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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### 1 MILLION CREDIT FOR THE "LANDESAUSSTELLUNG"

The Municipal Council of the town of Zurich has proposed a credit of 1 million francs towards the costs of the "Landesausstellung" which is to take place in the year 1939 in Zurich: a further amount of 250,000 frs. is earmarked for the same purpose.

#### INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING COMPETITION AT HELSINGFORS

The Swiss team which has competed at the International shooting competition at Helsingfors has been first in the Revolver competition, and also first in the Finnish Army Rifle Match. Our Swiss Riflemen have maintained throughout the competition a high standard of efficiency, and have well maintained the reputation which our country enjoys as one of the leading nations in rifle and revolver shooting.

#### SWISS NATIONAL BANK

Return of the Swiss National Bank for week to 23rd July shows the gold reserve at Frs. 2,594,400,000, or Frs. 30,000,000 less than a week before. The drop is due to transfers to the Exchange Equalisation Account.

#### SWISS OFFICERS AT FOREIGN ARMY MANOEUVRES

Army-Corps commander, Colonel Wille, lieutenant-colonel di Giovanolo and Major Nager are attending the Italian Army manoeuvres.

Army Corps commander, Colonel Miescher and Colonel Bircher, commander of the 4th Division, will attend the German manoeuvres, which will take place shortly.

#### SWISS MILITARY MACHINE CRASHES

A Swiss military aeroplane belonging to the "Pilotenschule" Dübendorf, has crashed between Wettingen and Würenlos. Flight-lieutenant Hans Schärli, born in 1914, from Weier near Affoltern (Ct. Berne), was killed.

#### SWISS GRAND PRIX MOTOR RACE

The Swiss Government has delegated Federal Councillor Baumann as their representative at the 4th Annual Motor Race, which will take place in Berne on the 21st and 22nd of this month.

#### LEGACIES

The community of Küssnacht (Zurich) has received an amount of 30,000 frs. for charitable institutions, in remembrance of the brothers Hermann and August Keller. The town of St. Gall has received the amount of 10,000 frs. from an anonymous donor to be used for the poor. Nearly 20,000 frs. have been left to the town of Frauenfeld for various charities. Mlle. Felicité Caille, who recently died in Sales, has bequeathed the sum of 112,000 frs. for various charitable institutions.

#### MOUNTAINEERING FEAT

Three German Alpinists—Zimmermann, Wollenweber and Löhner—who had been waiting in the Swiss Alps for suitable weather to scale the difficult North Wall of the Eiger Mountain, on which several of their compatriots perished last year, have succeeded in ascending the Eiger Ostwand, or eastern side.

#### 12,000 FEET CLIMB AT 75

In order to celebrate his birthday a Bernese man, 75 years of age, accompanied by a guide, has climbed the Wetterhorn—the 12,000 feet peak in the Bernese Oberland.

#### ENGADINE AERODROME

Work on the new aerodrome beyond the golf course between Samaden and Pontresina, in the Engadine, has been held up owing to bad weather.

It was anticipated that the new flying ground and hangars would have been ready for use by

the middle of August, but it is not now expected that they can be used before the end of the month.

### SWISS CONDITIONS IMPROVING

The half-yearly statements of the seven big Swiss trade banks which have been published during these last few days show clearly the effects of the devaluation of the Swiss franc. The balance-sheet totals of the seven banks, which were well below 4,000,000,000 francs before the devaluation, reached the new high level of 4,809,000,000 francs on June 30, 1937. This constitutes an increase of 224,000,000 francs since March 31.

Among the various balance-sheet items short-term creditors show the most remarkable increase. They amounted to 1,727,000,000 francs on June 31, as compared with 1,496,000,000 francs three months before. In the same period short-term debtors have risen from 378,000,000 francs to 596,000,000 francs. Discounts, too, show a sharp increase from 457,000,000 francs to 680,000,000 francs. Among advances, those given to public authorities have advanced from 93,000,000 francs to 110,000,000 francs last quarter. As a whole the half-yearly statements are notable for their great liquidity, apparently the Swiss public is still meeting with difficulty in finding suitable investment possibilities for the huge funds made available in the past nine months through repatriation of Swiss funds from foreign countries, dishoarding of gold, and repayment of loans.

