Zeitschrift:	The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK		
Herausgeber:	Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom		
Band:	- (1923)		
Heft:	86		

Rubrik: Notes and gleanings

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The Swiss Observer Published every Friday at 21, GARLICK HILL, LONDON, E.C. 4. Telegrams : FREPRINCO, LONDON.

Telephone : CITY 4603

LONDON, JANUARY 27, 1923.

PRICE 3d.

No. 86

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

ons may be paid into Postscheck-Konto: Basle V 5718).



According to statistics published by the Federal Labour Office, the unemployed have cost Switzer-land 406 million francs to end September last; of this amount 225 millions have been contributed by the Confederation, 164 millions by the cantons and communes, and 17 millions by factory owners. * * *

The preliminary figures with reference to the working of the Swiss Federal Railways during 1922 disclose a considerably improved position. The probable surplus will be 844 million francs (21 millions in 1921), which is chiefly due to a reduction in the working expenses of 24 million francs. * * *

The expert commission, presided over by Federal Councillor Musy, to study the revision of the law relating to the military tax, is making a few recom-mendations which, it is anticipated, will increase the revenue from this source by about $4\frac{1}{2}$ million france annually. The personal tax of Frs. 6.— is to be increased to Frs. 15.—, and the age limit is to be raised from 42 to 48. The taxation of possible inheritances is to be maintained.

Dr. Locher, formerly general director of the Swiss National Exhibition, has been appointed director at Zurich of the Swiss Federal Railways, in place of Director Mezger, who is retiring.

The Swiss League of Nations Union has pre-sented to the Federal Council a petition, drawing attention to the great economic sacrifices imposed upon other countries by the present serious friction between France and Germany, which is fraught with great dangers to international peace.

At the request of the Federal authorities, a small delegation of the National Council has gone to France in order to study the possibility of find-ing employment for Swiss agricultural workers.

To destroy the fear of higher coal prices, the French authorities have stated that instructions have been given that no obstacles should be placed in the way of a continuance of the coal deliveries from the Ruhr.

* * *

Emigration during last year shows a decrease, 5,787 Swiss having left their home for overseas countries, against 7,129 in 1921.

Free postage, which has been the privilege of Government and other official bodies in Switzerland, will probably be abolished, the cantons receiving as compensation a yearly subsidy of one million francs from the Confederation.

* * *

The electorate of the canton of Geneva is giving its verdict to-day and to-morrow on a proposed increase in the cost of dog licences, pensions to retired states councillors who have been in office for nine or more years, and an increase in the property tax property tax.

Of the 37,413 voters in the canton of Geneva one-half are Swiss who belong to other cantons, chiefly Vaud and Berne. ***

Taxation of foreign residents, to the tune of the equivalent of the military tax paid by Swiss, is the object of an initiative presented to the Regierungsrat of Zurich, which will submit this proposed law to the people with a recommendation for its relation for its rejection.

A referendum having been demanded on the new fiscal decree promulgated by the canton of Lucerne, which imposes a higher though graduated income tax, the voting will take place next Sunday.

The town of Bienne is in the fortunate position of anticipating in the budget for 1923 a surplus of Frs. 73,384.

Several farmsteads have, these last few days, been destroyed by fire: the Spittel in Madiswil

(Langental), rendering six families homeless; a farmhouse in Oberzeihen (Laufenburg); and another in Asuel (Porrentruy), the latter belonging to Xaver Choulat; a fourth in Wölflingswil (Frick), the property of Jakob Belser. The vicarage in Dittingen (Laufental) was completely burned out on the 19th inst. 19th inst.

* * *

The falling of an avalanche was the cause of a grave accident to a party of fifteen tourists, members of the Geneva section of the Swiss Alpine Club, who were undertaking last Sunday the customary winter ski excursion. Near the Porte du Soleil (Champéry) they were overtaken by an ava-lanche; three of those who were buried were able to artificate themeologic, but Hunzi Car Carttera to extricate themselves, but Henri Gex-Crotter, a well-known and much respected guide of Morgins, remained entombed in the specied guide of Molgills, remained entombed in the snow. Help soon ar-rived, and the two search parties brought back his remains, which were discovered 1.2 metres under the snow, about 15 metres distant from the spot where the accident happened.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

