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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has appointed the delegation which is to represent Switzerland at the second assembly of the League of Nations, which opens in Geneva on the 5th of September.

As at the initial assembly, Switzerland will be represented by Federal Councillor Motta, Chief of the Political Department, States Councillor Usteri and ex-Federal Councillor Ador. Professor Dr. Max Huber will again act as supplementary member.

The Federal Council has appointed Colonel Hans Pfyffer from Lucerne as Swiss Minister to Poland.

The Federal Council has granted diplomatic privileges such as exterritoriality, customs facilities, etc., to the following officials of the League of Nations: The Secretary-General and his deputy, the Director of the International Labour Bureau and his deputy, and to the Directors of Departments.

The Swiss Federal Council has issued a decree that the certificates of matriculation of the following colleges shall be recognised at the Federal examinations of aspirants for the medical profession: The Karl Boromäus College, Altdorf, the Ecole Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, Lausanne, the Brigue Gymnasium.

The Governments of Venezuela and Columbia have agreed to submit their frontier differences to arbitration of the President of the Swiss Confederation and to accept his judgment as final and binding on both parties.

The "Basler Nachrichten" report the following details as pertaining to Mussolini's past. Born in 1883 at Predappio, Italy, he followed the occupation of a school teacher, later that of a labourer. In 1903 he was arrested in Berne on a charge of issuing menacing threats, which proceedings were dropped without compensation in consequence of insufficient evidence being forthcoming in support of the charge. In June, 1903, Mussolini was expelled from the Canton of Berne owing to his activities as revolutionary agitator. In the spring of 1904 he appeared in Geneva, continuing his revolutionary propaganda and fire-brand speeches. Producing a falsified passport to the Geneva police, he was also expelled from the Canton of Geneva and conducted by the police to the Swiss-Italian frontier. In 1909 he was expelled from the Tirol, and re-appeared 1913 in Fribourg as agitator. Since then he has not again been observed in Switzerland.

To-day Mussolini leads the Italian Fascist Party! What a change, and what a pity that utterances by such type of politician should be taken seriously! It is small

wonder now that the majority of the Italian papers ignored his attack on the Tessin and Switzerland, expressing surprise at the excitement which was shown by the Swiss Press.

\* \* \*

At the meeting of the International Association of Social Democratic Parties in Berlin, the Swiss delegate, Nationalrat Grimm, demanded the creation of an international battlefield against the present social system.

As a front against the right wing he refused to accept the proposals of the Reformists to enter into a league with the Bourgeoisie, whilst as a front against the left wing he condemns the adoption of the impracticable strategy and tactics of the Communists.

\* \* \*

The receipts from Swiss Customs for the first half of the year 1920 amounted to frs. 44,652,000, whilst for the first six months of the current year they produced only frs. 40,179,000, representing a drop in revenue of frs. 4,473,000.

\* \* \*

The fiscal accounts of the Canton of Zurich for the year 1920 disclose revenue of frs. 72,629,913 and expenditure of frs. 80,104,032, the excess of expenditure thus amounting to frs. 7,474,118, against frs. 4,999,090, as anticipated in the preceding budget.

\* \* \*

The crisis in the two principal industries of the Canton Zurich, engineering and textile, is becoming still more acute. Although emergency work has been provided for a great number of unemployed of these trades by various communities, nearly two million francs had to be spent, in addition, for unemployment benefits from January to July 1st. As no improvement in the situation is expected in the near future, the Government of the Canton Zurich is preparing a new bill authorising further credits for providing emergency employment.

\* \* \*

The new Swiss Customs Tariff, which came into operation on July 1st, is meeting with very pronounced opposition from political, commercial and industrial centres all over the country.

It is contended that while the new tariff will bring very little, if any, amelioration to Swiss industries, it is bound to produce disastrous consequences for consumers, manufacturers, exporters and commerce in general. The argument is maintained that for Switzerland's industries there can be but one form of protection, and that is: Free Trade. Any violation of this law of nature must be fraught with utter failure.

\* \* \*

The index figure as compiled by the Association of Swiss Co-operative Societies shows a decrease of frs. 27.29 standing at frs. 2236.99 for June 1st against frs. 2264.28 on May 1st.

