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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

A petition of Swiss residing in Alsace-Lorraine, who suffered damage to the amount of about five million francs and who endeavoured to obtain assistance from the Federal authorities, was rejected as having no legal basis; it is officially stated that such claims should be addressed to the belligerent States concerned.

The damage caused by avalanches during the last winter has been officially computed as in the neighbourhood of 1.1 million francs; about ten per cent. of this amount has been obtained from voluntary contributions, and the Federal Council is to be asked to grant a substantial subsidy, as in some instances whole homesteads have been demolished and as these risks cannot be covered by insurance.

During the last summer 348 passenger-carrying aeroplanes have passed through the flying station at Basle, without a single accident being recorded. The London-Paris-Basle-Zurich line, worked by Imperial Airways, Ltd., carried in 86 regular flights 165 passengers and 880 kilos mail and merchandise.

According to statistics, the canton of Geneva shows the largest number of car owners in relation to population, there being to end of June last year 194 motor-cars to every 10,000 inhabitants; Neuchâtel with 73, Vaud with 67, and Basle-Town with 57 follow next. Of a total of about 20,000 cars owned in Switzerland, not quite 9 per cent. are of home manufacture; nearly a third are imported from France, and another third from Italy and the U.S.A. combined. Of the foreign makes the "Fiat" is an easy first with 2,653, "Peugeot" and "Citroën" being next in favour.

An international traffic route, partly by water and partly by rail, from the Rhine to the Lakes of Lucerne and Maggiore via Milan to the Adriatic is the ambitious scheme, strongly recommended by an Italo-Swiss navigation committee which deliberated last week in Lugano.

Remarkable presence of mind was exhibited by Frau Schild, of Grenchen, whose two-year-old boy wandered on to the railway line. Seeing an express train approach, she was just in time to get hold of her boy, throw him down alongside herself, both lying flat between the rails whilst the train passed over them, leaving both uninjured.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Sept cent cinquante fêtes!**—A la Société suisse d'utilité publique, on s'est occupé de l'excès des fêtes.

Il y a eu en Suisse, cet été, 47 fêtes de gymnastique, 25 fêtes de lutte, 14 fêtes d'athlétisme, 32 fêtes de tir, 21 fêtes de chant, 20 fêtes de musique, 20 courses hippiques, 4 courses d'automobiles, quatre expositions, etc.

Soit 240 fêtes de grande envergure. On compte qu'il y a eu, en outre, 500 fêtes de moindre importance.

Des pourparlers sont engagés entre la Société d'utilité publique et les sociétés fédérales de musique, de chant, de tir et de gymnastique pour en arriver à diminuer le nombre des fêtes.

(Feuille d'avis.)

**Un peu de statistique genevoise.**— Sur 171,000 habitants (du canton), en 1920, 73,000 sont dans l'industrie.

En 1923, 11,000 ouvriers de fabriques dans le canton, contre 13,000 en 1911.

Le nombre des chômeurs, complets ou partiels, tombe de 3441 à 2198, de 1922 à 1923.

Les forces motrices du canton sont de plus de 41,000 CV (disponibilités).

726,000 voyageurs sont, en 1923, partis de Cornavin; 698,000 l'an précédent.

Le trafic marchandises, toujours à Cornavin, s'est accru de 769,000 à 776,000 tonnes.

Le rang de Cornavin est, en Suisse, le deuxième pour le tonnage, le quatrième pour les voyageurs.

Aux Vollandes, 521,000 voyageurs; 400,000 en 1922, et 48,000 tonnes marchandises (33).  
Le trafic du port fut de 261,000 voyageurs (243), et de 5000 tonnes (3). (Journal de Genève.)

**Le drapeau des pompiers.**—Dimanche (5 Oct.) a eu lieu à Fribourg la bénédiction du drapeau du bataillon des sapeurs-pompiers de cette ville.

A 9 heures, le bataillon s'est rassemblé aux Grand'places. Puis divers exercices et concours de subdivisions ont été exécutés. A 10 heures 45, le corps s'est reformé pour la bénédiction du drapeau. Un service religieux, célébré par M. le capitaine-aumônier Waecher, a commencé à 11 heures, aux Grand'places. Une foule entoura le bataillon. Outre les délégations des corps de pompiers du dehors, on remarquait les drapeaux de toutes les sociétés locales.