The Winter Season

The Winter Season. To be compelled to read, while at the same time prevented from responding to the call of, the many enchanting and enticing reports from the winter resorts appearing now in the English press is as attrocious a mental punishment as can be imagined. We will not inflict upon our readers the same penalty, but only illustrate the gravity of the latter by giving one or two extracts, culled at random. This is what Eustace E. White says in Ladies' Field Fashions (January):---

St. Moritz, Pontresina and Mürren represent the the which claims most of the space in the English papers. The train service to the English had to be doubled, thus providing accommodation for some 40,000 visitors. St. Moritz is, of course, an easy first, but the neighbouring Pontresina, whose specially to the heighbourne for the series of the series

Alan Bott in the Evening News (Jan. 11th):— "I shall call them rectors' daughters, not because some of them really are rectors' daughters, but because most of them belong to the rectors' daughters genus-fresh face, easy carriage, frank manner. courageous, merry, self-possessed, moderately intelligent, satisfying to the ultimate heel-edge in outdoor clothes, but rather awkward about the pink shoulders, the hanging sleeve-lets, and the hairdressing schemes incident to dinner-daughters hurry into the Bernese Oberland—to Wengen, Ad the fag-end of each December the rectors' daughters hurry into the Bernese Oberland—to Wengen, Adelboden, Grindelwald, Mürren (St. Moritz, Davos, and Pontresina are more for the cosmopolites to whom even sport must be a function).

With them they bring waterproof breeches and flaring jerseys and iron-tipped boots and wild woollies and laughter and the Tunbridge Wells drawl. There come with them also menfolk of similarly standard pattern. The young and the youngish wear sweaters rimmed in the colours of this college or that public school, ties made in regimental or Air Force patterns. Their hair is uniformly neat and crisp a l'An-glaise; their faces are firm and fresh, as only young Englishmen's faces can be fresh and firm. The no longer young are mostly old-stagers whose features have been overscrawled by the pencil of strenuous success. They are the doers of flawless 'rockers' in the figure-skating competitions, the leaders of parties who, on skis, and with luncheons in ruck-sacks, climb and descend mile upon mile of snowdeep mountainside.

mountainside. There are other old 'uns whose status is merely that of fathers persuaded to start winter-sporting at nearly fity. These arrive intending to skate a little and walk a little and rest a lot. But the air, the Veuve Cliquot 1911. Extra Dry, air, incites them into wanting to tumble around on skis and hurtle into snowbanks on luges. Like the very young on holiday from the prep. schools, they make their difficult way to the top of the ski beginners' 'nursery slopes'; but since the very young have plastic and resiltent bodies, the old 'uns fall much more often. . . And the usually sedate old 'uns mind not at all the

An interesting article in the *Bystander* (Jan. 17) deals with "The Origin and Development of Winter Sports"; the same journal also contains a number of photographs of well-known society people enjoying sports.

enjoying sports. The international ski-jumping championship at Klosters, for which there were forty competitors, was won by the Austrian Risch, whose three jumps aggregated 132 metres, the Swiss flying officer Baertsch being a good second with only one metre less; the latter, however, made the longest indi-vidual jump (47 metres).

Mussolini as a Tramp. When nearly every fallen statesman becomes conscious of the desirability of enlightening his partisans by conferring upon them the benefit of his memoirs, it is quite in keeping with modern precedents that the Italian Prime Minister should have written an autobiography for publication. *The Scotsman* (Jan. 16th) publishes the first instal-ment of a free translation, which has been supplied by a correspondent, and we reproduce that part which describes Signor Mussolini's stay in Switzer-land, as this is possibly meant to be the "official" version: version:-

