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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

MENACE OF MELTING ALPINE SNOWS.

In Switzerland the almost tropical heat has led to unduly rapid melting of the mountain snows. The River Rhone has burst a dyke at Yvorne and overflowed its banks near Sion, and the railway lines are flooded.

Continental expresses on the Simplon line, including the Orient express and the Paris-Milan-Rome trains, have been diverted.

The inundations increased, and large areas of the cantons of Vaud and Valais are under water. The tocsin was sounded in the villages as a signal to the inhabitants to rally to the rescue.

The fire brigades of the entire district are working feverishly to combat the abnormal torrents of water, and this evening they were supplemented by companies of sappers.

Vast areas of corn land are submerged. The walls of farms, houses, cafés and restaurants are lapped by the waves of an inland lake which has appeared in the Rhone Valley. The well-known Rhone Tower has been swept away. Difficulties have been experienced in keeping open the emergency lines of communication for trans-Continental expresses. Streams and canals have been converted into raging torrents. Main roads are impassable and all night strenuous efforts were made in the light of searchlamps to get floods under control. Emergency dams are being constructed of sandbags and poplar trees hastily felled. Lorries loaded with sand, large jaggeds and boulders are being hurried to various areas.

EARTHQUAKE IN SWITZERLAND.

Eastern and Central Switzerland was shaken by a pronounced earthquake shock on Friday last. At Ettingen the church bells suddenly began to ring. In Liestal the window panes began to rattle, and in Gelterkinden the shock was so intense that plates and cups fell of the racks. In Etzgen (Ct. Aargau) walls of houses began to tremble.

Many houses in Frauenfeld were shaken and heavy furniture was displaced, exhibits in some of the stores in St. Gall collapsed. Similar experiences are reported from Zurich, Meilen, Aegeri; Goldau and Andermatt. Lausanne and Geneva also felt the shocks. Jets of white foam and gigantic bubbles and whirlpools appeared on the surface of the Lake of Zurich.

CANTON OF GENEVA AGAIN IN DIFFICULTIES.

The Treasury of the Canton of Geneva is unable to repay a loan of 9,000,000f. granted by several Swiss Banks some months ago. The banks have now agreed to extend the day of maturity.

SWISS BANKING TROUBLES.

The Banque de Genève, in liquidation, reports a new loss of 10,000,000f. which is due to overvaluation of the assets at the time the bank entered into liquidation. The Canton of Geneva will have to bear this loss.

The Banque d'Escompte Suisse, in liquidation, announces a loss of 31,220,000f. This new loss is also due to overvaluation of the assets. The Swiss Confederate Loan Office, whom the Banque d'Escompte Suisse still owes 7,400,000f. for money advanced, objected to the latest balance-sheet just issued by the bank.

The Federal Government has agreed to extend the moratorium granted to the Bank of Burgdorf until June, 1936. Meanwhile a Federal Commissioner supervises the affairs of the bank on the spot.

Miner and Co., of Geneva, a well-known private banking firm which has been specialising in dealing on the Bourses, has declared its inability to pay. Several firms have sued Miner and Co. for alleged breach of contract. The Public Prosecutor is enquiring into the matter.

BANKING MERGER.

The merger is announced of Banque Générale and Franco-Suisse Electricque into Société pour l'Industrie Electricque.

CHARGE D'AFFAIRES FOR TEHERAN.

The Federal Council has decided to appoint a Chargé d'Affaires in Teheran, hitherto the French Legation has looked after Swiss interests in Persia.

FEDERAL SINGING COMPETITION IN BASLE.

The Swiss National Choir Festival in Basle started on Saturday last in Basle. Nearly 200 choirs numbering about 13,000 members are expected to participate in the competition. The societies will compete in 4 categories, in three of which the song or hymn is only handed to the choir one hour before the performance. Ever since its foundation, the festivals, which are held once in 6 years, have been regarded as patriotic demonstrations of true Democracy, where all classes of the people, all the four languages as well as all political and religious parties and groupments are visibly united in the name of Music.

REDUCTIONS FOR FOREIGN MOTORISTS IN SWITZERLAND.

