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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

DEATH OF FEDERAL COUNCILLOR KARL SCHEURER.

M. Karl Scheurer, who was to have been President of the Confederation for 1930, died at the age of 57. His death will cause a second vacancy in the Cabinet, as Federal Councillor Haab, the present President will retire from political life at the end of the year.

M. Scheurer, like other members of the Federal Council, was originally a lawyer by profession. In performing his military service he attained the rank of Colonel of Artillery. He was in charge of the Military Department, and during his term of office carried out many important reforms in the organisation of the Army, including the introduction of machine-gun companies in the infantry.

M. Scheurer was a native of the canton of Berne, and had all the Bernese characteristics of devotion to duty. He had already in 1923 occupied the position of President of the Confederation.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A tramcar and trailer of the Fluntern route, coming down Gloriastrasse at a tremendous rate, jumped the rails at the turning opposite the Physikgebäude and ran into a wall. The front car was reduced to splinters, but the trailer was scarcely damaged. The conductor in the first car had the presence of mind to shepherd his 10 passengers to the rear, as soon as he realized that an accident was inevitable, and all of them escaped with bruises and cuts. Dead leaves blown by wind and rain on the rails prevented the brakes from getting a grip and thus caused the accident.

BERN.

A serious accident at the construction of the power station at Oberhasli has cost three lives. Workmen were engaged in covering-in concrete at the Grimsel-dam prior to the annual stoppage of work during winter, when part of the scaffolding collapsed. Some of the men were crushed, others were flung into the deep. Apart from the three killed, three were seriously and five slightly injured.

Burglars have visited the Fischermattli railway station at Bern and rifled the safe. Their booty amounts to over 2,000 Frs. An attempt on the adjoining mustard factory was unsuccessful.

Miss Marie Schumann, aged 88, eldest daughter of the famous composer, died recently at her home at Interlaken, Switzerland.

LUZERN.

The cantonal budget for 1930 foresees a reduction of 1/10th unit of the State Tax. The total reduction of this tax since 1924, the year in which the present Act came into force, amounts to one-fifth. The poor tax is to be increased by 1/20th, which increase will be used to succour communities with the heaviest poor charges.

GLARUS.

This canton makes enormous efforts to maintain its industries. Collective measures have become necessary, as some of the industries seem to have passed high water mark and show signs of stagnation and even retrogression. Intensive endeavours to attract tourists and to introduce new industries are the means by which matters are to be improved. The finance commission of the canton—and neighbouring cantons admire the exemplary way in which Glarus finances are safeguarded—stresses the need for care and wisdom in expenditure. Their report further states that the chief industry, textiles, which employs about 3/4 of the available labour, suffers from a chronic crisis, and a decline can scarcely be prevented. Domestic production of cheap cotton and other goods in the near and far

East, competition by artificial silk, the reduction of clothing worn owing to present fashions, high cost of living and labour, and stiff foreign tariffs are quoted as causes of the crisis. Exports, in spite of big quantities, are not on a remunerative basis, and any further increase of the cost of living, with consequent additional cost of labour, would inflict inestimable harm. Therefore: be careful and economize is more than ever to be the guiding maxim.

AARGAU.

The cork-works at Dürrenäsch have been lost by fire. The brigades of the neighbouring villages rendered good help, but all were hampered by dense volumes of smoke.

The home of farmer Hottinger at Zuzgen was totally destroyed by fire. Arson is suspected, and the inhabitants of the village are greatly perturbed, as this is the third fire within three weeks.

BALE.

The "National-Zeitung" is proudly recalling to its readers that Editor Richard Amstein can now look back on 25 years service, and gratefully acknowledge its indebtedness to a considerate and highly appreciated collaborator. Amstein excels in forecasting and judging the trend of political events.

For the second time since the start of its post-war activities, the association for the reunion of both Bales meets in general meeting. The committees appointed at the 1927 meeting have practically completed their preparatory work, and a draft constitution for the united canton Bale will be submitted. Dr. Max Vischer will be in charge of this item on the agenda.