Which describes signor autosoftitis stay in Switzer-land, as this is possibly meant to be the "official" version:—
"I telegraphed," reads the autobiography, "to my mother to send me the money necessary for the journey, and she sent me by telegraph 45 lire. On the verning of July 9th, 1902, I arrived at Chiasso. As J waited for the train to carry me into the centre of Switzerland I bought a 'Secolo' newspaper. What was my surprise and grief to find in it a notice of the arrestment of my father. He, with other Socialists, had smashed to pieces the election urns at Predappio and Orte to prevent the Clericals gaining a victory. This news placed me inta dilemma. Should I go back or go on ? I decided to continue my journey, and the next day (July 10th), in the afternoon, I arrived at Yverdon with 2 lire and 10 centessime (Ls. 9d.) in my pocket. But I did not care. I wished to see, to study, to work, to knock about topsy-turvy in the world. . . . Night fell, and Mussolini was tramping on aimlessly and he was hungry. The road was dark, but at last a dim light appeared. As he approached it he saw a family at supper in the courtyard of a house. He hesitated for a moment, then he boldly entered and asked: 'Have you any bread ?' There was dead silence. 'Give me a piece.'Still no answer. Then a man slowly picked up a bit from the table and offered it to him. Mussolini took it and said 'Thank you,' but still ther was no answer, so he turned on his heel and went out into the night. His first impulse was to throw the bread away, and Te raised his arm to do so, but slowly it was lowered till the bread reached his mouth, when he ate it greedily—still tramping on.
The next day he hired himself as a bricklayer's labourer, and carried hods of lime and bricks up the scafolding of a house in course of erection. His wages were two and a half france a day. But this was not seeing the world, so, we are told, one fine morning he threw the sack, which he wore on his shoulder to save his hand. He was a fine-looki

THE SWISS OBSERVER.

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EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Volksbräuche im Baselbiet. - Die letzten Wochen Volksbräuche im Baselbiet. – Die letzten Wochen des Jahres waren früher bei den Bergbauern droben besonders reich an allerlei Bräuchen, von denen einige bis heute geblieben sind. So z. B. das Wetterorakel, nach welchem man zwischen Weih-nachten und Neujahr aus dem Salz in zwölf Zwie-belschalen (je nachdem sich dieses mehr oder weni-ger aufgelöst hat) das Wetter (ob nass oder trocken) der zwölf Monate des kommenden Jahres bestimmt. Oder das Bleigiessen in der Andreasnacht (vom letzten November zum ersten Dezember) zum Zwecke. letzten November zum ersten Dezember) zum Zwecke, aus den wunderlichen Formen des im Wasser plötz-lich erkalteten Bleies den Zukünftigen oder die lich erkalteten Bleies den Zukünftigen oder die Zukünftige zu enträtseln. – Noch hat man das Kuhschellengeläute und Peitschenknallen der Santi-klause in den Ohren, die nach einem alten Ober-baselbieterbrauche in der Nacht vom 6. zum 7. Dezember unter entsetzlichem Lärm von Berghof zu Berghof ziehen, und schon stehen die Festtage, Weihnachten und Neujahr, unmittelbar bevor. Das ist, wie in einem Basler Blatte ausgeführt wird, für die Hausbäckerei in den Bauerndörfern, wo in allen Wohnungen noch die grossen Kachelöfen stehen, immer eine strenge Zeit. Denn auf Weih-nachten werden die Aenisbrötli, die Brunsli, die Mailänderli und anderes nach währschaftem Bauern-rezept selbst zubereitet und gebacken, und auf Neunachten werden die Aensbrötil, die Brunsil, die Mailänderli und anderes nach währschaftem Bauern-rezept selbst zubereitet und gebacken, und auf Neu-jahr macht die Bäuerin Zupfen und Wecken wie ein richtiger Bäcker. Damit aber am Christbäum-chen auch die Lebküchlein und das "Zuckerige" (Marzipansachen) nicht fehlen, gehen heute noch wie vor 50 Jahren die Lebkuchenfrauen und -männer von Dorf zu Dorf, von Hof zu Hof und bieten ihre Ware feil, denn vom abgelegenen Dörflein oder Berghof hätte man schon eine Tagreise bis zum nächsten Zuckerbäcker. — Vierzehn Tage vor Weihnachten beginnt das Vertragen. Es ist die immer ein Ereignis für die Kinder. Ich erinnere mich noch gut aus meinen Bubenjahren, wie wir Kinder jedesmal aufhorchten, wenn im Hausflur oder auf der Treppe Schritte laut wurden. Ging dann die Türe auf, und es kam jemand anders, da gab es lange Gesichter. War es aber wirklich der "Plappersämi" oder "sVreni Jogälletau," mit der schneeweissen Zeine oder Hutte, richtige Oberbasel-bieter Originale — sie haben schon lange das Zeitbieter Originale — sie haben schon lange das Zeit-liche gesegnet — so kannte unsere Freude keine Grenzen mehr. Die Augen hefteten sich auf das weisse Tuch, das die Schätze barg. Und wurde

Das war einmal (Der Baselbieter.)