Dans son allocution de circonstance, M. le capitaine-aumônier Waecher a rappelé la signification du nouvel étendard et a souligné les nombreux liens qui unissent le dévouement des sapeurs-pompiers à la charité chrétienne et à l'idée religieuse.

La remise du drapeau au bataillon a eu lieu l'après-midi. Elle a été suivie de nouveaux exercices, d'un cortège et d'un banquet. Une soirée familiale a clos cette fête, dont la réussite fut complète.

(Feuille d'avis.)

**Die Hochwildjagd im Albulagebiet;** ist dieser Tage zu Ende gegangen. Sie zeitigte im allgemeinen bescheidene Resultate. In Preda sind etliche Gamsen geschossen worden, desgleichen in Filisur, wo nicht weniger als 37 Mann das Patent gelöst haben sollen. Bergün und Umgebung verzeichnet einen geringen Abschluss; selbst alte, erfahrene Gamsjäger sind dieses Jahr nicht auf ihre Rechnung gekommen. Ein "glücklicher" Anfänger war ein Jäger in Latsch, der als debütierender Waidmann nicht weniger als vier Rehböcke, zwei stattliche Gamsböcke und etliche Marmeltiere zur Strecke gebracht hat. Im allgemeinen wird über Rückgang namentlich des Hochwildes geklagt.

Es scheint uns dies um so merkwürdiger, als die unmittelbare Nähe des wildreichen Bannbezirkes Piz Aela gerade das innere Albulatal stark befruchtet sollte. Aber erfahrene Jäger sagen, dass ein Ueberströmen des Talflusses, auch bei niedrigstem Wasserstand, weder von Gamsen noch Rehen leicht praktiziert werde. Ein Mitarbeiter des "Freien Käti" befürwortet die Jagd nach alter Bündner Jägerart mit der Flinte oder dem Stutzen. Kalibrierte Jagdwaffen, wie die hochmodernen Büchsenflinten mit dem "Zielfernrohr" sind, die dem Jäger auf grössere Distanzen und bei einbrechender Dunkelheit ein ganz genaues Zielen und Fassen des zu schiessenden Wildes ermöglichen, sollten nach seiner Ansicht gesetzlich verboten werden. Derartigen Instrumenten sei das arme Wild schonungslos ausgeliefert. Wenn zur grossen Jägerzahl noch die technische Vervollkommnung der Jagdwaffen hinzukommt, dürften die herrlichen Gamsreviere in wenigen Jahren vollständig ausgeschossen sein.

(Thurg. Volkzeitung.)

**Der Ansturm aufs Zivilstandesamt.**—An den beiden Tagen vom 2. und 4. Oktober sind in Zürich nicht weniger als 63 Paare getraut worden. Mit einer solchen Heiratslust kann allerdings die Bautätigkeit nicht Schritt halten. Es wäre interessant, feststellen zu können, wie viele von den neuen Ehepaaren wirklich eigene Wohnung gefunden haben.

(Zürcher Post.)

## D'HOSPICE A HOTEL.

By A. W.

Ceux de nous qui ont eu l'occasion de s'arrêter au Grand St. Bernard et d'y goûter l'hospitalité des moines, seront navrés de savoir qu'on parle de convertir une partie de l'hospice en hôtel.

Les moines, qui depuis plus de mille ans, ont accueilli, logé et nourri les voyageurs sans jamais rien leur demander, ne sont pas à blâmer. Le touriste n'est plus aussi généreux; il aime recevoir et ne donne rien en retour.

