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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Council has decided to participate in the deliberations of the special Commission dealing with financial aid to Austria and has delegated Dr. Julius Frey, the Bank Director of Zurich, to attend on its behalf the meetings of this Commission of the League of Nations.

It is stated that should the League of Nations not find a rapid solution of the Austrian problem, Switzerland, Italy, and Czecho-Slovakia have expressed willingness to grant Austria credit.

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It is proposed to increase the number of members on the Council of the Swiss Federal Railways from 11 to 15. According to the budget for 1923 the deficit on the Swiss Federal Railways is estimated to be 29 million francs as against 72 million francs for the preceding year.

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The Federal Council has appointed National Councillor Tanner (Liestal) Director of the Federal Liquor Control.

\* \* \*

Switzerland has requested France to safeguard her interests in Asia Minor.

\* \* \*

Switzerland is represented on the different commissions of the League of Nations as follows:—

Questions of Jurisdiction and Constitution: Mr. G. Motta; Technical Organisation: Mr. P. Usteri or Mr. G. Ador; Budget and Finance: Mr. P. Usteri or Mr. L. Forrer; Political Questions: Mr. G. Motta and Mr. P. Usteri.

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Dr. Millart, Vice-President of the Swiss Medical Association, has been appointed Chairman of the Mixed Commission of Arbitration for Pensions in Alsace-Lorraine. To this commission is entrusted the power of decision when divergencies of view arise between the respective French and German authorities regarding grants of pension to discharged or wounded soldiers having served in either of the two countries or to invalided, or indigent civilians of the restored provinces.

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At a congress of Swiss Army Chaplains held at Horgen on September 7th, a request was sent to the military authorities to retain the chaplains as spiritual guides throughout the various periods of military service.

At a meeting at Interlaken of delegates representing the abstainers among the railway employees, a petition was sent to the Swiss Federal Railways to reduce freight charges on non-alcoholic beverages.

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The University students of the Canton of Ticino are agitating to obtain recognition in Switzerland of medical degrees conferred by Italian Universities.

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While motoring on the road to Leukerbad, Dr. Raymond Zenn-Ruffinen, accompanied by Dr. Sulpice Zenn-Ruffinen and a lady from Albinen, met with a severe accident. His car skidded and crashed down a steep incline of 300 metres and was completely destroyed. The occupants have sustained serious injuries, Dr. Raymond Zenn-Ruffinen's condition causing special anxiety.

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*The Circuit of the Alps.*—The week of international competitive aviation, which has been arranged at Zurich from the 3—10 September, culminated in a flying circuit of the Alps.

This admirably organized air-race attracted 25 competitors, and was a specially interesting test of endurance and pluck, as the route was mapped out over the summits of the Alps, and the climatic rigours were not lessened by successive fogs and icy winds. The starting point was Dübendorf, and the route of the first section lay over Hochdorf-Wohlusen left of Napf to Thun. The second section, from Thun to Bellinzona, was by way of Interlaken-Schreckhörner (4,080 metres), over Finsteraarhorn (4,275 metres) and Griespass-Maggiatal. The third section, from Bellinzona back to Dübendorf, ran over Biasca and the Scheerhorn (3,600 metres), Schächen and Muottatal-Einsiedeln.

Nineteen of the competitors completed the course, the race being brilliantly won by Lieut. Bärtsch, whose flying time for the 224 miles was 122m. 44s.

2nd—Lieut. Comte (Swiss), 154m. 16s.

3rd—Lieut. Schaefer (Swiss), 152m. 42s.

4th—Lieut. Ackermann (Swiss), 146m. 44s.

5th—Lieut. Mittelholzer (Swiss), 145m. 25s.

6th—Lieut. Viguiet (French), 136m. 4s.