A motor car caught fire between Augst and Rheinfelden. The chauffeur, careless of his own safety, remained on his seat surrounded by flames, until he managed to stop the car with the foot-brake. The car ran on for 100 meters before coming to a standstill, and yet the chauffeur miraculously escaped injury.

APPENZEL.

Fire broke out in the grocery store belonging to widow Dobler-Mausser at Meistersrüti. The flames were nourished by considerable stocks of petrol and fat. The fire brigades from Meistersrüti, Appenzel, Rütli and Gais had a hard task before they could save neighbouring houses, particularly as water was scarce and had to be carried a distance of 200 m. The first arrivals found a broken window, so that a criminal origin of the fire is suspected.

GRAUBÜNDEN.

The proposal of a railway line from St. Moritz to Maloja has obtained the required financial backing; estimates and plans are being prepared.

Book early for Engadine & Oberland Express.

People who are thinking of going to Switzerland this winter had better be quick about booking their seats in the Engadine and Oberland expresses. The first trains run from December 17, and are already fully booked up until December 23, while the lists for the duplicates are already half full.

One whole coach of the Engadine express is taken up by the joint parties of two well-known men, one of whom is Sir Henri Deterding. The Engadine express serves the St. Moritz area, while the Oberland takes one to the neighbourhood of Wengen, Mürren, and Grindelwald.

Usually the family parties go out before Christmas—as soon as the schools break up—while the more expert skiers delay their departure until the first week in January.

NOTA BENE!

On December 14th, another Special Issue of the *Swiss Observer* will be broadcast so as to reach the whole Swiss Colony in Great Britain. This will be a unique opportunity for advertisers to secure the Christmas trade. Please communicate in good time if you wish to secure space, which can be booked at the ordinary rates for serial advertisements.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Winter Sports:

The sun may be shining beautifully again by the time my Readers will be enjoying the *Swiss Observer's* next issue and we may, by then, have forgotten the frightfully depressing Friday, 15th November, when the City and most of the Country were shrouded in evil smelling fog and life was anything but pleasant for those who had to venture out and brave the elements. And on that day it fell to my lot to go through the week's Press-Cuttings and a most tantalising experience it proved to be. For, I never met such a wealth of beautifully illustrated articles appearing in one single week in the British Press and all about Swiss Winter Sports. I think all the famous Swiss Resorts were represented. You might, perhaps, envy me, thinking that going through all these cuttings, looking at all these beautiful pictures, ought to have brought some vicarious sunshine into my office too! I repeat, however, that my feelings were more akin to those experienced by the late, unfortunate Mr. Tantalus and that I thought it very cruel of Fate to tease me with such unattainable vistas. I have decided to write and reproduce as little as possible about Winter-Sports this Season, but I cannot refrain from putting before you the following from *Piccadilly* 9th Nov., so that you too may feel that tugging at the heart-strings, that longing and fierce yearning to be off and away to a better climate:

TRAVEL SONG.

Sing a song of Winter Sports,
Of sunshine and snow;
This is the jolly day
We start our holiday;
Off we go.
Victoria's
A glorious
Spot to start from;
You know where the place is;
Bring the bags and cases
To the platform we depart from.
The Southern Railway
—That sterling never-fail way—
Runs us swiftly, smoothly down to Dover;
Its comfortable boat
—We'll scarce know we're afloat—
Will see the Channel-crossing quickly over.
Right from Calais quay
In a fast train marked Pareae,
The Railway Nord will hurry us along;
The Golden Arrow
O'er its speed narrow
Flies true and straight like the arrow in the
song;
The Railway Est
Takes up the task with zest
And whirls us on our way with flying wheel.
Our couch at night will be
A well-appointed wagon-lit;
As cosy in bed at home we'll feel.
By smiling vale and lake
Our onward way we'll take;
Swiss Federal now our destiny is tending;
From the level lowlands
To the sunny snow-lands
The mountain train its upward way is wend-
ing;
"Round and round again,"
Says this puffing, sturdy train,
"The mountain may be steep,
But I'll try with might and main.
I shan't stop
'Till I get to the top;
That's my way," says the mountain train.
"Oh, I'm not particular,"
Says the Funicular,
"If I go perpendicular,
It's all the same to me."
So the mountain train goes snorting,
Our skates and skis escorting.
To take us Winter Sporting
Oh happy, happy we!
Then sing a song of Winter Sports.

