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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

The Swiss Minister and Mme. Paravicini have returned to London from Switzerland.

MR. HAAB'S RESIGNATION.

Mr. Haab, President of the Confederation, has informed his colleagues and political friends of his decision to hand in his resignation as Federal Councillor at the end of the year 1929. This news will be received with regret, as Mr. Haab is one of our most distinguished and learned magistrates. He was especially qualified to manage the Post Office department and the Swiss Federal Railways, having previously been at the head of the latter. On the other hand, his sojourn as Swiss Minister in Berlin had given him a very clear insight into international politics.

ZURICH.

The painters' union under communistic guidance, have broken the wages agreement and declared a strike.

The union of the Zurich tramway employees claims a revision of their wages, which were reduced in 1923, the increase asked for being about Frs. 56. per month. Although Dr. Klöti, President of Zurich's Town Council (Socialists in majority) personally addressed the meeting, he did not achieve any result. Indeed, he was apparently told that the "Trämaler" are now harder worked than under the former conservative authority.

BERN.

Dr. Rudolf Mürger, a well-known painter and etcher, died in Bern, aged 67 years. *St.G.T.*

A 70 years old member of the Cantonal Government, Mr. Zingg, has proposed in all seriousness, that aeroplanes should be constructed to carry water with which to spray the country in periods of drought. The St. Galler Tagblatt remarks, that age has evidently not dried up Mr. Zingg's youthful imagination.

LUZERN.

The Conservative Party has settled internal differences and proposes Councillor Albert Züst as candidate for the Federal State Councillor's seat held by the late Mr. Winger. *N.Z.Z.*

SCHWYZ

The Commission appointed a year ago to study the terms of a proposed Income Tax Law has examined the general outlines laid down by the Cantonal Exchequer. It appears very probable, that the citizens will soon have the "pleasure" of dipping deeply into their pockets.

The Federal Railways need 9 square metres of land belonging to Lachen for an alteration to their track. Lachen originally acquired that land at a cost of Frs. 10. per square metre. The Federal Railways consider this price far too high and offer Frs. 4. As no settlement could be reached, this matter has had to go to the Federal Court of Justice; so that, for the grand total of Frs. 54, the Federal Court must travel to Lachen to inspect the ground. As the newspaper adds, this unfortunately is not a bad joke, but the bitter truth. *N.Z.Z.*

GLARUS.

It is suggested, that the Freuler Palace in Glarus be made the home of a cantonal museum. A beginning has already been made, as part of the building is used to house the collections belonging to the historical society. *St.G.T.*

ST. GALLEN.

A queer case of kidnapping occurred at Rapperswil, where a motorist offered a ride to two 12 year old girls. As soon as the children were in the car, the man drove away at full speed. One of the girls, becoming alarmed, threw herself out of the car during a momentary slackening of speed and raised a hue and cry. The motorist, Karl Bosshard, garage proprietor in Chur and formerly dancing master in Zurich, was arrested at Rüthi the following day, with the girl in his company. The poor child was so dazed, that she has so far been unable to give a coherent

report of what happened. Bosshard says, that he intended to exact a ransom, being in financial difficulties; but he is suspected of white slave traffic. *N.Z.Z.*

APPENZELL.

Some years ago, a dwelling next door to the school at Meistersrüti was completely burned out, because the fire brigade could not attempt any salvage owing to the absence of water. A few days ago, a house on the other side of the school burned down. Again the fire brigade was helpless, as there was still no water. Yet, the Federal Council has just granted a State subsidy to provide Alp Siegel (Schwendi) with water mains. *St.G.T.*

THURGAU.

Lenz-Rossi, Chairman of the bankrupt Meteor A.G. at Bischofszell has been found guilty of negligent bankruptcy and has been sentenced to 1½ years imprisonment. *N.Z.Z.*

FREE ZONES.

The Federal Council has nominated as negotiators for Switzerland for the conversations which have to take place shortly regarding this question, Professor Eugène Borel and Mr. Walther Stucki, head of the commercial division of the Federal department of Political Economy.

Switzerland's adhesion to the International Relief Convention has been approved by the Council of States.

The Prince and Princess of Liechtenstein paid an official visit to the Swiss Government in Bern where their Highnesses were the guests of the President of the Swiss Confederation at luncheon. This is the first official visit of a Sovereign of Liechtenstein since the economic union of the Principality with Switzerland was effected in 1926.

LEAGUE WIRELESS STATION.

The station which is to serve the League is already in being, near Nyon, on Lake Geneva. It has been finished so far as the buildings are concerned, within the last few days, and has in operation a transmitter of European range and of the most modern technical character. Two short-wave transmitters, capable of transmitting to remote parts of the world, are to be added at the earliest possible moment. The station is the property of Radio-Suisse, in which the Swiss Government has a large financial interest, but it is to be handed over to the League for operation by an international *personnel* in times of crisis. It is believed that by the end of this year the League will obtain independence of communication without the heavy initial and running expenses of a station that would be entirely its own property.

