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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

THE SPYING AFFAIR.

The Federal Government has received the first report of the Ticinese Police on the spying activities on behalf of Italy which were discovered some weeks ago. The Italian agent *Emilio Bottiglia* has been deported as an undesirable alien. Domiciled in Milano, he regularly used to come to Switzerland to collect large consignments of the "Becco Giallo," an anti-Fascist humorous journal published in France. What was done with these papers is not clear and is no concern of the Swiss Government. They might have been used to trap anti-Fascists in Italy or possibly they were simply destroyed at the expense of the publishers who apparently were never paid for them. As the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* states, Bottiglia never seems to have had any connection with the spying affair proper.

The latter is still being unravelled. In the Ticino five persons are under arrest, but a whole network of spying activities seems to spread over other parts of Switzerland. In St. Gall it has been established that the Italian Consulate is the centre of such activities which consisted mainly in denouncing anti-Fascists to the interested quarters. Both Italian and Swiss nationals are involved in the matter. Also in Lausanne traces of the spying organisation have been located. The question whether criminal proceedings under Federal laws regarding political crimes may be investigated is still being considered. The Political Department at Berne is considering the diplomatic steps that might be required in this connection.

THE FEDERAL PENAL CODE.

The draft-bill for the unification of the criminal law in Switzerland, which up to the present is a Cantonal prerogative, has been finally accepted by the National Council after three years of deliberation. Exactly half the members of the Council (99) voted for the bill and only five members against it. The Catholic-Conservative fraction refrained from voting as in its midst there seems to be an even balance between opponents of the bill and undecided members. In Schwyz and Valais new Cantonal penal codes have been drafted in opposition to the Federal code and in the Vaud there is also a very strongly antagonistic attitude to the Federal bill. A long struggle for the new code will yet have to be fought out in the States Council and later on in the country as a whole preparatory to the popular vote which will probably be demanded. It is to be feared that the States Council will also require several years for dealing with the bill so that it is unlikely to reach the statute book before 1933 or 1934.

THE NEW MILITARY AEROPLANES.

The States Council has unanimously and without formal discussion agreed to the grant of 20 million francs for the purchase of new military aeroplanes. In the National Council matters will not proceed so smoothly as the Socialists are opposing the grant.

AN ORIENTAL FILM BY A SWISS.

The *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* reports that a film entitled "The Wonders of Asia" which is entirely the work of our compatriot *Martin Hürlimann* has had a tremendous success when shown in Berlin. Without any of the cheap sensational elaboration so well known in connection with many travel films Hürlimann, who is an experienced traveller, has with the best of taste combined in his film a number of shots taken on a journey from Tripoli to Damascus, through the Syrian desert to Baghdad, Babylon, Ktesiphon, via the Khyber pass from Afghanistan to India and Ceylon, Siam and China. He succeeded to give a highly personal, yet sober and absolutely truthful account of life in the Orient as it presents itself to the Western visitor. We hope that we may before long have an opportunity to view the film also in London.

A SWISS ENGINEER HONOURED IN GREECE.

As the *Bund* reports our compatriot Engineer *Fahrni* who has been living in Greece for the last twenty years, has been awarded the First State

Prize of the Athenian Academy of Science for the best solution of the problem of utilising the Greek brown coal which was the subject of a public competition initiated by the Greek Government. The plant and machinery for Fahrni's system of treating the brown coal hitherto not commercially usable have been erected by the von Roll'schen Works in Switzerland. Fahrni received his prize at a meeting of Government representatives and Academicians amidst loud ovations.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The F.C. Zurich has petitioned the Town Authorities for a loan of 50,000 Frs. and a donation of about 20,000 Frs. This Club has football, athletics, rowing and hockey sections. The membership numbers 446 active and 483 passive members. The Club's ground is rented from the town and has been laid out at very considerable expense. This compelled heavy financial sacrifices on the part of members and friends, as well as the raising of a mortgage. The liabilities still amount to 170,000 Frs. and have to be liquidated by August 31st 1943, when their ground lease ends. The activities of the F.C. Zurich are not only a great boon to young manhood; they also attract numerous visitors to their fixtures, a business asset to the town. The Town Council realizes all this, as well as the need to further the health-giving aims of sport, and recommends the acceptance of the petition. The loan, so the Town Council proposes should be for a period of 45 years at 4½ per cent. interest, the first five years to be free of interest.

The Zurich police has created a flying squad, consisting of three groups of five men each: a N.C.O. as leader, a detective, a constable, a photographer and a draughtsman. These groups will be available at short notice at any time of day or night. The increasing traffic in the town has also necessitated other re-arrangements, in order to create a body of specially trained traffic controllers.

A ferry is proposed between Horgen and Meilen. The plan is due to private initiative and has been submitted to the Authorities complete with technical and financial calculations. The two Communal Councils have formed a committee to study this matter.