Votes for Women:

I said a few things about the "Votes for Women" campaign in Switzerland in last week's issue. Meanwhile the question has naturally aroused deep interest in many quarters in England and Mr. John Striving in the *Sunday News*, 10th inst., thinks that the Swiss men's apathy or even antipathy on this question is a proof that "Democracy does not lose its head!" Writes he:
Yet Switzerland, whose laws are framed

not by Cabinets or ambitious politicians who forge cheques on the Bank of Confidence, but by the electors themselves who say to a Ministry: "There is your programme; get on with it," does not like woman suffrage and will not have it.

To those of us who believe in woman suffrage or have wearied of opposing it, this decision comes as something of a shock. The Swiss, whose love of liberty is something of which the rest of Europe knows little, actually turned on women canvassers who waged the battle of equal rights on doorsteps.

Apart from the pros and cons of the particular issue, there is a great lesson for all reformers and even revolutionists in this exhibition of apparent intolerance.

It is this: The community which has longest enjoyed real freedom is the least likely to abuse it by panic legislation. True democracy, which means giving the fullest liberty to a people to act as it thinks fit, as distinct from the liberty to act as you or I think it fit for it to act, is the greatest bulwark against ill-considered legislation and, what is worse, government by politicians.

I confess, the last paragraph merits reading and re-reading. And, having read it several times and tried to think it out, I am not sure even now, whether Mr. Striving is right. Quite apart from the fact that some of his ideas on Swiss Government are not quite in accordance with what I believe to be facts.

Children and Cinemas:

Birmingham Post, 9th Nov.

The municipal authorities of St. Gall have just taken a step with regard to children and the "movies" which I think all right-minded people will approve of. Owing to the recent increase in juvenile crime and lawlessness, they have passed a law which prohibits boys and girls under 16 years of age from attending cinemas, even with their parents. Suitable pictures will, however, be shown at private cinemas for children only, at very low prices, as they feel this will be better for them than the sensational and sickly sentimental stuff which is usually shown. And when passing a cinema recently in one of the cheaper parts of the town I saw the number of quite young children waiting outside, as well as the lurid fare offered them inside—which was to be judged from the titles of the films and the posters—I felt that it was quite time our City Fathers—and mothers in particular—took the matter in hand.

In the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 1st Nov., I find the following, very interesting article:

Four Hundred years ago: 1529

The year 1529 is one of the most interesting years in the history of Europe. If humanity was not on the march, it was, at least, girding itself; if the times were not pentecostal, there were windows in heaven, and the reformation of faith long visionary was becoming a reality.

Suleiman the magnificent besieged Vienna that year, and, with the support of France, seemed likely to overthrow the mediæval Empire, but there were greater things for Europe to reckon with than the advance of Islam along the Danube. Suleiman might harry the Hapsburg lands, but Luther and the Swiss were, in their own spheres, breaking up the unity of the Papal empire; and the spirit of Zurich and Wittenberg is not yet a spent force, while the dominions of the Turk in the West have faded to a shadow.

The Imperial Diet met in February, at Speyer, and its Romanist majority of electors urged the strict enforcement of the Edict of Worms against Lutheranism. Thirteen days later a protest against this was laid before the Emperor on behalf of the princes of Saxony, Hesse, Brandenburg, and the representatives of fourteen of the imperial free cities. From this act the name Protestant was given to the dissenting leaders; so the year 1529 is the birth year of non-Papal Churches in the West, considered apart from their national claims to continuity and autonomy.

In this year, too, Luther took a definite step towards the fulfilment of the vision of Erasmus of the days when the husband-man at the plough and the weaver at his shuttle would have the words of the Gospel on their lips and in their hearts. He had returned in December, 1528, from the visitation of the Saxon churches, and his heart was sore at the degradation of the people and their spiritual ignorance, so he prepared, and published in German, his *Longer and Shorter Catechisms* as popular manuals of Scriptural truth.

