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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### PARLIAMENT.

The parliamentary autumn session opened on the 20th September and will occupy three weeks. The agenda is unusually heavy. President Troillet took his chair in the National Council while Vice-President de Weck presided in the States Council, due to the illness of the President (Hauser, Glarus). The first business dealt with was the financial programme in the former and the creation of a film board in the latter.

The present session of the National and States Council will be interrupted for a fortnight on September 30th and will reconvene on October 18th. In the meantime the Committee of the States Council will deal with the proposal for the extension of the fiscal urgency decree.

#### GERMAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES LODGES COMPLAINT

The German chargé d'affaires called on the chief of the political department, in order to protest officially against certain insulting remarks made, during a speech at a banquet, by the Spanish delegate at the League of Nations, Negrin.

It appears that Negrin spoke at a reception given by the journalists attending the League of Nations meeting, when he is said to have uttered some insulting remarks at the address of Herr Hitler, according to a report appearing in the "Journal des Nations," a paper of somewhat extreme views and favouring bolshevism. As this newspaper is produced and published on Swiss territory, the German government considered the facts sufficient to deduce an insult of the head of a foreign state.

The Federal Council dealt with the matter at their next meeting. Señor Negrin, Spanish Minister-President and Delegate at the League of Nations enjoying diplomatic immunity, no steps against him can be taken. It seems, however, that the words complained of, as published in the Journal des Nations, were in fact never spoken by Negrin. The newspaper merely affirms that a Spanish press agency had furnished the report.

The Federal Council has ordered an immediate investigation.

(Later). The Spanish Minister-President Negrin now declares through the "Information Espagnole" (the source of the published report), that, having again perused the shorthand notes of his speech to the journalists accredited at the League of Nations, he can only confirm what he then said to the representatives of the world's press, and that he has nothing to alter in the report which gave a true version of his address.

Thereby any prosecution of the newspaper becomes impracticable. Neither can the speaker be held to account, so that the somewhat painful incident must be considered closed.

#### A NEW NAZI GROUP LEADER FOR SWITZERLAND?

After the murder of the territorial group leader Gustloff, the Federal Council let it be understood that such post of Landesgruppenführer of the German National Socialist party in Switzerland should not again be filled. From various sides now come reports that Counsellor of Legation von Bibra, accredited at the German embassy in Bern, had been nominated as group leader for Switzerland. The Swiss people as a whole consider the Nazi activity on their soil as an undesirable intrusion. The question is, will the Federal Council tacitly accept such challenging appointment (if it is proved a fact), or will the former decision, not to suffer such reinstatement of group leader, be upheld? As parliament is in session, it should be easy to get a clear answer.

### THE MANOEUVRES OF THE 3rd DIVISION.

The great manoeuvres staged between Bern and Solothurn were unfortunately fated to take place at a time of abominable rainy weather. The exercises were of a most interesting character, involving the crossing of the river Aar, all bridges having been "blown up." After troops set over in pontoons had established a bridge head on the south bank, the engineers built a pontoon-bridge in record time, only to have it bombed out of existence some time later. The Bucheggberg stood in the centre of the disputed area. In pouring rain, Colonel Prisi held the critic, in the presence of Fed. C. Minger who conveyed the thanks of the Federal Council to the troops, complimenting them on their steady, well-disciplined bearing and efficient performance.

The march past on the Beundenfeld, Bern, before Col. Prisi, commander of the 2nd army corps and Fed. C. Minger, chief of the military department, was witnessed by members of the Federal Council, States- and National-Council and a multitude estimated to have exceeded 100,000. All wished to see for the last time their old 3rd division, under Colonel Borel, to which so many of them had formerly belonged. The impressive spectacle is at an end. The old 3rd division is no more. Long live the 3rd division of the new army organisation!

### POST, TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE.

For the month of August the department for Post shows an excess in receipts of 1.8 million francs (1.2 last August), or for the first 8 months of this year receipts of 93.5 and an expenditure of 80.5 million. Allowing for interest and depreciation there remains a profit of 9.2 million francs.

The administration of the Telegraph and Telephone department shows revenue at 69.5, expenditure at 27.3 million francs. The excess of income of 42.2 million leaves a net surplus of 3.33 million francs.

