

# Prepaid subscription rates

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1930)**

Heft 479

PDF erstellt am: **06.08.2024**

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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRING. LONDON.

VOL. 10—No. 479

LONDON, DECEMBER 27, 1930.

PRICE 3d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	{ 3 Months (13 issues, post free) - . . . . .	3/6
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SWITZERLAND	{ 6 Months (26 issues, post free) - . . . . .	Fr. 7.50
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(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postcheck-Konto Basle V 5718).

To All Our Readers

A

Prosperous New Year

## HOME NEWS

### FEDERAL.

#### REDUCTION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

The reduction of the membership of the National Council as recommended by the Federal Council has been sanctioned, the voting being 104 for reduction and 74 against.

#### THE WELTI AFFAIR BEFORE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

National Councillor Farbstein interpellated the Federal Council regarding the arrest of National Councillor Welti on the occasion of some communistic disturbances which took place some time ago at Bale. It was stated that M. Welti's arrest was illegal owing to the fact that Parliament was sitting at the time. Federal Councillor Haeberlin, chief of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, stated in his reply that the taking into custody of a member of Parliament during the session was indeed an infringement of the law, and he promised that necessary instructions would be given to the police authorities in order to avoid a recurrence.

#### SECRET AGENTS DEPORTED FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Government has decided to deport from Switzerland two French citizens belonging to the secret service of their country who tried to obtain from persons in Switzerland military information concerning a foreign power.

#### STATE HELP FOR THE EMBROIDERY INDUSTRY.

A grant of 1 million francs was voted by the National Council in order to support this industry which has suffered from a period of acute depression.

#### NEW CHRISTMAS STAMPS.

This year's Swiss series (in aid of child welfare work) continues the arms of the cantons from previous years. In the border of the stamp for the canton Uri, William Tell's famous apple is shown, with two arrows. The figure on the 30 centime stamp is the Swiss novelist who wrote under the pseudonym of Jeremias Gotthelf.

#### SWISS ELECTRICAL EXPORTS.

The value of the exports of electrical instruments and apparatus from Switzerland during the nine months ended with September last amounted to £1,266,200 as compared with £1,107,040 in the corresponding period of 1929. The nine months' exports of electrical machinery are returned as £1,092,400, and of electric locomotives at £102,680.

### LOCAL. ZURICH.

The international amateur figure-skating competitions organised by the Zurich Skating Club will be held at the Dolder Artificial Rink on February 7th and 8th, 1931. Full particulars of the contests, which are open to British amateur skaters, can be obtained from the Zürcher Schlittschuiclub, Dolder-Kunsteisbahn, Zürich 7. Entries close on January 29th. Sp.

### BERNE.

A happy event at the Bear Pit is expected for Xmas. As the accommodation is somewhat limited, three of the inhabitants, one five years and two two years old, had to be shot.

### SCHWYZ

The death is reported from Einsiedeln of Colonel Karl Gyr. The deceased was in 1917 in command of the 29th mountain regiment and he has been Commandant of Schwyz since the year 1921. V.

### GLARUS.

A Frenchman living at St. Quentin who was interned at Lintlhal during the war, has written to the authorities that he would be willing to take care of some of the inhabitants of the village. It will be remembered that Lintlhal had to be evacuated on account of the landslide danger of the Kilchenstock. St.T.

### BASLE.

M. Baumgartner, Professor of History at the University of Basle, has died at the age of 76. N.Z.

### NEUCHATEL.

The State Council has asked Hans Schmid, at present a member of the board of the Hypothekarkasse Berne, to make thorough investigations into the financial status of the Cantonal Bank. This institution has, as previously reported, suffered heavy losses. T.G.

According to a report from the "Suisse Liberale," the Chocolate Works of Suchard S.A. are to be transferred to Liestal. Heavy taxation is said to be the cause of the removal. V.

### ST. GALL.

Professor Dr. Adolf Dick, for many years Headmaster of the Kantonsschule, St. Gallen, has died at Wallenstadt at the age of 71. V.

### THURGAU.

The citizens of Frauenfeld have decided by vote that maternity expenses shall be met by the town exchequer. V.

### VALAIS.

A terrible crime took place at Monthey, where M. Rémy Berra, Manager of the branch of the Cantonal Bank, has been murdered. M. Berra was found lying on the floor of the bank premises with his head battered in; he was at once taken to the hospital, but soon after his arrival succumbed to his injuries. The police were able to arrest the murderer at Ollon on the same day; he is a Frenchman, called Albert Duboin. The motive of the crime seems to be robbery. It is reported that the assailant had an accomplice and the police are making frantic efforts to lay hands on him. M. Berra, the unfortunate victim, leaves a widow and eight children, the eldest of whom is 15 years old. N.Z.