Professor Niklaus Michel, from Mengistorf (Bern), died in Winterthur after a long and painful illness. He contracted blood-poisoning, and a few weeks ago he had a leg amputated in a desperate effort to save him. Elected to the position in 1876, he was for 46 years Gymnastics and Cadet Instructor of the Winterthur Town schools. In his younger days he was a famous gymnast; he was also well-known and respected as a member of juries at Federal and Cantonal competitions.

BERNE.

Colonel Hubert Scheuchzer, Federal Official and Chief Officer of the Bern Fire Brigade, died at Bern aged 76.

LUCERNE.

A terrible tragedy occurred at the Sentimattstrasse in Luzern. A mechanic, who lost his wife some time ago and has also been out of work for the last two months, seems suddenly to have become insane. He badly wounded his two daughters, aged 16 and 18 years, with revolver bullets and then jumped out of a third floor window. One of the daughters is on the danger list. The man fell on to some flower-beds and seems only bruised.

GLARUS.

The Glarner Landsgemeinde has been fixed for May 4th. Two of the proposals to be dealt with concern the introduction of dental service at the schools and some relief in taxation matters.

BASLE.

The strike at Affolter, Christen & Cie., Ltd., has been settled, and work was resumed on Monday.

A few young men at Allschwyl celebrated carnival in too thorough manner, so that they could not longer be termed sober, when they went home on Tuesday morning. One of them still felt adventurous enough to climb the paling surrounding the Allschwyl pond; he finally landed in the icy water. Although the water's depth was only

one metre, he yelled for help to the utmost of his lungs' power. His comrades pulled him out. Dripping wet, but sobered, he went home.

GRAUBUENDEN.

The Cantonal Finances, owing to heavy expenditure on the upkeep of roads, show a deficit for 1929 of 4,711,000 Frs., which, according to the Cantonal Constitution, must be covered by taxation. However, the outlook in matters touristic is so bright, that even this deficit can be covered and yet allow a very small reduction of the rate of taxation.

Council-President J. Huonder (Conservative) was elected Federal State Councillor in succession to the late Dr. F. Brügger. He obtained 9,223 votes; the number needed for a majority was 7,000. The Liberal Party had decreed a free vote in recognition of the rights of the Conservative claim. Democrats and Socialists proposed abstention. Unofficially a second candidate, Dr. Dedual (Conservative), was put into the field; he obtained 4,321 votes. Polling was feeble.

In view of the recent controversy regarding the foreign-made Bernina film, it is interesting to know, that a new film of the Bernina and Palù is being made. The aim is to portray the beauties of the landscape and the suitability for winter sports. This time the majority of the actors are Swiss guides and sportsmen.

APPENZEL.

Unreasonable jealousy has claimed a victim at Teufen. Two girl friends, factory hands, had been to St. Gall and walked up the incline towards Teufen. At the Blockhütte they sat down to rest; the girl Frischknecht sat on the ground, and her companion was lying by her side. The latter fell asleep, but woke up on feeling a twinge of pain in her head. To her consternation, she could not see; at the same time she heard pistol reports. It appears that the girl Frischknecht was, for some reason, jealous of her friend and decided to kill the two of them. She achieved her wish in her own case; the other girl's optical nerve was severed by the bullet.

THURGAU.

A few young men, who wore masks, penetrated into the bedroom of Mr. & Mrs. Oberhänsli, cattle dealer's, at Maltbach near Bissegg, and threatened them with revolvers. Oberhänsli, believing the whole matter to be a rather unfortunate practical joke, enquired the reason for this act, whereupon one of the attackers threw a stick against him. The stick caught Mrs. Oberhänsli's head, which was cut. As Oberhänsli jumped out of bed, the men fled. The five men concerned have all been arrested, three of them in Zurich, and, judging by their past, it would seem beyond doubt that the motive of the attack was robbery.

NEUCHÂTEL.

Following a question asked in the Neuchâtel Grand Council about the serious state of the watch industry, Mr. Renaud, of the Department for Industry, has rendered a detailed account of the actual position, in which he mentioned that there were over 1,100 men out of work, and that during January and February a sum of Frs. 160,000 has been paid in relief.

On the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the Neuchâtel republic a great patriotic and religious manifestation has taken place during which the President of the Confederation, Mr. Musy, delivered an inspiring address in favour of the new alcohol legislation.

VAUD.

In the election for the States Council 5 Radicals and 2 Liberals have been successful. The list was prepared by mutual agreement between the radical and liberal parties and was unopposed.

TICINO.

A 26 years' old workman of Locarno has killed a young widow, aged 22, mother of two children, because she resented his advances. Immediately after the murder the man committed suicide.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal—for Health!