### 3,000 HECTARES OF LAND TO BE RECLAIMED.

In the year 1807, Conrad Escher von der Linth began, and by 1827 he completed the task of reclaiming thousands of acres of marshland in the plain of the Linth, by diverting the river into the Wallensee and constructing a canal between the latter and the lake of Zurich.

A new project, destined to complete the task and reclaiming another 3,000 hectares of unproductive soil is now under consideration. The costs are estimated at 12 million francs and work for hundreds of unemployed would be provided. The outlet of the lake at Zurich will have to be corrected whereby the greater part of the Linth-plain will be effectively drained. The beds of various brooks will have to receive attention. The project is not yet quite complete in all its details, but it is hoped to be able to approach the Federal assembly before the end of the year. (For a subsidy, of course).

### RELAXING THE PRICE CONTROL.

At the time of the devaluation of the franc, the Federal economic department was authorised to exercise a strict control over the prices of goods, hotel tariffs, gas, electricity, rents, etc., in order to prevent an unduly sharp increase in the cost of living. The measures taken have been a success, the cost of living index has risen by only 5.4% and trade and industry have gradually adapted themselves to the new conditions.

On the 27th September a new decree has come into force, easing the former strict control, by applying the prohibition of an increase in price to certain goods and tariffs only and to rents. Trade and industry will welcome this relief. Nevertheless the Federal Council will continue to watch carefully that no undue rise in costs does take place. His right remains, to stop any unjustified price increase, so that the authorities are in a position to prevent any ramp from developing.

### PROTECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST AIR ATTACKS.

On the nights of November 3rd, 4th and 24th all Switzerland, in three separate areas, will stage a great rehearsal of a total black-out, in order to test the efficiency of this passively protective measure of defence against attacks from the air. The test begins at nightfall and lasts until dawn.

### WHO WILL IN FUTURE CARRY THE BANNER?

With the new army organisation the rank of "Adjutant-Unteroffizier," our highest non-commissioned officer, will disappear. His cherished privilege was to carry the banner of the battalion. It was now proposed to entrust the standard to a young lieutenant which let loose a storm of quite justified indignation from the whole corps of n.c.o.'s, one of whom had always enjoyed this privilege from time immemorial. Now the States Council has approved the motion Ackermann (Appenzell a/Rh.) whereby a sergeant-major (Feldweibel) shall be standard bearer.

### CONFERENCE OF CANTONAL DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION.

Under the presidency of Regierungsrat J. Müller (Näfels) sat at Glarus delegates of the cantonal boards of education. Federal Counsellor Etter addressed the meeting on the subject: "National education." A committee was formed to study this question. Uniformity in the form of handwriting to be taught at school failed to be achieved, due to objections raised by Zurich, Obwalden, Zug, Vaud and Ticino. Among other things the furtherance of the use of dialect during lessons was approved. The Ticino demanded a subsidy for a new building for the Swiss school in Milan, which was agreed to. Next year's conference will be held at Frauenfeld, under the presidency of Dr. Müller (Thurgau).

### MOVEMENT OF POPULATION IN FIRST HALF OF 1937.

During the first six months of this year 32,477 births, compared with 34,236 last year were registered. The decline is more pronounced in the towns (over 10,000 inhabitants) with 8.8% as against a mere 4.4% in the country districts.

Similarly the number of weddings decreased by 100 to 5,349 in towns, but increased in the country from 9,318 to 9,648.

Deaths remained almost stationary at 25,210. The excess of birth, therefore, is much reduced in the towns, from 1,070 to 437, while in the rural areas there is a fall from 7,726 to 6,794. The towns, though representing about one quarter of the population merely account for 6.5% of the excess of births. (No, I have not had time to work out by what year there will be room for the Auslandschweizer in our dear fatherland!)

### INITIATIVE AGAINST FREEMASONRY.

The initiative demanding the prohibition of freemasonry will be submitted to the vote of the people on November 28th. Both the National- as well as the States-Council (the latter with a number of abstentions) adopted the Federal Council's proposal to recommend rejection, no cause having been made out that the existing regulations covering the rights of societies, clubs, etc., were not adequate to deal with dangerous tendencies that might arise, nor that the fraternity was or had been pursuing anti-patriotic or state endangering activities. The agitation for dissolution is centred in the "Front," the Swiss "Nazis," and savours very much of "follow my leader" psychology.