In Switzerland this year saw Erasmus packing his books for a retreat from Basel before the rising tide of reformation. He had lived there eight years, and now found the spirit of the city too intense for his delicate and unheroic constitution; so he retired to Freiburg, and Basel adopted the Reformation. The

humanist, however, complained that Freiburg was damp, and soon returned to Basel, where he died in 1536.

Efforts were made to check the spread of the Swiss Reformation that year. The Forest cantons joined in league with their old enemy, the house of Hapsburg, to maintain Romanism, but after the first Peace of Cappel they consented to allow liberty of conscience in their territories.

Zwingli, the leader of the Zurich reformers, now aimed at a union of German and Swiss Protestants, and 1529 saw the famous Colloquy of Marburg, when he and Luther met. All his efforts failed before Luther's obstinacy over the phrase he chalked on the Council-table, *Hoc est corpus meum*. The Saxon could not say what that perplexing phrase meant, but held that faith in it was the only issue. In vain the Swiss declared that there were no men in the whole world he would rather unite with than the men of Wittenburg; Luther only answered, "You have another spirit than we." Our own formularies range us with Zwingli against Luther; but in 1529 Cranmer was busy collecting a symposium of opinions of the European Universities on the validity of Henry VIII's marriage, and the genuine reformation of the English Church had scarcely begun twenty years later. Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper, as published in 1531, seems to be practically that of Article XXVIII.

Calvin, who a year later was consulted by the University of Orleans on Henry's marriage, was, in 1529, just twenty, and was studying Greek and Law at Bourges. Reformation ideas had spread in that town, and no doubt the principles upon which the "Institutes" are founded were then being formed in his mind.

All this does not exhaust the significance of 1529, for just then Geneva freed itself from the practical dominance of the Duke of Savoy, and so gained the necessary liberty to become, as time went on, what Knox called "the most perfect school of Christ since the days of the Apostles." In this year, too, a young Westphalian clergyman, Bernhard Rothmann, began to preach the Gospel to the artizans and workers of Münster. Thus began the Christian communism of the Anabaptists, which ended in the tragic siege of the city and the subsequent slaughter.

In the Netherlands the determined campaign against Lutheran ideas began with sentence of death upon all who possessed Protestant books, and, as years passed, the persecution grew more intense until, in 1573, the Duke of Alva left a land which for six years he had deluged in blood.

On the other side of the picture this year saw the settlement at the College Ste. Barbe, in Paris, of a war-worn Spaniard, aged thirty-six, Ignatius Loyola. The previous year he had attended the College Montaigu, and there may have known his young contemporary, Calvin. The one may have talked of his experiences before Pampeluna and shewed the manuscript of the "Spiritual Exercises." The other may have spoken judiciously of the new movements in Germany. We shall never know.

A whole literary tragedy lies on those concluding words "we shall never know," for what could have been more interesting than a conversation between those two great men, both of whom affected the Church so deeply and so differently.

WINTER SEASON IN SWITZERLAND 1929-30.

The Pamphlet "Winter-Season in Switzerland 1929/30" published every year by the Swiss National Tourist Office in English, French and German has just appeared for the season 1929/30. It gives, in its 28 pages, the list of sports and social events in the Swiss Winter-resorts and towns, a list which, without doubt will rouse the interest of all sportsmen planning a Winter holiday on sunny heights. Also all those who are in quest of pleasure ought to consult this booklet, as it gives a full choice of social entertainments, Balls, Theatrical performances, Carnivals on Ice, Gymkhanas, etc. It also contains full information about Direct Train Service between England and Switzerland, about Passports, Customs, Fares, etc. The booklet is supplied free of charge by the Swiss Federal Railways, 11c, Regent Street, S.W.1.

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Erfreuen Sie mich durch Ihren werten Besuch, ich werde dafür sorgen, dass Sie wiederkommen!

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