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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

During discussion of the new Swiss Penal Code in the National Council the inclusion of capital punishment was declined by a large majority, the minority mainly consisting of Catholic councillors.

In the municipal elections—Grosse Gemeinderat—at Winterthur which took place during the week-end, the Communists lost one of their two former seats; previous to the elections in 1925 they controlled four mandates. The Socialists maintained their strength and dispose of 27 out of 60 seats in the Council.

The Rev. Heinrich Urner, who for a short time officiated at the Swiss Church (Deutschschweiz, Gemeinde) in London, has been elected Hauptpfarrer at Liestal (Basel-Land) after an animated election campaign.

Two cyclists on the road from Altendorf to Pfäffikon (Schwytz) succeeded in stopping a car driven by a Zurich artist, and after a heated altercation about his omission to dip his headlights, proceeded to maltreat him and his wife with their pocket-knives.

In an endeavour to avoid a collision, a large, closed car dashed through the heavy iron railings along the Limmat quay, near the Urania bridge (Zürich) and turned a somersault into the river. The owner-driver, Director Rud. Häuptli from the Plakat- und Propaganda-Gesellschaft, was subsequently extricated apparently alive but died before he could be removed to the hospital.

In consequence of an explosion in a chemist's shop belonging to Dr. Aisslinger in Zurich, two female attendants lost their lives; the cause of the accident is said to have been the striking of a match by one of the victims close to an oil container.

Alt-Landammann J. K. Lutz, a former National Councillor and distinguished leader in cantonal politics, died suddenly at Lutzenberg (Appenzel A.-Rh.) at the age of 87.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

**Erfolge der Schweizer Uhrenindustrie im Ausland.**—Das Nationale Physikalische Laboratorium in Kew-Teddington (England) veröffentlicht alljährlich einen Bericht über die 50 besten Resultate, welche die Uhren erlangt haben, die ihm während des vorhergehenden Jahres von den Uhrenfabrikanten zur Beobachtung übergeben wurden.

So erfahren wir, dass unsere schweizerischen Fabrikanten im Jahre 1927 wiederum sehr gut klassiert sind. *Erst an 34. Stelle ist die erste ausländische Firma zu finden* (Smith & Son, Ltd., London), während die 33 ersten Plätze schweizerischen Fabrikanten zugefallen sind.

Nachstehend geben wir die 10 besten Resultate bekannt (Maximum 100 Punkte):

1. Fabriques Zenith, Le Locle. Taschenchronometer	45mm	96,2 P.
2. Fabriques Zenith, Le Locle. Deckchronometer	49 ..	96 0 ..
3. Francillon & Co., Fabr. des Longines, St. Imier. Deckchronometer	54 ..	95,7 ..
4. Fabriques Zenith, Le Locle. Taschenchronometer	45 ..	95,6 ..
5. Fabriques Movado, Chaux-de-Fonds. Deckchronometer	50 ..	95,5 ..
6. Louis Brandt & Frère, Fabr. Oméga, Biènné. Deckchronometer	48 ..	95,4 ..
7. Fabriques Zenith, Le Locle. Deckchronometer	65 ..	95,3 ..
8. Fabriques Zenith, Le Locle. Deckchronometer	65 ..	95 0 ..
9. Paul Dittschheim, Fabriques Solvil, Chaux-de-Fonds. Taschenchronom.	45 ..	94,9 ..
10. Louis Brandt & Frère, Fabriques Oméga, Biènné. Deckchronometer	48 ..	94,6 ..

An der Ehrenstelle finden wir die Uhrenfabrik Zenith, wie übrigens auch im Jahre 1926, die —bemerkenswerte Vollkommenheit obgleich — mit einem Taschenchronometer von 45 mm das beste Ergebnis erringen. Zenith, welche fünfmal unter den zehn ersten Resultaten zu finden ist, wird Zweite der Klassierung.