### ALPINE POST MOTOR-CARS.

The ever growing popularity of our motor car service travelling over all the better known alpine passes is again proved by the figures just published. Between June 14th and September 19th 514,909 passengers were carried, or 105,709 more than last year. This means an increase of 25.8%.

### LEONHARDT v. LOOSLI.

In the slander action of the frontist leader against C. A. Loosli, now before the Bernese court of appeal, a sensational turn was given to the proceedings, by the defendant's counsel producing photographic copies of letters purporting to prove that the frontist movement is being subsidised from abroad. Thus the plaintiff becomes the accused. The case has been adjourned to get the new evidence duly classified.

### INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING TROPHY.

When recently our crack shots beat the world at Helsingfors in the match with army rifles, the prize of honour, besides the Mannerheim cup, was a live bear. He may now be seen at the Zoological Gardens in Zurich, where Dr. H. Enderli has deposited the 18 months old "Ameko."

## FOREIGN FUNDS.

At a meeting in Berne on Friday last the Council of the Swiss National Bank unanimously approved the proposal made by the chairman with the aim of preventing, in the interests of the country, a new influx of foreign funds and of inducing the withdrawal of foreign capital which has taken refuge in Switzerland in excessive quantities.

## LOCAL.

## ZURICH.

The Engineering Works Oerlikon have increased their rate of pay by 4 centimes an hour for adult workers and 3 centimes for juvenile and female hands. The rates for piece work are increased by 4½%. Since the beginning of this year the firm has given additional employment to over 400 workers.

\* \* \*

At the post office Fraumünster a novel idea has been put into practice. You insert a two-penny piece in an automatic machine, press a lever, and have at your disposal a type writer for the space of 15 minutes. Progressive indeed!

## BERN.

The Municipal Council of Bern has resolved to present the city of Berlin with a bear. Germany's metropolis with its coat of arms of a bear rampant is to follow Bern's example, by erecting, or rather excavating a den for bears.

## GLARUS.

The former National Councillor Heinrich Jenny of Ennenda is retiring from his post as president of the cantonal bank of Glarus, a position which he has occupied since 1920.

## BASEL.

Mr. A. Müller-Jäggi, for twenty years in charge of the station buffet at Basel, is retiring at the end of this year. From a multitude of applicants, Director J. Seiler-Bovin, for the last seven years director of the crack hotel of the East, the King David Hotel at Jerusalem, has been chosen as his successor.

## ST. GALLEN.

Some time ago a small book was published in St. Gall dialect under the title "Chomm, mer wend us freue" which was very favourably received. Several of the poems have now been set to music and will be published shortly under the title "Chomm mit us ginge." These ventures, for preserving our dialect, can be thoroughly recommended to all friends of Sanggallerdütsch.

\* \* \*

The final accounts of the Cantonal Singing Festival shows a net profit of 15,378 francs.

\* \* \*

The appointment of Dr. jur. et phil. W. A. Jöhr as lecturer in national economy at the Commercial High-school in St. Gall has let loose a storm of indignation on the part of the populace, on the grounds that Dr. Jöhr was at one time actively identified with the National Front and that from his writings as well as from his speeches he may be said to be opposed to the existing democratic form of state and liberty. The Municipal Council will have to deal with the matter.

## GRISONS.

Heavy rains caused a landslide near Silvaplana whereby a part of the Julier pass was blocked up. Traffic has been interrupted.

\* \* \*

Dr. med. Carl Spengler, director of the Alexanderhaus, Davos, a well-known specialist in tubercular disease, died at Davos. Medical science has lost an eminent research worker. His father, a German emigrant during the troublous days of 1848, was the first to recognise the beneficial climatic advantages of Davos for diseases of the lung and may be said to have been one of the most prominent founders of the now world famous health resort in the Grisons. His son worthily upheld the tradition set by his sire.

\* \* \*

Work is expected to begin next month on the construction of a funicular railway from the Pass above Pontresina to the famous Diavolezza Glacier. The proposed railway, which will rise 3,000 ft. in 1½ miles, will connect with the Bernina line running from St. Moritz, past Celerina and Pontresina over the Bernina Pass into Italy. The cost of the funicular is estimated at 2,200,000 Swiss francs.