Le Times en date du 9 Octobre nous donne un intéressant article à ce sujet:—

The Hospice of the Great St. Bernard Pass, we are told, is likely to be changed from a hospice into an hotel. For nearly one thousand years food and shelter have been freely given on the spot where St. Bernard of Menthon, Archdeacon of Aosta, and the evangelist of the Alps, founded a monastery in a place of perpetual snow, more than eight thousand feet above sea level. Many and very diverse have been the wayfarers who have used, since the days of St. Bernard, the pass which before his time was known to Roman and to Celtic warriors and traders. French and German pilgrims

on their way to Rome (it was these whom the founder of the monastery chiefly had in mind to serve), Emperors and their medieval armies, French soldiers and Austrian ecclesiastics, workmen, hunters, students, climbers, sightseers—all these and many more have partaken of the hospitality of the foundation, receiving food and shelter free. Time was, and has not yet wholly passed, when the famous dog—of the noble St. Bernard breed, which is said to be in origin a spaniel, crossed perhaps with the Pyrenean sheepdog—was far more than an attractive show; his sagacity, his courage, and his long training enabled him to do the work of rescue which picture, song, and story have delighted to celebrate. Of the rescued and the succoured, the fed and the housed, nothing was asked. They honoured the Hospice by accepting its gift of charity; they might, if they would, honour themselves by giving of their own charity. Both host and guest, free of the taint of barter and sale, might enjoy the interdependent privileges of giving and receiving, of thankfully accepting and generously bestowing. But now, if the report be true, the old virtue and dignity are to pass away. One party to the courteous relation has failed to use its opportunity; and the other party is thus robbed of its power. The modern traveller will take, but will not give, and the Canons Regular—the Monks of St. Bernard, as they are familiarly called—who for seven centuries have played the host, must stoop from host to trader. The Hospice, invaded by swarms where it used to welcome handfuls, can bear the expense no longer; and from a hospice must degrade itself to be an hotel.

Some small amount of sneering may be expected. We shall perhaps hear talk of Switzerland "on the make," and be reminded of the nationality and the intended profession of that very prudent person, Mr. Bernard Shaw's "chocolate soldier." Such sneers will not come from those who have exercised their privilege of freely giving where no price was demanded. The Monks of St. Bernard will only be doing what the guardians of most of our own Cathedrals and other buildings of historic interest have long been compelled to do. In the abstract there is much to be said for the plea that such great monuments and fields of study should be free to all who wish to see them. In practice, Westminster Abbey, like beard and lodging at a mountain hospice, costs a great deal of money; and at present there is no sufficient evidence that the bold experiment, successfully made during a short period in Chester Cathedral, would be sure of success elsewhere. If giving be not voluntary, it must be made obligatory, because compulsion is the only offset to the habit of mind which at its best is but ignorance and thoughtlessness, and at its worst is a contemptible meanness. This is the habit of mind which threatens to bring the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard down from its unsullied height of charity into the traffic of the common market; and, though the change would indeed be lamentable, the most lamentable part of it would be the spread of a vulgar vice to infect an honourable virtue.

## AS OTHERS SEE US.

The following extract from an article which appeared in the "Evening Standard" (Oct. 14th) over the name of Mr. G. H. Muir, throws some unscrupled sidelights on life in Geneva:—

International brotherhood makes strange bed-fellows, and when the League of Nations Assembly is sitting, the seat of the League becomes the most astonishing political museum in the world. Geneva has always been an odd place, and beneath the outward calm of an appearance which sometimes resembles Eastbourne, sometimes Windermere, and generally has the hue of all the coloured photographs that ever were, it hides an amazing series of passionately held, contradictory loyalties.

Over the old town there broods the gloomy majesty of Calvin. Now, Calvin once, and in Geneva, burned for heresy a French Protestant called Servet. This dubious episode in his career is celebrated twice over, once by an inscription in the city itself, which famously declares Calvin's fault to have been that, not of himself, but of his time, and secondly by a statue of his victim.

Is the statue in Geneva itself? Certainly not. It decorates the main square of a little French village just over the frontier, to which the trams run from Geneva every twenty minutes, and it bears on its pedestal an inscription that as the Town Council of Geneva refused it has been put up there instead.

There are more recent horrors behind this bland exterior. It was on the quay where the leisurely steamers start to amble to Lausanne that the Em-

press Elizabeth of Austria was murdered by a man who still languishes in perpetual confinement in a Geneva prison, though the event happened a generation ago.