According to the statistics of the Swiss Tourist-traffic Office, the following figures represent the number of visitors from foreign countries who have arrived in Switzerland during the first five months of the present year for the purpose of cures or sports: Asia 266, Austria 2,521, Belgium and Luxembourg 1,699, Bulgaria 146, Czecho-Slovakia 489, Denmark 997, France 11,208, Germany 14,747, Greece 420, Great Britain 8,107, Holland 3,078, Hungary 649, Italy 5,053, Jugoslavia 1,538, Northern America 3,405, Poland 405, Rumania 725, Russia 258, Sweden, Norway and Finland 1,483, Spain and Portugal 687, Southern and Central America 479, from various other States 1,414; total: 59,774.

\* \* \*

Royal visitors to Switzerland. The Queen-Mother Christine of Spain has arrived with her suite in Basle and was temporarily staying at the Hotel "Drei Könige," where her brother, the Archduke of Habsburg, is in permanent residence, before she proceeded to Interlaken.

Prince-Consort Henry of the Netherlands arrived at the same hotel on the 8th instant.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways have decided to grant a discount of 10 per cent. on touring tickets aggregating less than 400 kilometres, and a discount of 20 per cent. on tickets of 400 or more kilometres, the lesser tickets being available for ten days, and the others for 45 days.

These reductions will enter into operation from August 1st next.

\* \* \*

The well-known Ticinese poet Francesco Chiesa received hearty congratulations from all parts of Switzerland and from Italy on the occasion of his 50th anniversary.

The professors and students of the Bellinzona Gymnasium celebrated their beloved rector's anniversary with joyous demonstrations, the teachers of the same institute presenting Chiesa with a gold watch bearing a suitable inscription.

\* \* \*

The bust of Dante, erected by the Ticinese in the Lyceum of Lugano in commemoration of the 600th anniversary of the great Italian poet, was unveiled on Sunday, the 10th instant, in the presence of leading notabilities and a great gathering. Speeches by the Councillor of State, Maggini, Dr. Rossi, delegate of the Ticinese Government, and the Ticinese poet Francesco Chiesa were received with great ovations. Scholars of the Lyceum rendered Italian folk songs of the 14th and 15th centuries with commendable ability.

\* \* \*

According to present information the next Swiss Federal Gymnastic Festival will be held in St. Gall during the last week in July, 1922.

Doubt is, however, expressed whether the fixture will be definite, as it may be found necessary to postpone the festival for another year, owing to the prevailing economic and industrial crisis.

\* \* \*

Athletic competitions will be due for decision at the Stade Municipal at Lyons on the 24th of this month between members of the French and members of the Swiss Athletic Associations.

The competitions comprise flat and hurdle races over distances of 100, 200, 800, 1,500 and 8,000 metres, long jump, high and pole jumping, throwing of the discus and the javelin.

Switzerland will be represented by a picked team of amateur athletes recruited from Geneva, Lausanne, Bienne, Berne, Lucerne, Basle and Zurich.

This international event is rousing considerable interest in Swiss sporting circles, and it is hoped that our Swiss competitors will render a good account of themselves in view of the fact that similar competitions between teams representing Switzerland and Germany will take place in Basle on September 4th.

\* \* \*

*The Toll of the Mountains.*—Miss Louise Eugster, 20, from Speicher, while crossing from the Altenalp to Seelalp, fell into a ravine and was killed.

Hans Eppstein, 18, from Ostermundigen, had a mortal fall from the Kümmlispitz.

Charles Lassueur, 16, from Lausanne, fell 200 metres near the Col de Jaman, being instantly killed.

Karl Helbling, 18, son of the Postmaster in Lachen, who started on an ascent of the Wäggitaler Alp on June 30th, has not since returned. Although search parties have gone out, no trace of the young man could be found, and it is presumed that he has met his death.

Joseph Siegrist, 30, from Meiringen, fell over a precipice of the Engelhörner and was killed. He leaves a widow and four children.

