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# The Swiss Observer

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## FEDERAL.

### THE FREE ZONES.

The Government has now notified The Hague Court that the negotiations with France regarding the Free Zones dispute have had no result.

The decision of The Hague Court in July 1929 was to the effect that the Free Zones, as set up by the Vienna Treaty of 1850, were not suppressed by the Versailles Treaty, and a recommendation was passed on to the two countries hoping that a solution could be found before May 1st, which would be mutually satisfactory. Negotiations in December last were broken off after deliberations which lasted only two days. France insists on a Customs barrier at the frontier and Switzerland wishes to retain the Zones, a point of view which found the full support of The Hague judgment. The Hague Court will now—in conformity with last year's decision—be requested to finally settle the question.

### BASLE'S SHUNTING YARD.

The Swiss Federal Railways have provided the most up-to-date shunting yard in Europe at Basle. A large part of the European goods traffic passes through Basle and between 1,800 and 2,200 goods wagons are uncoupled every day.

### WIRELESS.

At the end of March there were 87,002 wireless sets in use in Switzerland, of which a large percentage in the Canton of Zurich.

### SWISS GYMNASTS IN ALGIERS.

The gymnastic societies of Klein-Basel, Langenthal and Meilen have left for Algiers where they will attend the 56th display of French gymnasts.

### AEROPLANE BUILDING IN SWITZERLAND.

The famous French aviator Doret has gone to Thun to take delivery of a Dewoitine machine which was built by the Federal Air Works. The machine will be used for stunt flying and has so far given entire satisfaction. It is built entirely of metal and of the same type as used by our Military Air Force.

### EMIGRATION.

During the first three months of this year 892 persons left Switzerland for countries overseas as against 970 during the same period of the preceding year.

### INTERNATIONAL REPARATIONS BANK.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors took place on April 22nd, and Basle's authorities arranged an official banquet in the evening. The agenda for the meeting was so heavy that it was expected to last at least two days.

### MITTELHOLZER HONOURED.

The Austrian Aero Club has presented to Walter Mittelholzer the golden Sports Medal in remembrance of his second aerial raid to Africa at the beginning of this year, in company with Baron Rothschild, who was also the recipient of a medal.

### NO TRIALS ON THE KLAUSEN THIS YEAR.

As no satisfactory arrangement was arrived at between Uri and Glarus the Zurich section of the A.C.S. will not be able to hold their usual trials on the Klausenpass this year and the competition will probably be transferred to the Grisons.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

The house of the well-known cartage contractors Korrodi in Fluntern was partially destroyed by fire. The damage caused amounts to about 30,000 francs.

Under the presidency of Mr. Baumann, municipal councillor, a committee was formed composed of the representatives of various sports associations, to study the question of the erection of a large stadium with covered hall on the 'Allmend,' at an approximate cost of 3 million francs.

The States Council has voted a grant of 200,000 francs for the construction of a colony at Appisberg-Männedorf, where sufferers from tuberculosis may follow an open-air occupation.

The N.Z.Z. reports that a young man has terrorised the inhabitants of two houses in Zurich. His method is to ask for money as soon as he obtains admission to a house, with threats of shooting. In one instance he actually fired six shots at a man who closed with him, fortunately without serious consequences. Other similar intruders have made their appearance at Bassersdorf and Wallisellen, where a masked man threatened to shoot a man and his wife. Although the police were telephoned for at once and made enquiries, they have so far been unable to trace the intruders.

### BERNE.

On Easter Monday Mr. Friedrich Dähler, formerly in charge of the orphanage at Brünnen, celebrated the 90th anniversary of his birth and, at the same time, his second silver wedding.

### BASLE.

Some time ago Basle's police heard of an affair in connection with the supposed smuggling of cocaine. Three persons were supervised and arrested in the moment when one of them handed over to one of his accomplices a parcel of 'cocaine' against which he received the sum of 3,000 marks. The police were not a little surprised when, on opening the parcel, it was discovered to contain ordinary cooking salt. They are now wondering whether the whole affair was a hoax, or a ruse on the part of the arrested men, and the enquiry is being continued.

### AARGAU.

A novel way to raise funds for a Home for Children was instituted at Lenzburg by the request for eggs as gifts from the neighbouring districts. 7,000 eggs were thus received and sold at 1½d. each and the proceeds handed over to the committee in charge of the new building.

### UNTERWALDEN.

The "Landsgemeinde" for Nidwalden will be held on April 27th. A new 'Landamman' will have to be elected and the meeting will decide on the following propositions: Cantonal taxes, acceptance of the Federal Civil Code, subventions for afforestation purposes and provisions for electrical energy for the canton.