Dis war einigat (Der Dasebbeter.) ***
Ein kurioser alter Gantbrauch besteht noch in einigen entlegenen Gemeinden des Wallis in Ver-steigerungen von Wiesboden. Am Sonntag, an dem die Versteigerung erfolgt, kommt die ganze Ein-wohnerschaft vors Wirtschaus. Die Frauen und Mädchen stehen sittsam etwas abseits, die Männer stellen sich vor der Wirtschaftstüre auf, damit sie gleich zugreifen können, wenn der Wein herum-geboten wird. Die Amtsperson, Präsident und Weibel u. a. nehmen an einem Tische Platz und verlesen Grösse und Ertragsfähigkeit der Matte. Jetzt wird eine Flasche auf den Tisch gestellt, aus deren Hals eine dreizinkige Gabel herausragt; auf jeden Zinken wird ein kleines, dünnes Wachskerz-chen gesteckt, und sobald diese brennen, kann das Bieten beginnen. Jedoch erfolgt kein Angebot, obschon jeder Bauer die Matte gern hätte. Alle starren auf die immer tiefer brennenden Kerzchen. Da! Das erste erlischt! Jetzt ist's Zeit und es wird wacker geboten, denn sobald der Docht des wird wacker geboten, denn sobal der Docht des zinken abwärts senkt, ist es unwiderruflich Schluss. zinken abwärts senkt, ist es unwiderruftlich Schluss. Es gibt wohl kein Gebiet der Schweiz, in dem noch so viel alte Gebräuche wie im Wallis bestehen.

(Unter-Emmenthaler.) *** Eine Bärengeschichte. – Vor einiger Zeit konnte Bären als Ersatz für die schon recht altersschwachen Wapentiere im Bärengraben aus Ungarn unterwegs. Aber man scheint in Ungarn die Bärenfelle auch zu verkaufen, ehe man sie hat. Wenigstens kam bald darauf die trübe Kunde, dass zwei Bären wieder ausgerissen seien, weil sie nicht wussten, wieder ausgerissen seien, weil sie nicht wussten, wie gute Leckerbissen ihrer in Bern harrten. Ein anderer verletzte den Fuss in der Falle, und der vierte sei ohnehin ein Krüppel. Da glücklicherweise weder Bären noch Bärenfelle bezahlt waren, kommt die Stadt nicht weiter zu Schaden. Ein fünfter Bär, der offeriert wurde, käme bis zu seinem Ein-treffen in Bern auf 1600 bis 1700 Franken zu stchen, eine Summe die sich die Stadt schon ersparen eine Summe, die sich die Stadt schon ersparen kann, bis die Bären Hochzeit gehalten haben und junge, billigere zu finden sind, was etwa im Früh-jahr der Fall sein dürfte. Vorläufig müssen also noch die alten genügen. (Berner Tagwacht.) * *

Un Tunnel sous la Ville de Berne. — La ville de Berne fait actuellement percer un tunnel de 1040 mètres à travers la presqu'ile sur laquelle se trouve bâtie la cité des Zähringen. Ce tunnel, qui com-mence à peu près au pied du pont rouge ou du chemin de fer, passe à environ 40 mètres au-dessous de la place de la gare et débouchera dans le marais du Marzili, au-dessous de Bernerhof. C'est juste-ment neur descréber ce menie, et accimint tout la du Marzili, au-dessous de Bernerhof. C'est juste-ment pour dessécher ce marais et assainir tout le quartier construit au niveau de l'Aar qu'on s'est vu obligé d'établir ce tunnel qui, en somme, fera partie de la canalisation de la ville. Actuellement, près de 600 mètres sont percés et l'on travaille encore dans la molasse ou grès verdâtre du Plateau suisse. Mais d'un jour à l'autre on s'attend à voir les difficultés augmenter, car on atteindra bientôt la moraine, formée de sable et de galets qui n'offrent que peu de résistance et où les éboulements sont touiours à craindre. Tout le tunnel sera muré n'offrent que peu de résistance et où les éboulements sont toujours à craindre. Tout le tunnel sera muré et tuyauté de ciment, de sorte qu'on pourra tou-jours y passer. A cette profondeur, la température y est constamment de 13 à 14 degrés centigrades et les quarante mineurs qui percent la roche en trois équipes s'y trouvent aussi à l'aise que possible. Il n'y a relâche dans le travail que le dimanche, afin de permettre aux ingénieurs de mesurer les distances et de contrôler la direction donnée au tunnel. (L'Express de Neuchâtel.)