## AARGAU.

Mrs. Marianne Ursprung-Ryser of Ueken has celebrated the 100th anniversary of her birth in perfect health.

## THURGAU.

"Mostindien" has been blessed this year with an abundance of fruit. Especially the apple trees are fully laden and the value of the crop is estimated at five million francs. Altogether the farmer has had a very good year.

## TICINO.

Persistently bad weather has caused a threatening rise in the level of the lake Maggiore and the waters have inundated many of the villages on its shore. From Cannobio valley come reports of several houses having collapsed; the road has been blocked by falls of rock.

\* \* \*

Ezio Gianferrari, from Bellinzona, a winner of many motor cycling events, was fatally injured near the village of Grono when he lost control of his machine and was thrown into the shallow waters of the Calanca.

AN APPRECIATION OF  
PASTOR HOFFMANN-DE VISME.

By the death of Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme the Swiss Colony in London has lost one of the stoutest pillars it possessed. The tragedy is still oppressing our minds:— his sad passing, away from his family and away from his homeland alike, alone in Paris in the surgeon's hands. Both here and in Switzerland services were held for Divine Intercession and the recovery of his health. The gradual weakening of his resistance after the dreadful shock of the death of his beloved wife and the subsequent nervous breakdowns, apart from habitual overwork, — these were the reasons for bringing to an untimely end a life and a personality precious to the colony at large. Those of us who have taken his singular devotion to us for granted for so long perhaps recognise now that we have not valued, not honoured the man sufficiently in his lifetime. As we go along, we shall feel an increasing sense of loss, a void which it will take a long time to fill and to forget.

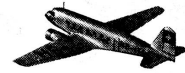
Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme's activities in our colony were so extended and diversified, so intermingled with every aspect of our social life, that many of us knew him better as the man than the priest. He, our spiritual head, unassuming but always optimistic, incurious yet always helpful, with his fine gift of speech, with his deep knowledge of the colony, never assumed direction or guidance where another good man filled a place usefully. Never idle for one moment, thoughtless of his own convenience or health, he devoted himself unsparsingly to his never ending work; he carried with him constantly the worries of his calling. I know that the segregation of a portion of the German speaking colony from his church in Endell Street and the later relations between the two churches was, apart from the loss of his wife, the greatest sorrow in his latter years. He did not desire this schism, he regretted it wholeheartedly, knowing that it could not be for the good of the colony in the long run.

He who had received during his London residence no less than 26 different appeals from various parts of the world to accept ministries elsewhere, with a fine and noble loyalty to his London colony steadfastly refused to accept any of them.

Perhaps the most difficult of all human professions is that of a Minister of the Church. There are other professions, such as the medical one, entirely devoted to the service of others, but none calls for such complete self denial, such absolute selfishness as that of a Minister. It is not only the essence of his calling to assist, sustain and comfort at all times, it is often enough incumbent upon him also to find the funds to be able to do so and this latter necessity is probably the greatest worry in the life of a minister. By it he may be exposed to the criticism of the very people who could be his greatest help, whose assistance he has invoked, but who do not fully approve of his schemes.

Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme was therefore often faced with difficulties not of his own making, but which his dominant nature urged him to solve, single handedly if necessary. To this end he sacrificed a great deal of his none too abundant leisure, depriving himself of the comfort of contemplation and the care of his nerves. The calls upon him became ever more insistent, with the result that he of the giant stature and apparently unbounded vitality was worn out before his time. It may be truly said that this was done in the service of his Faith and of humanity.

Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme and the writer were intimate friends. They were together in all manner of circumstances, sometimes at the church in Endell Street sometimes at the Sunday school outings to a favoured spot in Surrey, at other times on Committees and again in private intercourse. Yet whenever and wherever they met, the writer has never known him to complain either about his work or his health. His outlook was ever hopeful, his judgment sound and lenient, his faith paramount. Regrets he had few, only connected with his life's great tragedy, but he never spoke of them, though they might be in his eyes and voice. He loved sunshine, greenery, peace, and one glimpse of them would apparently suffice to keep him going for another week, another month.



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