

Swiss currency

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VALAIS.

The 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Seiler Hotel was celebrated last week at Zermatt, and a bust of Alexander Seiler was unveiled in the hall of the Hotel Monte Rosa. The statue stands opposite the old stone oven against which Edward Whymper was leaning on July 15, 1865, while he told Alexander Seiler the dramatic story of his first ascent of the Matterhorn and of the catastrophe in which were involved the Rev. Charles Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas (whose body was never recovered), Robert Hadow, and the guide Michel Croz. Alexander Seiler was the pioneer of the development of Zermatt as an Alpine resort.

VAUD.

At the police court in Vevey the proprietor of the station restaurant in Caux, Otto Kurzen, was ordered to pay a fine of 300 Frs. and costs for the manslaughter of his friend M. Arthur Bock from Montreux. On Sept. 25th, 1929, the two went to hunt for chamoix at the foot of the Dent de Jaman, when Kurzen killed his friend by shooting him. His defence was that, from a distance the brown clothes Bock wore and the form of his hat led him to mistake Bock for a chamoix and caused him to fire.

RAPPERSWIL.

Last week a serious traffic interruption was caused on the railway between Rapperswil and Rütli. A large boulder was laid on the rails. The oncoming train, however, smashed the stone and, with the exception of the cowcatcher and some of the brake mechanism on the engine, no damage was done to the train. The same day a broken barrier was laid across the lines. A 22-year-old saddler who confessed to the deed has been arrested; he did it, he said, because he wanted to see the derailing of a train.

JUNGFRAUJOCH.

The 64-year-old John Stuben, a farmer from Gossliwil Solothurn, wanted to make a tour from the Jungfrauoch Hotel to the Eggishorn. He had hardly started when he had a heart attack, causing immediate death.

ANDERMATT.

Since the 2nd of September the English tourist W. C. Newton from Sheffield, who stayed at a hotel in Andermatt, has been missing. A wild hay maker saw him in the morning at the "Gigin" in the Felsental, between Andermatt and Hospental towards the St. Anna Glacier when he asked him the way to the Guspital and the Gurschen-Alp. About noon he met another hay maker near the avalanche protection walls near the Guspital. That was the last seen of him. A very heavy fog soon afterwards filled the whole of the Guspital and it is presumed that he met with an accident either going towards the valley or on his way back. The whole of the neighbourhood, including the St. Anna Glacier, has been thoroughly searched but without result.

WENGEN.

A few days ago the American mountaineer Miss O'Brian from Boston, together with Guide Adolf Rubis and his youngest brother, climbed the Finsteraarhorn by the 3,000-ft. high east wall. After 13 hours of uninterrupted climbing starting from the north east base, they reached the top at 6 o'clock at night. The two guides Fritz Annmatt and Gustav Hasler were the first to perform this feat in 1904, and it has not been repeated since 1906.

TICINO.

It is a not infrequent habit of the Italian papers, especially the "Squilla Italia," to magnify inn disputes and personal quarrels amongst Italians, or with Italians who are temporarily on Swiss soil, into political affairs and broadcast them as anti-Fascist acts. The following is rather worthy of note. The other day 2 Italian Fascists, V. Fratus and M. Signorelli, attacked the proprietor of the Ristorante Alpino in the village of Rivera in the Tessin. They began smashing up the furniture in the place and two policemen who were called in were received with threats. The two ruffians declared that they were Fascists and would do what they liked and nobody had anything to say. In the end they attacked the policemen, so that these had to use force and eventually the two barbarians were arrested and handcuffed. They have now to stand their trial for assaulting the proprietor Albertoni and also for assaulting the police.

SWISS FOREIGN LOANS.