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

According to the provisional figures which are at present available, it appears that there was a deficit on the Swiss Post Office for the year 1922 amounting to about Frs. 4,800,000. This compares with a deficit of Frs. 12,874,000 estimated for in the budget, and may therefore be regarded as satis-factory. In 1921 there was a loss of Frs. 28,276,783 on this department, and in 1920 a similar loss of nearly 19 millions had to be recorded.

The telegraph and telephone services, which are worked separately from the post office proper, close their accounts for 1922 with a provisional profit of about Frs. 900,000, which compares very favourably with a budgeted deficit of Frs. 875,326. In 1920 these services produced a profit of nearly 4 million francs, but in 1921 there was a deficit of nearly 2 millions.

It is to be added that the improvement in the post office returns is not to be attributed in the first place to an increase of revenue, but is princi-pally due to the economies which have been effected pally during the year. In the case of the telegraph and telephone services it must be remarked that the amount of telegraph business has considerably fallen off, whereas the telephone department has regis-tered a small increase of activity.

bil, whereas the terephone department has registered a small increase of activity. Although they are not of any great intrinsic importance in the general financial and economic life of Switzerland, the results of the smaller local banks, which make their appearance at this time of year, always have a certain interest, if only as straws to show which way the wind blows. To reproduce the figures, even in the most abbreviated form, would occupy too much space in these columns, but it may be of interest to remark that the Solothurnische Leihkasse in Soleure had a net profit of Frs. 96,040, as compared with Frs. 66,013 in 1921, and is again paying $9\frac{1}{2}$ %, having a net profit of Frs. 563,989, approximately equal to that of last year. The Volksbank in Reinach is paying the customary 7%, having net profits of Frs. 165,679 (Frs. 157,940 in 1921).

The Cantonal Banks, on the other hand, being conducted on a somewhat larger scale, interest a wider circle. The first of these for which pro-visional returns are available is the Banque de l'Etat de Fribourg, which shows a net profit for the year of Frs. 2,082,822, as compared with Frs. 2,166,175 in 1921. The turnover achieved by this concern has fallen off from 2,005 millions in 1921 to 1,951 millions last year. Particulars as to the distribution of profits are not available.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

BONDS.	Jan.	16 J	an. 23
Swiss Confederation 3% 1903	80.12	% 7	9.05%
Swiss Confed. 9th Mob. Loan 5%	101.15	% 10	1.70%
Federal Railways A-K 31%	85.40	% 8	4.10%
Canton Basle-Stadt 51% 1921	105.25	% 10	5.25%
Canton Fribourg 3% 1892	77.00	1% 7	6.50%
Zurich (Stadt) 4% 1909	100.00	1% 10	0.35%
SHARES.	Nom.	Jan. 16	Jan. 23
	Frs.	Frs.	Frs.
Swiss Bank Corporation	500	659	640
Crédit Suisse	 500 	685	677
Union de Banques Suisses	500	563	558
Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz	1000	1659	1590
Société pour l'Industrie Chimique		1235	1232
C. F. Bally S.A		975	955
Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon		584	586
Entreprises Sulzer		650	620
S.A. Brown Boveri (new)	500	335	320
Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.	200	168	165
Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler		101	100
Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman		468	468

ALICE LANDOLT'S CONCERT.

The many Argoviens in our colony will be delighted to welcome one of their own, for the Landolt family is well known in the "Kulturstaat."

Landoit family is well known in the "Kulturstaat." Miss Alice Landoit was born in Zofingen, where her father is in a large way of business; she comes from an old musical stock, her grandfather being a great musician and art connoisseur. 'Studying under Hans Huber, Carreno and Busoni, her first public engagement was with the Berlin Philhar-monic Orchestra in December, 1917. Miss Landoit bas just come aver from Paris where she has been has just come over from Paris, where she has been playing with much success.

The programme of her London Concert (see advert. on another page) is a very attractive one, and we are sure that her compatriots will wish to give this distinguished artiste every encouragement in her English debut.