The festivities of the week were overclouded by the fatal accident to Capt. Echard, while flying the third section of the race. A wing of his machine loosened, and it crashed down from a height of over 3,000 metres, resulting in his instantaneous death. This gallant French officer was 35; his war record was distinguished, the organization of French aviation being largely his work. Widespread sympathy has been aroused by the tragedy, and his Swiss fellow-aviators have decided to honour his memory by naming a cup the "Challenge militaire Capitaine Echard." The superstitious will no doubt note the fact that Capt. Echard started thirteenth on his last race.

On the 9th of September Paul Schweizer, Honorary Professor at the University of Zurich, celebrated his 70th birthday. This prominent citizen of Zurich is the author of many important historical works.

\* \* \*

Frau Maja Matthei, the authoress and poetess, completed her 50th year on September the 6th at Zurich. One may recall, among the recent works this gifted woman has produced, her novel "Die Stadt am See," which depicts the beautiful scenery and life of Zurich; "Von Alltag und Sonntag"; and "Die guten Willens sind." Frau Matthei is also an active social worker and has edited several family magazines.

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#### Athletics.

At the international competition for putting-the-weight at Colmar, Swiss athletes gained three first prizes out of five events. The names of the winners are: Henri Graf, Berne; H. Fleuty, Chaux-de-Fonds; and Hermann Muser, Basle.

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#### OBITUARY.

Professor Johannes Messchaert died last Saturday at a Sanatorium at Küsnacht where he had gone to recuperate after an operation. Messchaert was born in 1857 at Hoorn in Holland; he was trained as a singer in the conservatoriums of Berlin and became the most celebrated bass of his day. He retired at the height of his fame and devoted himself to teaching his art, which united a rare perfection of technique and musical interpretation. Those who were fortunate enough to hear him in full possession of his vocal powers will never forget his rendering of Loewe's ballads or Brahms' songs, and the Conservatorium of Zurich was proud to possess him for the past few years as their leading teacher of singing.

#### EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**A Lavaux.**—Dimanche, par une journée toute ensoleillée, il faisait chaud pour parcourir le superbe vignoble du Dézaley de la Ville de Lausanne, d'Oron, d'Épesses et de Cully. La récolte, franche de maladie, est superbe; le raisin traluit déjà et par-ci, par-là, certains parchets promettent une riche vendange, que l'on peut estimer à 2000 litres la pose dans les bas de Cully, 2500 litres dans les vignes du Dézaley et de 2500 à 3000 litres dans les vignes d'Épesses et sur les hauts. Si l'on est favorisé de quelques semaines chaudes, le raisin va finir de se dorer et Lavaux pourra maintenir sa réputation pour la qualité de son vin. Le raisin est plus gros qu'à La Côte et tout fait prévoir que les vigneronns de Lavaux seront un peu dédommagés en 1922 de la maigre récolte de 1921, en partie anéantie par les gelées de mai. ("Journal d'Aubonne.")

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**Un congrès de la danse.**—Le congrès de l'Académie chorégraphique suisse a été tenu à Neuchâtel, sous la présidence de M. G. Gester. Quarante-quatre membres avaient répondu à l'appel du comité.

L'assemblée s'est levée pour honorer la mémoire de MM. J. J. Muller et L. Galley, de Glaris et Fribourg, tous deux membres honoraires de l'Académie, décédés au cours du dernier exercice.

Il a été donné lecture d'une adresse de M. André de Fouquières, souhaitant au congrès suisse une entière réussite. Les Académies étrangères unies officiellement à celle de Suisse, ont également fait part de leurs vœux.

Mlle. Régnier, de l'Opéra, dirigeant une des premières écoles de Paris, a dansé quatre danses de sa composition.

Le congrès a examiné la concurrence faite aux professeurs établis par les maîtres d'occasion, fonctionnaires, employés, artisans etc. et des démarches seront faites de toutes façons pour sauvegarder les intérêts des membres de l'Académie.

("Gazette de Lausanne.")