Underneath the surface placidity of the town dark and adventurous things go on now. While I was there the other day a man called Conradi, who killed a Bolshevik delegate at the Lausanne Conference, but was acquitted of murder, was arrested for threatening people with a revolver at a night club. He was under the influence of cocaine at the time, but it being Geneva, he got off under the First Offenders Act, though if you ride a bicycle (and everybody in Geneva does) and go on the wrong side of one of the musical-comedy-chorus policemen, you will certainly be fined heavily for your fault.

And talking about cocaine, there is something (is there not?) a little comic in the fact that while the League of Nations has a commission which sits at Geneva and is valiantly and fairly successfully dealing with the question of dangerous drugs, the city is a place where cocaine is bought and sold openly under the noses of the public. I have myself heard the proprietor of a café asked for it by a passing customer without any concealment whatever.

Into this curious atmosphere the League Assembly, like an international circus, draws caravans of statesmen, politicians, and their camp followers. They overflow the hotels, bringing dismally with them rising prices and a lowered exchange. All the taxis are commandeered, and rush backwards and forwards with strange flags on their wind screens. And beside the caravans of the delegates there are the hordes of the curious, some with business, some with no business.

**Schweizerische Frachtsätze in internationaler Beleuchtung.**

Wir haben jüngst bei der Besprechung der Finanzlage unserer öffentlichen Verkehrsanstalten darauf hingewiesen, dass es eine der wichtigsten Aufgaben unserer Transportanstalten sei, energisch den Abbau der Frachtsätze zu betreiben. Wie man weiss, ist ein Abbau der Frachten vorgesehen; wie dringlich er ist, geht aus einem Vergleich der schweizerischen Frachten mit den ausländischen hervor. Wir rechnen eine Tabelle, welche in "Wirtschaft und Statistik" erschienen ist, auf schweizerische Verhältnisse um und konstatieren Tatsachen, die zum Aufsehen mahnen. Nimmt man die schweizerischen Frachtsätze für Steinkohle, Stabeisen, landwirtschaftliche Maschinen, Zement, Getreide, Rohhäute und Baumwolle (100 Kg. auf 200 Kilometer berechnet) mit 100 an, so kostete die Fracht für die gleiche Ware in:—

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| 1. Belgien          | 22 |
| 2. Italien          | 29 |
| 3. Frankreich       | 32 |
| 4. Tschechoslowakei | 43 |
| 5. Oesterreich      | 43 |
| 6. Polen            | 48 |
| 7. Ungarn           | 48 |
| 8. Holland          | 48 |
| 9. Deutschland      | 66 |
| 10. Schweden        | 76 |

Diese Zahlen zeigen mit fast erschreckender Deutlichkeit, mit wieviel höheren Transportkosten die schweizerische Wirtschaft gegenüber der ausländischen zu rechnen hat. Belgiens Ansätze betragen wenig mehr als ein Fünftel der schweizerischen, Italien und Frankreich stehen unter einem Drittel, Oesterreich, Tschechoslowakei, Polen, Ungarn und Holland zahlen nicht die Hälfte der schweizerischen Frachten. Man merke wohl, Holland, das mit einer hohen Valuta und im allgemeinen hohen Lebenskosten zu rechnen hat. Die deutschen Frachtsätze betragen zwei Drittel der schweizerischen, und selbst diejenigen Schwedens liegen immer noch 25 Prozent unter den unsrigen. Solche Differenzen müssen natürlich die Wirtschaft in ungünstigem Sinne beeinflussen. Von welcher Dringlichkeit daher die von den Bundesbahnen beabsichtigte Reduktion der Frachten ist, liegt auf der Hand. Die Frage ist nur, ob die kommende Reduktion eine genügende sein werde.