Foreign motorists spending at least three days in Switzerland will benefit by a reduced price of petrol between July 10th and October 31st.

BIG SWISS GOLD GAIN.

The return of the Swiss National Bank for the week to June 29th shows a further gold increase of 26,600,000f., to 1,195,500,000f., the previous week gold holdings rose 6,200,000f. Gold exchanges show little change at 10,900,000f. The note circulation is up by 71,900,000f. at 1,306,900,000f. Other sight liabilities increased by 47,300,000f., to 312,800,000f. The note cover of 74.48 per cent. compares with 78.61 per cent. a week ago.

SWITZERLAND BANS GERMAN PAPERS.

The Federal Council decided as a counter-measure to the ban on the sale of the "Basler Nachrichten" in Germany to prohibit the sale of two German newspapers, "Der Stürmer" and "Der Allermanne," published in Freiburg-Breisgau, and also to prohibit the publication of the "Reichsdeutsche," a National Socialist propaganda paper published in Switzerland. Dr. Goebbels's action in banning the "Basler Nachrichten" has caused great indignation in Switzerland.

The "Völkischer Beobachter," "Der Angriff," and the "Berliner Börsen Zeitung" were banned in Switzerland last year as a reprisal against the prohibition of several Swiss papers in Germany because of their comments on the "purge" of June 30th.

SWISS CONVERSION SUCCESS.

The conversion loan arranged by the Federal Council for the redemption of the 5 per cent. Federal Bonds of 1921, amounting to 80,000,000f. and falling due on June 30th, 1935 has been a success.

SWISS WRITER HONOURED.

M. Benjamin Valloton, the distinguished writer, has been nominated commander of the "Légion d'honneur."

DR. HANHART'S RETURN.

Dr. Ernest Hanhart, doctor of medicine, and a lecturer at the University of Zurich, who was under arrest for espionage at Marseille, has returned to Zurich. After exhaustive investigations by a Military Tribunal the charge of espionage was dropped and Dr. Hanhart was released.

BISHOP BACCARIANI. †

The death has occurred at Lugano of Msgr. Bacciarini, Bishop of Lugano. The deceased was born in Lavertezzo in the year of 1873 and studied at the Priests' seminary in Milano. From 1897 to 1906 he officiated as a Priest at Arzo, and later on became head of the seminary at Poleggio. In 1917 he was nominated Bishop of Lugano. —

Federal Councillors Motta and Etter, National-Councillor Rossi, States-Councillor Riva, representatives of the cantonal government and the Grand Council and all the Bishops of Switzerland as well as a large number of the public attended the Funeral Service, which took place at the cathedral church of San Lorenzo.

A WHIPNADE FOR GENEVA.

The new zoological gardens of Geneva were opened last Sunday in the Parc d'Aire. The gardens are constructed on the most modern Whipnade lines, with no interposition of cages or barriers of any unnecessary sort between the animals and the public. The policy of the promoters of the new zoo is not to amass a large collection of animals, but rather to collect interesting and rare specimens which can be changed from time to time so as to maintain public interest in the gardens.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Fritz Baeschlin, Professor at the Technical University in Zurich has been elected rector for the period of October 1st 1935 to September 30th, 1937. Dr. Baeschlin was appointed Professor of the Technical University in 1909, he is a *doctor honoris causa* of the University in Berlin. In the army he reached the rank of a Colonel of Infantry.

Dr. Albert Halblützel, editor in chief of the "Neuen Winterthurer Tagblattes" has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Dr. Halblützel was for many years President of the Swiss Press Association.

BERNE.

The death has occurred in Berne, of M. Ernest Linck, a well-known painter, at the age of 61.

The proposals for balancing the budget, put before the people by the cantonal government, has been accepted.

BASLE.

Dr. Werner Kaegi has been appointed Professor of History at the University of Basle, he was born in 1901 at Oetwil (Ct. Zurich). Dr. Kaegi studied at the University in Leipzig and later became lecturer at the University of Basle, he is the author of many works on history.

The "Basler Nachrichten" has been prohibited throughout Germany for an indefinite period.