**Une périlleuse excursion.**—Trois voyageurs s'étaient engagés mercredi après-midi dans les gorges de l'Aar, à Meiringen. La pluie tombait serrée; la rivière était grosse et commençait à charrier de fortes billes de bois. Hâtant leur retour, les trois excursionnistes trouvèrent une partie de la galerie enlevée par le courant; cherchant une autre issue, le même cas s'était produit en amont de ce torrent démonté. La caravane se trouvait donc isolée, n'ayant pour dernier secours que les escaliers du "Lamme," sans autre issue qu'un entonnoir de rochers.

Un de nos compatriotes, qui faisait partie de la caravane, recommanda à ses compagnons, un Anglais et une jeune Anglaise, de s'abriter sous une grotte et d'attendre les secours qu'il allait chercher. Après plusieurs tentatives et de vigoureuses varappées, agrémentées de nombreuses glissades et d'une pluie diluvienne, il atteignit cependant un sentier qui lui permit d'aller à Meiringen chercher du secours; une colonne partit aussitôt, munie de cordes, et rentra vers les 7 heures du soir avec les deux rescapés.

L'Aar a débordé à tel point que la ligne de chemin de fer a été submergée et un service d'automobiles, rapidement organisé, a permis de transporter les voyageurs jusqu'à Interlaken, où, malgré le retard, le train de Berne les attendait encore.

("La Suisse.")

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**Des nègres qui parlent le schwyzerdütsch!**—Dans un journal d'Argovie, un de nos compatriotes établi en Amérique raconte l'épisode suivant:

"Aux environs de Tampa, dans l'Etat de Floride, près du golfe du Mexique, je devais visiter une école de culture de palmiers, dirigée par un sieur John César. Ayant donc pénétré dans la cour, j'avisai deux nègres qui s'y trouvaient et leur demandai si M. César était à la maison. Ces derniers répondirent dans le plus pur dialecte argovien! Vous jugez de mon étonnement. J'eus l'explication de cette énigme deux heures plus tard, lorsque le propriétaire rentra avec sa femme. M. John César m'expliqua qu'il avait quitté, il y a 30 ans, le canton d'Argovie. Les nègres et les Indiens de la plantation sont à son service depuis leur enfance. M. César leur a toujours parlé l'allemand de son pays; c'est ainsi que des nègres de la Floride parlent le dialecte argovien."

("Tribune de Genève.")

#### A SWISS PLAY IN LONDON.

On Tuesday night the Apollo Theatre brought out a four-act play, "The Torch," by John Knittel. The author was educated in Basle, but has spent a great deal of his life in England, and introduced himself to the public last year by a first novel, "Aaron West" (published by Hodder & Stoughton) which, by the way, subsequently appeared as a serial in the "Basler National Zeitung." To say the important thing right at the beginning, "The Torch" had an enthusiastic reception on its first night. The success, of course, was due to a very large extent to the powerful representation of the principal character, Jurg Winkelried, by Maurice Moscovitch, who has been out of London for over a year and re-appeared for the first time on this occasion.

The play itself, which was produced by Theodore Komisarjevski, the former producer of the Moscow Art Theatre, combines in a curious way Swiss feelings with English stage traditions. The action is very complicated, and I wonder whether one ought not to call the play a melodrama. There are moments where the real tragedy appears, but there are others where you do not feel so convinced of it as you ought to be. Jurg Winkelried, a descendant of Arnold Winkelried and Mayor of Sempach, is the dominant character. He has a great deal of trouble with his children, whose mother died ten years previously. His daughter, Suzanne, runs after the stable boy; his son, George, has become sub-editor of a Communist paper in Lucerne; his son, Henry, has had to drop his university studies because he could not get on with his professors, and now he wanders about the house doing nothing, and all of them have forgotten the tenth anniversary of their mother's death; only Abel, the eldest, who farms in America, has sent his father a letter on this date. All of them decline to accompany the Mayor to the Sempach battle celebration, where he will have to carry the traditional Torch alone. Money matters are loudly discussed, political animosities—deepened by the presence of two Communist friends whom George has brought home with him—bring about hard words upon both sides, and when Jurg finally shows the undesirable guests, who have abused the honour of his country, out of his