This exceptional liquidity provides, of course, an excellent stimulus to the country's economy. For the first time for many years the Federal Government and the other Swiss public authorities are now able to reduce the burden of their indebtedness by conversion and loan repayments. Public issues accordingly are being heavily over-subscribed, and recently allotments of the first large foreign issue in Switzerland since the end of 1932 had to be sharply curtailed.

### CUSTOMS MODIFICATION

The Swiss Customs authorities have decided to modify the tax of 10 centimes per 100 kilograms levied on all motor-vehicles entering Switzerland under a *carnet de passage*. This tax, which is hitherto payable at each entry of the car into Switzerland will now be levied once only, at the first entry.

### OPEN-AIR FESTIVALS IN SWITZERLAND

The Swiss summer theatrical season this year has been full of open-air festivals, chiefly Swiss folklore productions, which have attracted numerous and enthusiastic audiences. In every performance all the actors, except a few leading ones, have been amateurs recruited among the peasants and village folk.

Genuinely Swiss were the performances at Geneva of *Genève chante*, a well-composed selection of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze's works, which was produced in the open, on the very shore of the lake, and which met with an overwhelming success. Particularly successful, too, were the performances at Mézières of *La Serrante d'Erolène*, by René Morax and Gustave Doret. This summer saw the first appearance of the "Théâtre valaisan," a company of amateurs which began by producing at Finhaut, a village of the valley of Salvan, among the rocks and pastures, two comedies written by a local author, Canon Poncelet, the curate of Finhaut. One of the comedies was called *L'Auberge du Genépi*, the other *Les Rogations*, and both described in very simple language the life and customs of the mountain folk of the valley of Salvan.

In German-speaking Switzerland one has to mention *Isen im Für* (*Iron in Fire*), by Fritz Ringgenberg, an attractive comedy in Bernese dialect, which was performed at Meiringen. In Berne a newly formed company of amateurs produced a historical play entitled *Bubenberg*, by R. von Tavel, which recalls some episodes of the war between the Swiss Confederates and Duke Charles of Burgundy. Interlaken has specialized in the production of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, which was performed last year in the open, and has once again proved successful. Under the patronage of the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, in Canton Schwyz, a local company of amateurs is producing at night, on the very steps of the abbey, Calderon's *Theatre of the World*. Next week at Berne there will begin a series of performances of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann*, which will be acted on the quaint little place in front of the cathedral. The success of all these performances suggests that the public

is particularly fond of open-air festivals, especially those produced by amateurs.

### NARROW ESCAPE OF BRITISH FLIERS

Mr. Philip Bradley, a 33-year-old Nottingham leather manufacturer, and a woman passenger had a remarkable escape last week in an aeroplane accident on the Franco-Swiss frontier.

Mr. Bradley was returning from the International Air Rally at Zurich, piloting his own plane, when it developed engine trouble. He landed without difficulty in a field and repaired his engine.

Just after taking off again he swerved to avoid some high-tension electric wires and crashed into a poplar tree. The plane was wrecked, its engine being buried in the ground. The two occupants, however escaped practically unscratched. Mrs. Webster had a slightly sprained knee.

After details of the accident had been noted by the French gendarmerie the fliers took a car back to Basle, whence they restarted for England, again by plane.