Diese Zahlen sind aber auch noch von einer anderen Seite bemerkenswert. Sie sollten dem Personal der Bundesbahnen doch zeigen, dass die gegenwärtige finanziell günstige Position der Bundesbahnen auf einer unhaltbaren Basis ruht und dass die S. B. B. dringend auf dem Abbau der Kosten bestehen müssen. Auf die Dauer geht es auch nicht, Hoffnungen fiskalischer Art auf die Ertragnisse der eidgen. Verkehrsbetriebe zu hegen, so lange diese um so viel teurer arbeiten, als die ausländischen Konkurrenzbetriebe. Wir halten zwar einen völligen Ausgleich mit dem Ausland für unmöglich und unnötig. Aber die heute bestehenden Unterschiede in den Transporttaxen der wichtigsten Waren erheischen dringlich und beförderlich eine tiefgreifende Aenderung unserer Frachtsätze. (National-Zeitung.)

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**FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.**

Rates in the money market may normally be expected to show a hardening tendency at this season of the year, but at present the tendency is rather the other way. The private discount rate for first-class bank acceptances and trade bills of two to three months vary somewhat between one cent and another, but are in general somewhere between 3½ and 3⅞. The supply is in any case short, and business has frequently been done at the first-named figure or even lower. The "Lombard" rate is 4 to 4½ per cent. Advances against current security remain firm at 5½% to 6%, since the demand is still great and it is difficult to obtain funds for new mortgages, and the money is being obtained by deposit of securities. Call money is offered rather more freely at 3½ to 3%, but no great business is being done.

The 1923-24 report of the Banque pour Entreprises Electriques in Zurich emphasises that the reorganisation of the company has provided a renewed sound basis for development in the future. This is already clear from the dividends which the company is in a position to declare. Seven per cent. is being paid on the "A" and "B" shares, against six per cent. last year. The directors, moreover, look forward to the future with optimism and believe that the period of depression has now passed.

The budget of the Federal Alcohol Monopoly for 1925 foresees revenue of Frs. 11,524,000 coming in, and expenditure of Frs. 6,274,000. The surplus will be divided partly among the various cantons, and partly to provide partial covering for the deficit of Frs. 2,529,000 which was incurred in 1923 and 1924.

The Swiss issue of the German External Loan, which was offered to the public on the 15th inst., has been largely over-subscribed. The total amount of the Swiss portion of the loan was fixed at £3,000,000; of this, half was taken up firm by a group of the principal banks, and the remainder, viz., £1,500,000, was offered to the public. The loan was issued at 92 per cent., bearing interest at the rate of 7 per cent. Bonds are in denominations of 1,000 Swiss francs or of 100, 500 or 1,000 pounds sterling, according to the choice of the subscriber.

**STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.**

| BONDS.                      |     | Oct. 14 | Oct. 21 |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|---------|
| Swiss Confederation 3% 1903 | ... | 73.67%  | 73.25%  |
| Swiss Confederation 5% 1923 | ... | 97.87%  | 98.25%  |
| Federal Railways A—K 3½%    | ... | 76.30%  | 76.22%  |
| Canton Basle-Stadt 5½% 1921 | ... | 100.25% | 100.37% |
| Canton Fribourg 3% 1892     | ... | 67.75%  | 67.67%  |

| SHARES.   |     | Nom. | Oct. 14 | Oct. 21 |
|---|-----|------|---------|---------|
| Swiss Bank Corporation                              | ... | 500  | 642     | 642     |
| Credit Suisse                                       | ... | 500  | 678     | 675     |
| Union de Banques Suisses                            | ... | 500  | 540     | 540     |
| Fabrique Chimique ci-dev. Sandoz                    | ... | 1000 | 3115    | 3015    |
| Société pour l'Industrie Chimique C. F. Bally S. A. | ... | 1000 | 1861    | 1802    |
| Fabrique de Machines Oerlikon                       | ... | 500  | 1105    | 1107    |
| Entreprises Suizer                                  | ... | 1000 | 627     | 632     |
| S.A. Brown Boveri (new)                             | ... | 500  | 289     | 279     |
| Nestlé & Anglo-Swiss Cond. Mk. Co.                  | ... | 200  | 198     | 196     |
| Choc. Suisses Peter-Cailler-Kohler                  | ... | 100  | 145     | 149     |
| Comp. de Navig'n sur le Lac Léman                   | ... | 500  | 480     | 495     |

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