### ST. MORITZ.

While the Leaning Tower of Pisa is the most famous "monument" of its kind in the world, it isn't the only one. St. Moritz, where devotees of winter sports are now gathering for an athletic Christmas, can boast of a leaning tower of its own.

One of the sights of this beautifully situated village, now celebrated all over the globe, is the tower of the old church, which has a very pronounced slant. It dates from 1573, and is the only part of the old church that is now standing. F.

### BADEN.

The police have been able to lay hands on two notorious burglars. They were caught red-handed whilst breaking into the house of the contracting firm of Heimgartner in Baden. The two criminals, Karl Woodtli and Eugen Bland, fired on the police when trying to escape, but fortunately without inflicting any injury. It is believed that various burglaries which were committed lately at the station buildings at Villmergen and Brengarten were the work of the prisoners. V.

### LAUSANNE.

A bookkeeper employed by the Municipal Tramway Corporation has been arrested on a charge of embezzlement. The amount in question exceeds 100,000 francs.

### L'ESCALADE

Les Genevois de Londres se sont réunis Samedi, 13 Décembre, au restaurant Pagani pour fêter l'Escalade sous la présidence de Monsieur R. de Cintra. Soirée pleine de gaieté et de patriotisme. Au dessert, la marmite traditionnelle ayant été brisée, Monsieur le Pasteur Hoffmann de Visne donna lecture des noms des citoyens tombés dans la lutte contre les Savoyards.

Monsieur Ed. Aubert parla de l'Epoque qui suivit l'Escalade jusqu'à la Paix de St. Julien. Monsieur L. Micheli, 1er Secrétaire de notre Legation, conta quelques souvenirs militaires. On entendit encore Messieurs Charmaux et Savoie. Nous notons aussi la présence de Messieurs Oltremare, Piaget, Ferrière et Dujerdil.

Cette soirée empreinte de patriotisme et de gaieté prouve la solidité de l'attachement des Genevois à leur petite République. E.A.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

### The Talkies in Switzerland.

I daresay most of our readers are ardent Talkie-Fans by now and they will be interested to read what is happening in Switzerland in this matter. Bioscope, 26th November, says:

In the days of silent films the renter solved the Swiss problem by having German, Italian and French titles and thus covered the multilingual population of this small country. The greater part of the population is German, with French next, and only the southern portions of the country Italian speaking.

Sound, however, increased the troubles of the renter and also of the exhibitor. It is much more expensive to introduce German, French and Italian "talkies" into the comparatively small sections of the country available as a market for each of these languages.

However, the demand for entertainment in Switzerland is increasing rapidly and three distinct classes of entertainment are well patronised—plays, films and music.

The Swiss are of an artistic temperament and extremely fond of theatrical representations. The price of seats, which to the British public would seem unbelievably high, does not deter the Swiss public from attending the theatre and cinema regularly. A good play or a good film is always a success, and, apparently, talking pictures have not greatly prejudiced the theatre-going public. French-speaking touring companies come from Paris to present French plays and the result is invariably successful. Italian touring companies are likewise a success.

A problem the cinema owner must meet in Switzerland is one which confronts the exhibitor in practically every European country. Musical evenings in cafés where classical or light music is presented are always popular. The young people who, in England or America, would attend the cinemas, are, in many cases, tempted to remain in the cafés for their coffee and listen to the music.

Eighty-two theatres are wired for the showing of talking pictures, of which 45 are Western Electric. Tests indicate clearly that the public are now critical of sound reproduction and, in most cases, blame the apparatus rather than the film. Swiss audiences are, perhaps, the most critical in Europe.

When the first talking picture theatres opened in Switzerland in August of 1929, they met with considerable criticism from the leading newspapers, but despite this fact, did good business with well-known dialogue films in English. In the spring of 1930, German sound films began to appear and met with great success. This marked the end of the dialogue picture in English. To-day they are almost impossible product for renter or exhibitor.

Following on the installations in the bigger towns, smaller centres even down to municipalities of under 10,000 people now have their sound movies.

While in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, German sound pictures are running almost exclusively, the French part has been badly handicapped by the lack of pictures in the French dialogue. This situation is being rapidly altered by the increasing production of the studios in Paris.

In the Italian-speaking centres either German or French pictures are being shown, and during the past year it was noted that most of the visitors to the summer and winter resorts of this section were Germans.

Films of the operetta type with pleasant music are usually the most successful with the Swiss public, but subjects of great dramatic value, crime and detective stories, are also much sought after.

That German producers have fully understood this situation is proven by the type of productions they have placed in Switzerland, such as "The Dreyfus Affair," based on the notorious French trial of some years ago, and "The Tiger," a production of the Edgar Wallace type.

It is interesting to note in those cases where silent cinemas are still running, pictures of the most lurid and melodramatic type are successful.