### THE SWISS EARTHQUAKE SERVICE

The Swiss Seismological Commission, afterwards the Swiss Earthquake Service, is the oldest committee engaged in the study of earthquakes. For its foundation in 1878, we are indebted to the veteran geologist, Prof. Albert Helm. Two years later, it was followed by the British Association Committee on earthquakes in Japan, which, on Prof. Milne's return to Great Britain in 1895, enlarged its scope as the Seismological Committee. In 1883, shortly after the destructive Ischian earthquake of July 28, a geodynamic section was added to the Central Meteorological Office at Rome, which still carries on its useful work of studying Italian and other earthquakes; and, in 1892, the Imperial Earthquake Investigation Committee began its similar, but more extensive, work in Japan. The Swiss Committee, under the direction of Dr. E. Wanner, has recently issued its *Jahresbericht* for 1935, containing three valuable tables, the first on earthquakes sensible in Switzerland, twenty-seven in number, none of which reached destructive intensity; the second, of eighty earthquakes with origins as a rule less than three miles distant; and the third, of a hundred and fifty earthquakes recorded at the five Swiss stations (Zurich, Chur, Neuchâtel, Basel and Sion), the distances of the origins being not less than six hundred miles.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The sale of the 1st of August Badge in the town of Zurich brought in 83,400 frs., or 22,000 frs. more than last year. In addition 40,000 frs. were collected for the 1st of August cards, which amount is about the same as last year.

\* \* \*  
Doctor Ernst Schwarzbach, for over 40 years a well-known medical practitioner in Zurich has died at the age of 70.

#### BERNE.

Doctor La Nicca, a reputed medical practitioner and scientist has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Berne. Doctor La Nicca is a member of the Grand, as well as the Municipal Council in Berne. In the army he occupies the rank of Colonel in the Swiss Medical Corps.

#### FRIBOURG.

M. Charles Chassot, President of the Conservative Party of the canton of Fribourg has been elected a member of the National-Council, in succession to the late M. Benninger. M. Chassot has already been a member of Parliament from 1932-35.

#### ST. GALLEN.

A terrible crime was committed last Monday at the town of Rapperswil. A police officer, Alfons Kellenberger from Walzenhausen, born in 1906, and since 1930 in the service of the cantonal police, arrested the 24 years old Jrniger from Niederrohrdorf (Aargau), who was suspected of having committed a burglary in Hurden. (Schwyz). On arriving at the Police Station, Jrniger suddenly took out a revolver and shot the Policeman dead.

The murderer then took to his heels pursued by a civilian named Josef Alois Döbeli from Sarmentorf; being cornered he fired at him point blank killing him outright. Later on the murderer was arrested on the shores of the Obersee. Both the unfortunate victims of this crime were married men.

**GRISONS.**

Mr. John A. Roosevelt, youngest son of the American President is staying at the "Suvrettahaus" in St. Moritz.

**VAUD.**

In St. Croix died, at the age of 85, M. Edouard Baierlé, a former proprietor of the "Hotel des Rasses." The deceased played an important rôle in the development of the "Stations des Rasses."

\* \* \*

M. Emile Gétaz, since 1896 editor and later on Director of the "Feuille d'avis de Vevey" and the "Hinkenden Boten" (Berne), has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. M. Gétaz was one of the founders of the Press Association of the canton of Vaud, and for many years its President and Treasurer; since 1924 he is a member of the Central Committee of the Swiss Newspapers Publishing Association.

**VALAIS.**

A large fire which broke out at the little village of Arbaz, almost completely destroyed the village; unfortunately the majority of the houses were not insured.

**NEWS FROM THE SWISS GRAND-PRIX**

Few days before the tragic accident which befell the racing champion Delius at the German Grand-prix, the Auto-Union firm had named him as one of their chief racers in the Swiss Grand-prix. His place will now be taken by H. P. Müller, or the wellknown Italian L. Fagioli. The two great German teams will thus meet at the start on equal odds. The bolides' race at the Swiss Grand-prix will therefore take the nature of a particularly decisive contest, seeing that both firms, Mercedes-Benz and Auto-Union, can at present claim victory records of equal import. For the former, Hermann Lang has won the Grand-prix of Tripolis and the International Avus race, while Caracciola has captured for them the German Grand-prix; Auto-Union, on their part, have to their credit the Grand-prix of Belgium, won by Hasse, the Eifel race and the American Vanderbilt Cup, both by Rosemeyer. Odds stand therefore at 3 against 3. Alfa Romeo have not, so far, named their drivers for the start with their new construction. It is however assumed that the task will fall to T. Nuvolari and G. Farina. Sommer and Belmondo also manifest an interest for a start on Alfa Romeo. One certainty may however be taken for granted, namely, that, with few exceptions, Berne will see on August 22nd the entire racing elite, both in the 1.5 liter class and the Grand-prix community.

