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# The Swiss Observer

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## FEDERAL.

### DISASTER AT ST. MARGRETHEN.

A serious disaster has plunged the town of St. Margrethen (Rheintal) into deep mourning. — Adjoining the slaughter-house at St. Margrethen is situated a building belonging to the Kühlhaus Handels A.G. in Buchs, where a large quantity of animal food is stored in the garret, underneath of which are work rooms which are occupied by 60-70 workhands.

Last Thursday the woodwork of the roof suddenly collapsed burying between 40-50 people underneath. The fire brigade was at once summoned and after many hours of strenuous work they managed to extract about 40 workhands more or less seriously injured, unfortunately five female and four male workhands lost their lives, and it is feared that the death roll will be still further increased. The authorities have at once ordered a thorough investigation concerning the cause of the disaster.

### M. MOTTA'S BROADCAST MESSAGE TO AMERICA.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, has broadcasted a message to the United States of America. He has sent cordial greetings to the numerous Swiss living in our sister republic across the sea. The President has pointed out the difference in ethics and customs of the two countries, which often seem to contradict each other, and yet are a valuable asset in promoting international goodwill and fellowship. Switzerland, he said, is one of the pioneers of liberty, and without liberty the United States of America would lose their raison d'être. He expressed the wish that America would take an active part in international affairs thus helping to solve the many economic problems which can only successfully be tackled by international collaboration.

### DIPLOMATIC CHANGES IN BERNE.

It is rumoured that M. de Marcellis, French Ambassador in Berne will shortly exchange his post for that of Vienna; as his successor M. de Laboulaye, directeur adjoint des affaires politiques at the Quai d'Orsay, is mentioned.

### SWISS PROFESSOR'S INVENTION.

Professor Kurt Weissinger, Professor of Locomotion Construction at the Swiss Federal Polytechnic at Zurich, has just given a demonstration of an ultra rapid train on which he has been working for a number of years. He claims it can reach a speed of 150 to 300 m.p.h.

The invention consists of a new application of the propeller system — a kind of aeroplane on rails — with an anti-derailing device.

A committee has been set up at Zurich to further the execution of the professor's plans. The Federal railway authorities have undertaken to provide a line three miles long for tests with a half-size model.

### NEW KEEPER OF THE FEDERAL ARCHIVES.

The Federal Council has nominated Prof. Dr. Léon Kern from Fribourg, to be the new keeper of the Federal Archives, in succession to Professor Türler, who is relinquishing his post by the end of this year.

### SWISS BANKS' POSITION.

The quarterly statement of the position of the leading Swiss commercial banks, numbering nine, shows a balance-sheet total of 6,747,516,000 francs. Current accounts amount to Frs. 2,480,359,000. The Swiss Bank Corporation of Basle is the largest of the banks included, with a balance-sheet total of Frs. 1,388,482,000, which is slightly in excess of that of the Credit Suisse of Zurich. The other banks included in the statement are the Banque Populaire Suisse, Leu et Cie., Banque Federale, Union de Banques Suisses, the Banque Commercial de Basle and the Banque D'Escompte Suisse.

## SWISS REPRISALS.

It is reported that by way of reprisal the Swiss Government has placed embargoes on all Post Office accounts above 50 francs held in Switzerland by Austrians resident in Austria. It is explained that Swiss importers failed to comply with the law to pay into the Swiss National Bank amounts owing by them to Austrians for goods imported into Switzerland.

## SWISS IMPORT PROHIBITION.

The Swiss Government has, as a temporary measure, forbidden the import of rayon. From October 12th onwards an import licence is required to send rayon into Switzerland.

This measure is chiefly directed against Italy, which whom Switzerland is now negotiating regarding tariff changes on rayon. But meanwhile it applies to all countries.

## ELECTRIC COOKING IN SWITZERLAND.

Among the papers read at the recent congress in Paris of the International Union of Producers and Distributors of Electricity was one by M. A. Burri on the progress of electric cooking in Switzerland, in the course of which he stated that the number of electric cookers and boiling plates in that country had increased from 93,000 in 1926 to 172,590 in 1931, and the corresponding load from 167,000 to 468,355 kW. The bulk of the users were employees and artisans, these representing 56 per cent. of the total. So far as hotel and large electric cooking installations were concerned, only relatively small progress had been made in Switzerland, there being only 636 such installations out of about 30,000 in the country.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

M. Georg Strohl-Richert, former proprietor of the Hotel des Balances in Basle, has died in Zurich at the age of 69.

The deficit in the cantonal accounts for 1933 will reach nearly 9 million francs.