Mit wirklichem Vergnügen stellen wir die Erfolge der Wunderwerke unserer Chronometermacher fest, um so mehr als sie diese Erfolge nicht nur an schweizerischen Sternwarten, sondern auch im Auslande erlangt haben. Derart glänzende Resultate

wie die oben erwähnten, sind bezeichnend und ein bereiter Beweis für die Ueberlegenheit unserer schweizerischen Uhrenindustrie.

—Technische Rundschau.

**Ein Wallenstädter als Admiral.**—Der "Sarg. Volkszeitung" wird geschrieben, dass im Schweizer-amerikanischen Kalender das Bild des unionistischen Admirals Edward Walter Eberle enthalten sei. Die Biographie neben dem Bilde gibt über die Herkunft Eberles folgende Auskunft:

"Edward Walter Eberle wurde geboren am 17. August 1864 zu Denton, Texas, als Sohn des Joseph und der Marie Eberle-Stemmler. Sein Vater, Joseph Eberle, wanderte im Jahre 1847 von seiner Heimat Wallenstadt (Canton St. Gallen) nach Amerika aus, um dort sein Glück zu suchen. Der junge Schweizer zog nach dem Westen und liess sich in Fort Smith nieder (Staat Arkansas), siedelte dann nach Denton (Texas) über, kehrte aber 1865 wieder nach Fort Smith zurück, wo er bis zu seinem Tode 1877 verblieb. Fort Smith ist heute noch der offizielle Wohnsitz der Familie Eberle. Vater Eberle wurde bei Ausbruch des Bürgerkrieges ausgezogen und machte als Offizier den ganzen Feldzug mit. Auch in öffentlichen Aemtern wirkte Vater Eberle mit.—Ober er wohl seinem Sohn nie erzählt hat von den stolzen Churfürsten und dem blauen Wallensee?"

Vater Eberle liess seinem begabten Sohne Edward Walter eine gediegene Bildung zukommen, um denselben in eine Marineakademie in Annapolis zu bringen. Er knüpfte enge Freundschaft mit dem Vorsteher dieser Akademie, Wilbur. Dann kam Aufstieg am Aufstieg, bis Wilson ihn im Jahre 1918 zum Conteradmiral auszog, mit Sitz in Washington. Edward Walter Eberle bekleidete 1921 bis 1923 den höchsten Posten, den die amerikanische Flotte zu verzeichnen hat. Am Ende dieses Jahres will Admiral Eberle sich zurückziehen."

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

### The Stockport Comedy.

With reference to the power generating stations erected by Swiss manufacturers in this country we have already reproduced the reports based on actual experience from the municipal undertakings at York, Newport and Edinburgh; the fourth is at Dublin, whose City Electrical Engineer gives the following account in the *Electrician* (March 2nd):—

"As a friend and admirer of the extremely able and active Director of B.E.A.M.A., I was very grieved at the contents of the brochure "Foreign Plant in British Power Stations."

Desperate diseases sometimes demand and justify desperate remedies, but assuredly the British electrical manufacturing industry is not in such a parlous condition as would provoke the issue of statements so obviously capable of misleading the public. So far as one can judge the industry in question is in a remarkably strong and flourishing condition; in fact, it is one of the few British industries which are prosperous.

Personally I am entirely in favour of giving a reasonable price preference to home manufacturers, and I have always given such a preference to goods made in this country. But there is a very decided difference between giving a reasonable price preference and giving *carte blanche* to any ring of home manufacturers to exploit local or national patriotism.

I have been drawn into this discussion mainly by the fact that Dublin has been set out in the brochure in question as one of the power stations which have in recent times installed steam turbines made in Switzerland. No definite statement has been made to the effect that the Dublin electricity supply undertaking has suffered financially by having installed Swiss turbines instead of British machines, but the obvious inference in the pamphlet is that *all* the purchasers of Swiss turbines have incurred substantial loss by reason of high steam consumption.