**TENNI AND VARZI AT THE PRIZE OF BERNE?**

Seeing the great number of European celebrities entered for both races, the Prize of Berne (contest in the 1.5 liter class) to be run at the Swiss Grand-prix meeting, the interest of car builders has evidently been aroused in no mean degree. From Italy, it is learned that Maserati is seeking to muster a particularly powerful factory team in order to oppose an equal match to the English E.R.A. His champion will probably be Varzi, whose remarkable debut in this class is well noted. In the second place will appear for Maserati, the equally famous motor-wheel champion Omobono Tenni, who is intending to resume on the racing car in exchange for the two-wheeled vehicle. Dreyfus is being named as a third competitor for Maserati.

**SWITZERLAND'S MOST DISTINCTIVE ANTIQUES**

By WALTER BUCKLER.

A recent article in *The Bazaar* described some of the old Swiss view and costume prints which are in a distinct class of their own, being, unlike any of the other eagerly collected colour prints, outline engravings beautifully coloured by hand.

The little country of Switzerland, which has pursued its own development, shut off to some extent by its mountain barriers from the fashions of other nations, has produced other distinctive kinds of art objects.

It is noted, for example, for its ancient pottery, which was entirely a peasant art in the early 18th century. Characteristic of this old pottery are the colours, such as light primrose with a very shiny brown and green, and the verses on the outside.

The nicest pieces were made as presents for birthdays and weddings and not for use. They consisted of plates, sugar bowls and cream jars, having a lovely varnish of a thick glaze. This pottery was made at Langnau in the Canton of Bern, and some potters emigrated to Pennsylvania where they continued to make a Swiss style of pottery, including the German verses, but with the portrait of Washington.

A feature of Swiss pottery, notably plates, is that they are all dated as well as decorated on the back in beautiful colours. The sugar bowls have very decorated lids, mostly with a cock

perched on them. These are very valuable and cost anything up to £20.

Pewter was made in Switzerland all over the country in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was made in nearly every canton as Switzerland is a wine-drinking country and the pewter was mostly used as wine jugs. Their form and the engravings on them are distinctive features of Swiss pewter.

The "Wadtländer" wine jugs, a speciality of the Canton of Vaud, takes the shape of a decanter with two acorns on the lid. The Bernese pewter wine jug is entirely different both in shape and form; it is like a bottle with six sides, a screw-in top, and the sides engraved with Swiss soldiers and the arms of noble families in Bern. The arms of the town and maker always appear on the spout, besides being stamped at the bottom inside.

Another product of Berne, quite different from those already described, is the so-called Bernese "Steg Kanne." This is oval in shape with a long mouthpiece supported by a man or woman's outstretched arm.

Those with the man's arm are the most prized because they are usually engraved like a knight's mailed arm. The soldier's outfit was more attractive than the dress of women in the 17th century.

These pewter jugs ranged from 2in. in height to about 3 ft. or more, and were always used for wine, every Swiss family possessing several of these for actual use. The Bernese "Steg Kanne" is nowadays rare, but that of Canton of Vaud is not so valuable, as many of them are still in existence.

The finest pewter jugs were made for Corporations, known as "Die Zünfte" for their annual dinners, and they were very proud of them. To-day the most eagerly sought-for pewter are those pieces marked with a gun, as these were given as shooting prizes and have the gun stamped usually on the lid.