AN INTERNATIONAL BUS SERVICE.

A bus service has been inaugurated between Switzerland and South Germany. This line, which runs from Schaffhausen to Donaushingen, is to be under the joint control of the Swiss and German postal authorities. The service in question links up with the railway which traverses the Black Forest.

FIRE DESTROYS VILLAGE.

The village of Valais-en-Lourtier, in the Val de Bagnes, between Martigny and the frontier, was completely wiped out by fire.

The work of the fire brigades was rendered very difficult by the lack of water.

A FAMOUS GUIDE.

Few people who visit the Mont Blanc district and are interested in mountaineering failed to know Anatole Couttet, who has been accidentally shot at Chamonix.

Couttet was one of a hardy race of guides, and was, perhaps the most famous guide in Switzerland. A man of fine physical appearance—as, one understands, were all his forbears, who were of the same profession—he was noted for his courage and for his extreme piety, sometimes astonishing less religious English visitors by dropping down on his knees in prayer during an expedition.

Like so many of his fellow-countrymen, he was a skilled wood carver.

SCOUTS CLIMBING THE ALPS.

Scouts from all parts of the world are now assembled at the International Scout Chalet at Kandersteg, Switzerland, for the final gathering of the long string of festivities which began with the great Jamboree.

For a week the boys will remain among the scenery of the Bernese Oberland, climbing, walking, and carrying out troop tactics among the Alpine peaks.

M. PADEREWSKI ILL IN MORGES.

M. Paderewski, who was spending the summer at his villa near Morges, on the Lake of Geneva, was taken ill on Saturday night with an attack of appendicitis. He was removed to the nursing home of Dr. Roux, in Lausanne, and underwent an operation. His condition was reported to be satisfactory. M. Paderewski was to have started in a few days for Paris and America, where he was to have given a series of concerts.

FILM STARS IN SWITZERLAND.

Doug. and Mary have been touring Switzerland recently, and they have left Gwen Pickford in one of the more famous Lausanne boarding schools. Thence they have gone to Como, and soon will be back via Paris in London, and thence on to Japan and China, where they will remain until the spring.

At Lausanne they stayed in the same hotel as Mr. Lloyd George.

SWISS BOY CYCLES TO LONDON.

Stefan Hort, a young Swiss, cycled into London after starting from Zurich seven days earlier covering 600 miles during that time.

He was delighted with the last lap of the journey for he found to his amazement that the English roads were incomparably better than the German, Dutch, or Belgian roads.

NESTLE'S EXPANSION PROGRAMME.

The expansion of Nestlé's has taken a further important step by the acquisition to the Konzern Nestlé of the majority of the shares in the Sarotti of Berlin. This puts Nestlé's in the front of the large European industrial combines and in its special branch, the firm can be considered as the most important in existence.

MOUNTAIN ACCIDENT.

Mis Margareth Bäschlin, of Winterthur, 33 years of age, who was climbing in the Loetschental, fell and was killed.

FROM THE TICINO.

A recent issue of the "Adula" reprints, under the title of "Forgotten Ticinesi," the following extract from the book "Excursions in the Canton Ticino," by Luigi Lavizzarri, published by Veladini & Co., of Lugano in 1863:—

"At 'Alabardia,' a homestead of the little village of Piazzogna (Lake of Locarno), was born Francesco Meschini, engineer and architect, who studied art in Paris and Milan. Meschini was well liked by Piermarini and Albertolli,—he built the hospital of Mantova and a number of forts around that city,—received the gold medal of the Academy of Arts of Parma for specially commendable work,—built the bridge of Ascona on the Maggia and the fine road which crosses the St. Gotthard. By order of the Government of Basle he planned the road which, by way of the Hauenstein, leads to Olten and to Lucerne, and built also the new Devil's Bridge, on the Reuss, above Goeschenen. At the time of the Helvetic Republic, Francesco Meschini was allotted very important tasks by the Central Government which he carried out, along with other works, in a most satisfactory way.

"It should be mentioned that Napoleon I., commissioned young engineer Meschini to build a floating bridge over the Po, in Italy, for the passage of the French armies, and he acquitted himself so well that he was highly praised by the Emperor.

The following is a translation of the epitaph to him, in the tomb of the Meschini family in the cemetery of San Nazzaro (Lake of Locarno):

To Francesco Meschini, 1762-1840, who applied his architectural genius both in his own country and abroad and who, as first magistrate (Landamman), guided for many years the destinies of the Republic of the Ticino with rare political foresight, and built with fine technical sense the magnificent road of the St. Gotthard, fount of prosperity for the Canton.

The vicissitudes of voluble fortune he bore with noble resignation.

This token of affection was laid by his sorrowing relatives.

Tears and peace be upon his ashes and may his soul enjoy eternally the fullness of God.

It may be mentioned that the family Meschini, well known to the Swiss colony in London, are the only surviving relatives bearing his name, and Francesco Meschini would be great-grand-uncle of our compatriot Mr. Arturo Meschini.