Lina Schwarz, 19, a telephone operator from Geneva, had ascended with some girl friends the Pointe Pelouse in Savoy, when she was suddenly seized with dizziness and, falling over a precipice, was shattered to death.

\* \* \*

A serious accident occurred near Kissing on the road from Augsburg to Munich. The touring car of Dr. Zeller from Romanshorn, after colliding with another vehicle, was hurled against a tree and smashed, causing the instantaneous death of Mr. Brunner, Dr. Rundzieher and Dr. Hans Gassmann, all from Berne. Dr. Zeller received serious injuries, whilst the chauffeur escaped with shock only.

\* \* \*

During the past week torrential rain and heavy hail storms have swept over the Cantons of Geneva, Neuchâtel, Tessin, Zurich and Schaffhausen, causing extensive damage to property, crops and vine yards.

\* \* \*

The French Académie de Médecine has nominated Professor de Quervain, Berne, as Corresponding Member.

\* \* \*

The anniversary of the Battle of Sempach was celebrated in Sempach on the 11th of July amid a great concourse of participants.

\* \* \*

In the St. Gervais quarter of Geneva will be founded a "Deutschschweizerheim," comprising a gymnasium, banqueting-hall seating 700, and a large restaurant, in addition to 14 large club rooms, a library and card-room. The office of a permanent Secretary for the Deutschschweizer will also be established in the same building.

\* \* \*

*Aviation in Switzerland.*—Two Swiss military aeroplanes have successfully completed a flight round Switzerland in 8 hours and 25 minutes.

Starting from Dübendorf at 3.45 a.m., the two 260h.p. biplanes headed for St. Gall, thence for Chur, rising to 5,400 metres, the highest altitude attained during the flight, before traversing the Engadine to make a first landing at Bellinzona at 5.15 a.m.

Restarting at 6.12 a.m., the biplanes passed over the



Naret Lake and the Giacomo Pass, traversing the Binn valley, pursued their course down the Rhone valley and reached the Geneva aerodrome Cointrin at 7.57, where the machines were overhauled and the benzine tanks refilled. At 9.30 the flight was resumed, the planes landing on the Sternfeld near Basle at 10.45, departing again for the ultimate goal, Schaffhausen, which was safely reached at 12.10 p.m., terminating an enterprise which does great credit to our Swiss military aviators. It may be added that the actual flying time occupied in making the complete circuit is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours less than the time taken by the late Oscar Bider two years ago for a little shorter circuit.

The aerodrome of the "Ad Astra" in Interlaken is receiving increasing patronage from visitors desirous of taking flights over the majestic giants of the Bernese Oberland.

The opening of an aerial service between Lausanne and Paris will shortly be realised. Further services between Lausanne—Genoa and Lausanne—Milano are the subject of advancing negotiations.

\* \* \*

A committee of prominent political and military personages have decided to invite public subscriptions for the purpose of erecting a modest monument in commemoration of the late Oscar Bider, Switzerland's first and foremost pioneer in aviation.

The Municipal Council of Berne has offered a site for the monument on the Kleine Schanze promenade, facing the wonderful Bernese Alps, which Bider was the first to fly over by aeroplane.

\* \* \*

The "Bodensee," the last of the Zeppelins to be handed over to the Allies, left Friedrichshafen on Sunday,

July 3rd, en route for Italy. Traversing Switzerland from north-east to south-west, it passed at a low altitude over Zurich at 7.20, Berne at 8, and Geneva at 9.45 a.m., then crossing the Swiss frontier headed for Italy, landing near Rome.

## NOTES & GLEANINGS.

Commenting upon the Souvenir-booklet which was sent by the Commercial Intelligence Department of the Swiss Legation to the Editors of the London and Provincial Press, the "Yorkshire Observer" writes in the issue of July 12th:—