Figures have been set out for Newport (Mon.), Edinburgh and York, purporting to give the losses sustained by those undertakings as a result of the use of Swiss steam turbines. These figures have been made out in such a manner that they are not worthy of serious comment. One can only express astonishment at the fact that any responsible organisation should publish anything of the kind. No doubt the engineers of the three undertakings mentioned will deal effectively with the figures in question.

So far as Dublin is concerned, all I can say is that the Swiss turbine steam consumption

figures have invariably been better than the British, that the guaranteed figures have always been improved upon in practice, and that the capital cost has given substantial advantage to the purchaser. In the case of the last steam turbine purchased by Dublin from a Swiss firm, the steam consumption figures were better than the best British figures, and the price of the turbo-alternator was 43 per cent. lower than the lowest British tender.

It is suggested in this pamphlet that British manufacturers cannot compete against those of Switzerland unless British wages and the whole British standard of living be reduced. Some little time ago I took the trouble to investigate the wages position as between Switzerland and Great Britain, and I found that the hourly rate paid to unskilled labour in Switzerland was considerably higher, and the rate to skilled labour slightly lower than in Great Britain, the average being rather higher in Switzerland. Any inability to compete with Switzerland cannot, therefore, be attributed to wages. I have had considerable experience of labour and other conditions in Switzerland, and I can say definitely that labour there is distinctly happier than in Great Britain. The social conditions in Switzerland might well be taken as a model for all industrial countries.

It might repay investigation to discover how it comes that Switzerland, who has to import all her raw material and pay the same wages, can compete successfully with British manufacturers in their own market.

It might well be asked why the B.E.A.M.A. thinks it worth while to attack a few Swiss manufacturers who supply only a negligible fraction of the British market. The reason is not far to seek. Although the Swiss steam turbines purchased by British electricity undertakings form such a small percentage of the whole, their prices form a useful criterion of the prices put forward by the British firms. If those few Swiss firms could be eliminated, the home manufacturers could dictate terms to the purchaser. The day when this objective is attained will be a bad day, not only for the British purchaser, but also for the British manufacturer. An industry which can dictate terms to the public will have no incentive to render itself more efficient—it will simply make the public pay for inefficiency.

The B.E.A.M.A. can scarcely have hoped that their statements would go without contradiction. The good sense of the average purchaser may still be relied upon, and supply engineers and undertakings will not be intimidated by such tactics."

In spite of these refutations and contradictions from the only parties that can speak on the basis of actual and prolonged experience, the B.E.A.M.A. continues to issue to the English Press statements that are evidently meant to mislead public opinion; there are several other tenders in the market, notably one of £250,000 for Leeds, which at all costs must not go abroad. We quite admit and appreciate the argument that from an economic point of view the placing of such orders abroad is far more detrimental to a satisfactory solution of the unemployment problem in this country than the apparent difference in price could compensate and we also recognise that it is most desirable to influence the authorities concerned with this postulate; what we cannot understand is the expedient of introducing controversial and wholly erroneous arguments, and thus weakening an otherwise strong case. It is also unfortunate that this patriotic and economic truth is advanced by the manufacturers, and that the official spokesmen of English Labour, which should in the first instance benefit, are not at all inclined to subscribe to it, ascribing to the manufacturers a desire to unduly exploit the patriotism of local councils. A very unconvincing and misleading explanation has been sent by Mr. Hugh Quigley, one of the officials of the B.E.A.M.A., to the *Manchester Guardian*, in which our great contemporary is accused of "distorting facts to fit in with prejudices." The long document is published in its issue of March 2nd and suitably dealt with; it contains one or two novel insinuations which will interest our readers. Mr. Quigley asserts that "a special delegation from the Stockport Electricity Committee went at the invitation of the Swiss firm to inspect several stations and for a little over a week was under the constant influence of Swiss propaganda." From this we would have concluded that the party had a ripping time in Switzerland, but this is what one of the Stockport Councillors states in the *Manchester Guardian* (March 3rd):—