### GENEVA.

The attempt of a man to poison his mother-in-law was frustrated by her refusal to eat some soup which had a bitter taste. The soup was finished by a dog with the result that he collapsed at once. Investigations were at once begun as it is suggested that the soup contained a strong dose of strychnine.

### FRIBOURG.

Mr. Johann Brulhart, director of the central prison for 40 years, has died at the age of 77. The deceased was also president of the board of administration of the "Freilanger Nachrichten" and from 1902 to 1927, was on the board of the "Banque Populaire Suisse."

### VAUD.

The Council of Yverdon has decided to apply for a Conversion Loan of 1,800,000 francs, to be issued at 99.4 per cent.

A military tribunal is investigating the case of a superior officer who is supposed to have prevented the delivery of "La Sentinelle" to a soldier.

Professor Bischoff of Lausanne university has again been called to serve as expert before the International Tribunal of Kattowitz and has left for Poland.

### VALAIS.

A conflict has broken out in the building industry and a meeting between workmen and employers at Sierre, which was presided over by States Councillor Broillet, had to be adjourned as the employers could not accept the demands of the workmen. Another meeting will be held at the end of the month with a view to settling the dispute.

A serious fire broke out in a barn at Muraz, near Monthey, which, owing to a high wind, and the scarcity of water, ended in a catastrophe

for the inhabitants. Six houses and many barns and out-houses were destroyed and seven families with 45 members are destitute. A lorry driver who discovered the out-break informed the various fire stations and rendered heroic services.

### TICINO.

Luigi Maccagni, who a year ago killed his brother by shooting him, was an Lugano sentenced to 18 years imprisonment and an indemnity of 7,000 francs. He was also ordered to pay 1,000 francs towards the costs of the case.

A serious railway accident occurred at Airolo when a shunting engine struck the rear of a goods train. The impact was so great that the engine and two wagons were thrown off the line. An employee on the goods train was badly hurt and died an hour after his arrival at the hospital.

## Lessons of the Basle Fair.

I have a little boy, and, like most fathers, have begun to reflect upon his future. It has been my good fortune to receive part of my education on the Continent, and, in subsequent years, to have travelled in every country in Europe, in India, throughout Africa and Australasia, and in the United States.

Looking back, I find that a knowledge of what people want, when they want it, and how they want it, a knowledge acquired from studying various races in their own territories, has given me a faculty of being able to determine what merchandise and commodities of universal consumption are likely to find a ready outlet in any of the markets of the world. And, with certain precision, also, I think I can say how goods of general usage in this country should be re-fashioned and re-dressed so as to find receptivity at the hands of buyers in different parts of the world.

There is no race under the sun like the British—as physical specimens, as to our system of justice, our democratic forms of government, our educational standards, culture and arts. Our excellence is probably due to the fact that we are healthy, virile hybrids. The people of the British Isles combine the distinctive qualities of the English, themselves varied, the Scotch, the Welsh and the Irish, each with its own particular genius.

On the Continent the Swiss have probably more in common with us than any other nation; and Switzerland itself is composed of four distinct nationalities—German, French, Italian, Romansch—combined in one national unit.

No matter what profession or calling my son will eventually follow, it is quite certain that, with the rapid development of communication and the general rise of standard of life throughout the world, the better will be his knowledge of other races and languages; the better his equipment for life.

Nowhere can one better acquire a knowledge of the presentation of goods, of their advertising and display, and of the commercial methods of other countries than at the great Continental Fairs—like, for example, that of Leipzig. But for the British people, in particular, I think there is another fair of importance equal to that of Leipzig, namely that of Basle.

At the annual Basle Fair, held in the middle of April, we find a people of similar characteristics to our own engaged in displaying their goods to the buyers of the world. The merchandise offered in this great fair is as varied as are the manufactures of our own country—from heavy engineering and vast hydraulic and electrical machinery to dairy-farming and rural arts and crafts. There is no one engaged in manufacture and in commerce, in husbandry or in craftsmanship, who cannot learn something from the enterprising Swiss.

In considering the education of my son, although I am looking some years ahead, I have therefore marked down the Basle Fair as one of the most important visits which he must make, so that from it he can learn valuable lessons from people, akin to himself, engaged like his own race in manufacture and in export trade, and which, like Great Britain, is virtually an island Power, surrounded on every side by strong competitive neighbours.

The Basle Fair this year commences on the 26th April, and I commend those who are eager for export trade to go thither and examine for themselves what the Swiss are doing to compete with a problem very similar to our own.

GRAHAM SETON in the *Glasgow News*.