During the first seven months of 1930 twelve foreign loans, totalling 233,700,000 francs, have been floated in Switzerland. Since the war Switzerland has been exporting capital to every country in Europe affected by the war except England. The loans floated thus far this year are—To Germany, four loans totalling 129,250,000 francs; to Belgium four loans, totalling 25,000,000 francs; to Chili two loans of about 25,000,000 francs; to Austria one loan of 20,000,000 francs; and to Italy a loan of 15,000,000. Since the war Switzerland has exported capital to the amount of 1,300,000,000 francs (approximately £52,000,000).

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HIGHEST RAILWAY IN EUROPE.

Preparations have now been started for the building of the highest railway in Europe to connect St. Moritz with the Piz Bernina. When completed, the railway, which will be alternately friction and cog-wheel on a one-metre gauge, will attain an altitude of 4,018 metres (13,390 feet), exceeding the record of the Jungfrau railway by 1,870 feet. The next highest point reached by rail or trolley on the Continent is the Mer de Glace at Chamonix, 3,161 metres, while the Gornergrat at Zermatt is slightly less, 3,093 metres.

The Piz Bernina line, which will cost around 12,000,000 Swiss francs, will be only 9,340 metres in length. It is planned to keep it open all the year round, so as to accommodate Alpinists in summer and devotees of skiing and snow sports in winter. Its point of departure will be at Morteratsch, on the present Bernina line, some twelve kilometres from St. Moritz. The exit from the tunnel, at which an hotel will be constructed as was done at Jungfrauoch, will be almost at the tip of the Piz Bernina.

With the completion of the new electrification programme which the Swiss Federal Railways are planning from 1931 to 1936, Switzerland will lead the world by a wide margin in electrified railways. To-day Switzerland has electrified 1,666 kilometres as compared with 1,625 for Italy, 1,557 for Germany, 580 for Austria, 488 for France, and 119 for Norway. The new programme, which calls for the transformation of 476 additional kilometres of line, will cost 81,000,000 francs and will give Switzerland a total of 2,142 kilometres of electrified railways out of 3,703 kilometres of normal gauge lines, or 57.8 per cent. Counting lines of all gauges Switzerland now has 4,894 kilometres, or 88.1 per cent. electrified.

One of Switzerland's oldest and best-known mountain railways, the exploitation of which was abandoned during the war, the Brienz-Rothorn railway, will also be reopened again shortly. Together with the Rigi and Pilatus railways, it brings to tourists one of the most beautiful views in the Bernese Oberland.

SWISS CURRENCY.

The value of the Swiss franc in the future will be identical with that of the gold franc as a result of a new series of laws before the Federal Chamber for the complete suppression of bimetalism. Bank-notes are now payable at the National Bank at any time in gold coin, bullion, or specie. The bulky five-franc silver pieces will be reduced in diameter from 37 to 31 millimetres and will no longer be accepted in unlimited amount as legal tender. Private individuals under the new law are obliged to accept payment only up to 100 francs in silver, ten francs in nickel, and two francs in copper coins. Only the gold coins of 10, 20, and 100 franc denominations are legal tender up to any amount. Private individuals may have their gold struck at the Mint at the rate of 3,444 4/9 francs per kilogram of fine gold.

FOREIGN RESIDENTS IN SWITZERLAND.

More than one-tenth of the entire population of Switzerland is made up of foreigners domiciled in the country, according to the federal census; 400,000 persons who do not bear Swiss nationality are permanently established in the Confederation for reasons of health or business or as political refugees. According to the census there are 150,000 Germans, 135,000 Italians, 60,000 French, and 60,000 from other countries. To these figures may be added about 15,000 people who live just over the frontiers and enter Switzerland daily to work.

The Swiss universities, especially those of Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich, Basle, Berne, Neuchâtel, and Fribourg, also have a high percentage of foreign students. Last year there were enrolled 384 Germans, 262 Poles, 173 Dutch, 143 French, 130 Hungarians, 148 Americans, 104 Rumanians, 96 Italians, 90 Letts, 77 Jugo-Slavs, 76 Bulgarians, 104 Asiatics, and 68 Africans. Of the registered students for the 1929-30 term 27.5 per cent. were foreigners.

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