Serious disorders broke out during a cinema performance at the "Kino Palace" at Zurich, where a Russian film entitled "Kain and Artem, the Volga giant" was shown. Stink bombs were thrown and boing interrupted the performance. When the police arrived the ringleaders escaped by a side door.

### BERNE.

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of M. Fritz Rösch, Kreispostdirektor, for reasons of health. The government has conveyed its thanks to M. Rösch for the services he has rendered.

F. Schürch, for many years head of the cantonal military tax administration in Berne, has surrendered to the police after various irregularities had been detected in his accounts. So far as can be ascertained the defalcation amount to 80,000F.

Jacob Wilhelm, the former cashier of the Swiss Bank Clerks Association, who has helped himself to the funds of this institution to the tune of 92,000F., has been sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment.

The budget for 1933 of the canton of Berne estimates a deficit of 2,018,545F. or 369,468F. more than last year. The authorities propose a reduc-

tion in wages to all cantonal employees of 8 per cent.

Maria Waser, the author of the book "Land unter Sternen" has been honoured by her native town Herzogenbuchsee. On the occasion of a meeting of the "Gemeinderat," the authoress was made an honorary citizen of the town. M. Moser, President of the municipality handed her the document eulogizing her great merits.

In an inn at Boujean near Bienne, a young man started to distribute 20F. notes to whoever entered the Restaurant. He was invited to visit the police station where an amount of altogether 4,000 notes were found on him, which sum he had withdrawn from the Bank that day. It was found that he was previously an inmate of a lunatic asylum, and the authorities have made arrangements to have him interned again.

## BASLE-COUNTY.

M. Emilio Müller from Sissach, a well-known painter has died at the early age of 35.

## FRIBOURG.

Four of the ringleaders of the riots which took place at Fribourg recently were condemned to between 4 and 8 months imprisonment.

## GENEVA.

Professor Louis Duparc, Professor of mineralogy at the University of Geneva has died at Geneva at the age of 66.

The organisers of the annual Swiss Motor Show in Geneva have fixed March 10th to 19th as the dates for the 1933 Exhibition.

## APPENZELL.

M. Julius Bachtold, embroidery manufacturer of Herisau has died aged 87. He entered the embroidery industry with Alder and Meyer of Herisau in the early sixties and in 1869 came to London in the interests of Steiger & Co. In 1881 he rejoined his original firm as partner, and in 1884 became sole proprietor.

## SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Dr. Heinrich Pletscher, will resign from his post as town President of Schaffhausen, at the end of this year; he has occupied this position since 1919.

## VALAIS.

Mme. Veuve Favre-Choupin of Martigny has celebrated her 100th birthday; she has received on that occasion the congratulations of the town and cantonal authorities.

## VAUD.

Burglars entered the offices of the Compagnie Générale de Navigation at Ouchy where they took away an amount of 500 Swiss francs, a considerable sum of French francs were left untouched.

## TIGINO.

The police has arrested one Swiss and two Italian subjects, they will be charged with espionage.

Lechini, who was condemned to 10 years penal servitude for having murdered his wife was conveyed to the prison at Lugano. When one of the warders was entering his cell he found the prisoner had hanged himself with a sheet.

## FOOTBALL.

October 23rd, 1932.

Austria .....3 Switzerland .....1  
in Vienna.

Let us acknowledge right away that this result can be written down as of credit to our National Eleven and as a proof of the advance made by them in the art of football, since our disastrous defeat in Basel by 8:1 last November. The 60,000 spectators expected something better, very much better, from their "wonder team" and fickle as the public ever is, in all parts of the world, gave expression to their feelings by a perfect pandemonium of booing and whistling against their erstwhile favourites.

The teams lined up: Switzerland:—Séchehaye (Servette); Minelli, Weiler (Grasshoppers); Spiller (Lausanne Sports), Imhof (Biel), Gilardoni (Lugano); v. Känel (Biel), Trello (Grasshoppers), Gobet (Blue Stars), Xam (Grasshoppers), Jaeck (Basel);

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE (London Group)  
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