M. Carl Schumacher, member of the General Management of the Swiss Bank Corporation has resigned from his post. M. Schumacher was connected for 40 years with this institution.

Two men were drowned, when a boat capsized near the railway bridge, two of the occupants managed to reach the shore by swimming.

VAUD.

M. H. Golaz, Professor of "pharmacie galénique" at the University of Lausanne has died.

VALAIS.

The Grand Council of the canton of Valais has decided to reduce the salaries of their functionaries varying from 6-11 per cent.

FOOTBALL.

Championship 1934-1935.

CUPWINNERS: F.C. LAUSANNE-SPORTS.

NATIONAL LEAGUE.

CHAMPIONS: F.C. LAUSANNE-SPORTS.

Runners-up: F.C. SERVETTE.
Relegated to First League: F.C. Etoile-Carouge; Concordia-Basel.

	P	W	D	L	for	agst	Pts.
Lausanne	26	17	7	2	69	28	41
Servette	26	17	6	3	56	28	40
Lugano	26	14	7	5	59	31	35
Grasshoppers	26	12	8	6	49	33	32
Basel	26	12	4	10	61	50	28
Bern	26	10	7	9	62	43	27
Biel	26	11	5	10	48	41	27
Young Fellows	26	12	3	11	48	59	27
Locarno	26	10	6	10	45	42	26
Chaux-de-Fonds	26	10	3	13	47	48	23
Nordstern	26	8	5	13	48	49	21
Young Boys	26	6	5	15	46	72	17
Concordia	26	5	4	17	36	79	14
Carouge	26	2	2	22	14	85	6

FIRST LEAGUE.

CHAMPIONS: F.C. ST. GALLEN.

Runners-up: F.C. AARAU.

F.C. St. Gall drew with F.C. Aarau in the Final 1:1 at home and won 2:1 in Aarau. Both clubs are promoted to the National League. F.C. Aarau has accepted; St. Gall is still considering the question. Should they decide to remain in the First League, F.C. Luzern would be promoted.

Relegated to League II: Old Boys-Basel; Bellinzona.

Promoted from League II: Vevey, Pruntrut, Oerlikon and Winterthur.

GROUP WEST.

	Goals					
	P	W	D	L	for	agst
Aarau	20	15	—	5	56	25
Grenchen	20	11	1	8	42	29
Olten	20	10	2	8	38	30
Montreux	20	9	4	7	40	34
Solothurn	20	9	2	9	46	41
Cantal	20	8	4	8	40	43
Racing	20	8	2	10	41	41
Urania	20	8	2	10	51	53
Fribourg	20	8	2	10	36	49
Monthey	20	8	2	10	34	52
Old Boys	20	5	1	14	37	55

GROUP EAST.

	Goals					
	P	W	D	L	for	agst
St. Gallen	20	12	4	4	49	22
Luzern	20	12	3	5	54	34
Brühl	20	12	2	6	44	29
Kreuzlingen	20	11	1	8	47	31
Schaffhausen	20	9	3	8	39	35
Chiasso	20	8	3	9	41	53
Seebach	20	8	2	10	44	51
Blue Stars	20	7	3	10	33	39
Juventus	20	7	1	12	38	50
Zurich	20	5	4	11	31	53
Bellinzona	20	5	2	13	26	51

And thus ended another chapter in the history of Swiss Football!

M.G.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN SWITZERLAND.

M. Obrecht, Federal Councillor and head of the Federal Economic Dept. has just set out his much awaited ideas in a statement in the National Council.

In opening his speech he reminded the various parties that this is not the time to fight one another simply because every party thinks it has the better remedy.

"I have become Minister of Economy at a time when our country is full of sorrows and problems," said M. Obrecht, "I knew of these troubles before, but not until I took over this post did I realise under what distress our people are suffering."

He made it quite clear that the help expected to be given by the Federal Government must be doomed to failure, if the State's finances were not considered. M. Obrecht had in mind the Referendum of June 2nd, which, in the opinion of the Federal Government, demanded great sacrifices from the Government.