### THE TRADE OF BASLE.

"The Chamber of Commerce of Basle has issued an artistic and interesting souvenir of the spring conference of the Manchester Textile Institute, which was held at Basle in May last. The book is really a handbook to the trade and commerce of the town, and gives an interesting glimpse into the manifold business activities of that important centre of industry. Switzerland is a country almost wholly devoid of natural advantages. It has no raw materials, and practically owes its present position in industry and commerce to the genius and resource of its inhabitants. It is where highly technical skill is required that Switzerland has excelled, and in its chemical and pharmaceutical industries it has done much valuable work. The present position of the country is a beautiful illustration of how much can sometimes be done out of very little if the matter is gone about in the proper way. The Swiss have every reason to be proud of their achievements. In the old days they had to assert their independence, which was not always an easy matter in presence of powerful and sometimes not very particular neighbours. New problems for Switzerland, as well as for the rest of Europe, have arisen out of the world war, and are in process of being solved. Switzerland has its schemes for its own development, particularly in regard to the Rhine, which, when carried out, will add to the country's importance and will also assist in the reconstruction of Central Europe."

## Feuilleton.

### LOUIS DE ROUGEMONT

(† June 10th 1921.)

(By Dr. A. LATT.)

It was owing to mere chance that I became interested in Louis de Rougemont. I am indebted for this acquaintance to "The Daily Graphic." The last time I got hold of a copy—that of June 11th—I noticed a photo, representing a naked old man riding a giant turtle. The accompanying text stated that Louis de Rougemont, the notorious Swiss adventurer, who with his tales from the bush had hoaxed and amused the world some 23 years ago, had just died at the Kensington Infirmary at the age of between 85 and 90 years.

From another copy of "The Daily Graphic"—dated 1st or 2nd January, 1920—I secured a cutting with the photo, of an old, white-bearded man leaving the London Homœopathic Hospital, where he had undergone an operation. The patient had been admitted to the hospital shortly before Christmas under the name of Louis Redmond. As some letters, evidently intended for this man, arrived at the hospital addressed to Louis de Rougemont, the curiosity of the doctors and staff was excited, but the mystery man left without giving a key to his identity. "A press representative," says "The Daily Graphic," "who called at the hospital was not allowed to see Mr. de Rougemont, or Redmond, on account of his poor condition. The resident medical officer said the old man was very much opposed to publicity. 'If you speak to him,' said the doctor, 'you will upset him; he does not want to see anybody at all outside his own friends. All the letters which are addressed to him in the name of Louis de Rougemont he refuses to open.' Inquiries made at Queen's Gate, Kensington, said to be his address, showed that the old man was very little known in the district."

I then tried to get first-hand information about my queer

countryman. He was unknown at the Legation, and figured in none of the lists of the various Swiss societies. Mr. Geo. Forrer, who for many years had been Swiss Vice-Consul in London, knew the case well. "Louis de Rougemont was a remarkable fellow," said my informant; "though his book is a fraud, he must have had the strangest life that one could imagine for a Swiss. He has long been forgotten by the public, which used to discuss with real passion this modern Robinson Crusoe. You see, he is still alive and doing well"—and Mr. Forrer handed me a copy of "The Daily Chronicle" of 30th July, 1915, from which I quote the following passages:

"Louis de Rougemont, whose famous story startled the world some years ago, has been married in London at a West-end registry office, the bride being Miss Thirza Cooper. The lady carries on an occupation in Regent Street as a financial agent, under the name of 'Cooper,' mainly transacting business with clients in London and Paris. The wedding ceremony, according to one who was present, was quite 'a simple affair,' no friends or relatives being present, except a lady and gentleman well known in London society. Mr. de Rougemont looked well and happy and bore himself in debonnaire fashion. . . ."

Then there follows the usual description of the dress and good looks of the bride who took Louis de Rougemont as her third husband.

"She met him in London for the first time some few months ago, in connection with literary work, and found him a delightful 'child of nature,' recounting for hours together tales true and marvellous. She said, when discussing her husband with mutual friends before her marriage, 'one cannot be dull in the company of Louis de Rougemont. His imagination is livelier than that of other men. And then, when he represented the truth interestingly, the world called him an outrageous liar.'"

"I believe in Louis de Rougemont. He will yet startle the world with the revelation of a great truth, and those who have thrown stones at him will live to see his name vindicated before the world."

M. and Mme. de Rougemont are now preparing for a trip to Australia, in connection with 'a highly interesting discovery,' the nature of which, however, is being kept a profound