In Canton Vaud pewter is still made in much the same old style, but the material is different and not so good as that of the early days. A fairly large proportion of very good Swiss pewter found its way to England, and that is why the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington has one of the finest Swiss pewter collections to be seen anywhere. There are still collectors and collections of Swiss pewter in England, but the Swiss are probably the keenest collectors of their own pewter, but only of the best quality.

The stained glass produced in Switzerland is a speciality of that country and has, so far as the writer knows, been made nowhere else. Most of it came from the Cantons of Bern, Basle, and Zurich, and took the form of presents from one canton or corporation to another.

The colours and the arms are distinctive features of this old Swiss stained glass, being in bright yellow, blue and red. The best examples of this stained glass date back to the 16th century, fading out around 1700, to be followed by another art, that of engraved glass.

This was not coloured, but just cut and was produced only in the Canton of Bern. This cut glass was famous in the 18th century, and still is to-day, as there are very few collections.

The engraved glass, just as the Swiss pottery, has verse and the names and arms of those for whom it was made. Pieces of this cut glass, measuring about 8 by 10in., used to be hung with chains inside the window or put into the window as part of it. The stained glass was only used in the churches for whom the best pieces were made.

The finest collection of both stained and engraved glass is to be found in the Bernese Historical Museum and Landes Museum of Zurich. There are several noted collectors of this glass in Switzerland, one being in Basle, and the other in Bern.

Switzerland had two factories of china, one at Nyon on Lake Geneva, and the other at Zurich, both differing entirely in the colouring and material used. The Nyon china is absolutely classical and done after the style of French Sèvres, whilst the Zurich china factory looked more to the German factories, such as Höchst and Dresden.

The colouring is done in minute style as on ivory, being very well worked out in detail, mouth, eyes, ears, etc.

Both factories closed down around 1800 and there are now not many pieces of either in existence. The china of the Zurich factory is the most prized because they are so rare, consisting principally of figures. The Nyon china consisted mostly of tea or coffee sets decorated, some with flowers and the best with landscapes.

Swiss furniture was mostly made in walnut, and during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries walls were beautifully panelled and inlaid in different woods, a dark wood being used with a lighter wood.

Of special note are the tables of that period, as the centre was mostly slate used for easier cleansing and the borders inlaid with the arms of the different cantons, or with lions or eagles.

Other outstanding Swiss furniture were the big dining-room cupboards, which stood some 10ft. high and about the same long. These had pewter washing basins in the centre or at one side and a pewter container for water suspended close by. The Swiss wardrobes were also big, the distinguishing feature about them being their beautiful columns and panelling. Always executed in the most beautiful walnut, they were used as linen cupboards for trousseaux.

The "Galgens Stabell" is a unique piece of old Swiss furniture; the back has the shape of a gallows, finely engraved, signed and dated.

The Swiss craftsmen also produced wooden cradles engraved and inlaid, also signed and dated, the best examples coming from the Canton of Grisons. All these articles of china, pewter, furniture, etc., are highly prized by the collector in Switzerland and elsewhere.

BAZAAR.

**WANDERWEGE.**

Es ist in Bern eine Section der Schweiz. Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Wanderwege gegründet worden, deren Zweck es ist die Hauptstrassen vom Fussgängerkehr zu entlasten und durch Ausbesserungen und Verbindungen der existierenden Wanderwege ein zusammenhängendes Netz von schönen Wander Routen zu schaffen. Der Pilgerweg der von der Beatushöhle bis nach Merligen führt, ist ein prächtiges Beispiel ihrer Arbeit und ihrem gemeinnützigen Bestreben. Der Weg wurde letzten Winter ausgebaut und die Section hat im Projekt, diesen Weg von der Beatushöhle bis nach Interlaken weiter zu führen, und somit dem Wanderer einen der schönsten Wege, mit prachtvoller Aussicht auf See und Gebirge, eröffnen. Wir wünschen dem Unternehmen viel Glück und Erfolg.

H. E.

**PERSONAL.**

We tender our deepest sympathy to Dr. Eric Kessler, London correspondent of the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, on the death of his mother, which occurred in Winterthur.

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