The extent to which Switzerland has suffered under the crisis is indicated by the following figures. In 1928 the total income of the Swiss people amounted to Fr.9,10,000,000,000. In 1932 this figure stood at Fr.7,500,000,000, and it continued to drop at the rate of Fr.500,000,000 per annum. To-day the income must be valued round about Fr.6,000,000,000.

Whenever there has been trouble of any sort the State has been asked to come to the rescue with subsidies. But plenty has been and can still be done without spending money.

Switzerland has at its disposal measures which are more effective. Better than assisting the export industry with subsidies, for instance, is to force foreign countries to buy from Switzerland if they want to sell their own products.

With measures such as Customs tariffs, import restrictions, the so-called "compensation trade agreements," quotas and clearing arrangements Switzerland can protect its home industry and, at the same time stimulate exports.

In view of the fact that Swiss exports have to give long-term credits which hamper their activities, the Government is closely studying the question of inaugurating an export financing institute. For this purpose the taking up of a loan is under consideration.

In this connection the Minister of Economy made it quite clear that Switzerland must adhere to the present value of the franc, if it does not wish to endanger the export industry.

Incidentally, those favouring devaluation contend that a depreciation of the value of the Swiss franc would be of great help to exporters. Still dealing with the export problem, M. Obrecht made the important announcement that it must be Switzerland's great aim to compel other countries to buy just as much from Switzerland as this country buys from them.

This would mean the end of Switzerland's traditional adverse trade balance. Switzerland, he said, has it in its hands to extend exports. To suit the action to the word, Switzerland will not shrink back, if necessary, from fearless inconsiderateness.

Where there are money restrictions, the State will make it its task that the money for imports from the countries concerned remains in Switzerland. This money will be used for paying for exports.

Continuing on the subject of money restrictions, the Minister said that as far as monetary interests are concerned, the Swiss Federal Council has taken the view that export and tourism come before the interests of the capital.

But the council does not forget that money invested in countries with exchange restrictions belongs to the national property and that, therefore, it lies in the interest of the State to get these moneys free to make it work for the home industry.

This the more so, since a good deal of money invested in this country by other nations has been withdrawn owing to the recent precariousness in the money market.

The frozen money must come back if Switzerland does not want to run the risk of facing a shortage of money.

M. Obrecht dealt in detail with agricultural problems. When speaking of measures to help agriculture, he said: "One immediately thinks of subsidies. Indeed, the State has spent a lot of money to support the price of agricultural products."

"But subsidies alone do not help. It has been necessary to restrict imports. Thus, the agricultural industry has been saved from the worst. We shall continue to act in this manner."

Another task will be to fight against internal overproduction, which is a grave danger to the country.

As far as over-indebtedness of Swiss peasants is concerned, the Federal Council has already decided to arrange debt relief for them.

To protect the home industry, imports had to be restricted. "But we shall have to consider our commercial men," said M. Obrecht. "In order not to hamper their activities we must try to loosen the quota system."

A further measure to protect the home industry will be the abolition of unfair competition. As far as injurious symptoms of price movement are concerned, these will be combated.

M. Obrecht further reviewed the Swiss labour market, with its 66,000 unemployed, and discussed the plans for an extensive creation of emergency works.

"It is curious," he said, "that a great number of foreign servants has to be employed in this country, although there are as many as 14,200 unemployed women."

He also touched on the question of emigration, which is regarded as one of the most urgent problems awaiting a solution. It is contemplated sending unemployed and their families to countries where there is still a demand for labour. The State intends to organise and finance this type of emigration.

In concluding, the Minister of Economy announced that a Committee of Economy would be set up which would consist of leading members of all trades. Its prime task would be to study questions concerning Switzerland's economic life.

Furthermore, a Bill will be submitted to Parliament at the next session containing all measures the Swiss Federal Council intends to take for the alleviation of the crisis.

For this purpose the Federal Council will ask for new powers. The Federal Department, too, will submit a Bill containing measures of its own.

F.T.

**"CLOSE QUARTERS"
AT EMBASSY THEATRE.
A Fine Play by a Reputed Swiss Author.**

With much pleasure we have read various announcements in the London Press that this play, which received such favourable notices by the leading critics, is the work of a Swiss author, W. O. Somin, translated and freely adapted by Gilbert Lennox. A successful Swiss play on the London stage would be an entirely unique experience, as, to the best of our knowledge, no Swiss play, successful or otherwise, has ever reached the footlights of the British metropolis or, indeed, of any foreign country outside Germany. This is scarcely surprising seeing that our country, so productive in all other branches of the arts, has so far been singularly poor in the dramatic field. Apart from some good dialect plays, entertaining only for our own folk, we are acquainted so far with only one Swiss playwright of some eminence, Adrian von Arx, who has won various "succès d'estime" in Berlin during the last few years. And now, suddenly, to our pleasant surprise emerges an alleged Swiss play at the enterprising try-out stage at Swiss Cottage with flying colours. Without losing one day we rushed to the Embassy Theatre and were not disappointed. The play is to be classed very highly indeed, a serious literary and dramatic achievement and, thanks to an excellent production, an absorbing entertainment.

We were delighted at having made the discovery of a new high-light on the horizon of Swiss art. But unfortunately there are strong grounds for doubting whether the author is Swiss after all.

We have made inquiries among literary Swiss friends to whom the name of W. O. Somin is unknown, and all the Embassy Theatre can say with certainty is that he is a resident of Zurich. The play was originally written in German but has not been produced or published so far. Its tenor suggests rather that the author is Austrian or of another more East-European nationality, although the subject-matter and the setting of the play are not strictly alien to the Swiss milieu. But whether the author is merely a guest of our country or a compatriot, we are glad to compliment him for a fine play of which Switzerland might justly feel proud. Further compliments are due to the author of the English version Lennox, which is freely adapted, to the producer at the Embassy, Irene Hentschel, and above all to the two sole actors Oscar Homolka and Flora Robson.

The two characters are an ambitious Labour politician Bergmann and his wife. The latter has been seduced by a wicked capitalist and chief opponent of socialism in the town. On the strength of that dark secret of the past he unscrupulously blackmails Bergmann's helpless wife time and again into betraying the political secrets of her husband's party. Bergmann himself owes, unknowingly, most of his success as a Labour official to the discreet protection of the cunning capitalist who thereby gains an invaluable source of information. To put an end to the situation Mrs. Bergmann shoots the fiendish boss without telling her husband. As the latter has that very evening at a public meeting lightly talked of shooting the enemy, he is afraid of being suspected. His wife, who is afraid of being discovered herself, gives him by her queer behaviour the impression as if she also suspected him. To prevent him from giving himself up she confesses. The truth of her relations with the employer is too terrible to bear and the couple commit suicide. The enactment of this moving drama, a technical tour de force, is superbly done by the two actors. Miss Robson's acting is well known already, but in Oscar Homolka, an Austrian who had to speak in a foreign idiom, the London stage has acquired a wonderfully competent, powerful and moving actor, such as it has few to boast of.

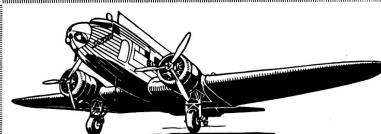
Dr.E.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

The summer evening had begun to fold the world in its mysterious embrace and Phoebus to drive his latest six cylinder chariot towards the western gates. And as he pressed on the accelerator with gentle touch so that the last rays of the sun lingered in lengthening shafts of golden light, the moon goddess began to cast her argentic softness over the sward where some 50 members and guests were assembled for the second summer meeting of the City Swiss Club at the Brent Bridge Hotel on Tuesday last. Shortly before eight the company sat down to partake of the succulent repast which had been provided for them. At that magic hour when the coffee filled the waiting cups, M. George Marchand, who presided, rose to propose the health of the King and the Swiss Confederation, and in a few words welcomed the ladies and guests in the name of the Club. M. Marchand said that the President, M. Billeter, was unable to be present as he was in Paris.

There were no other speeches and after retiring for a few minutes while the tables were removed, the company gave itself up to the joys of the dance.

To conclude, it was a most enjoyable and successful evening.



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