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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève.)

### FEDERAL.

#### THE WAR AND SWISS PRIVATE PROPERTY.

There are over a thousand Swiss whose claims to compensation (in the aggregate about 75 million francs) have been recognised as being in conformity with international agreements and "guarantees." The Federal Council has made all possible representations to the states concerned without the slightest result and has reported to the Federal Chambers that any further remonstrances and protestations will be futile. The National Council, however, has disavowed by an overwhelming majority the intention of our executive and has invited the Federal Council to continue the negotiations and to bring the matter before the council of the League of Nations.

#### THE GOLD STANDARD AND U. S. A.

It is stated that the Swiss Confederation will continue to pay the interest in gold on the 5½% Loan contracted in America in 1924 although the interest on Swiss investments in America will be remitted in depreciated dollar currency.

#### A SWISS PUBLISHER'S ACHIEVEMENT.

According to reports, so far not officially confirmed, a publishing firm in Milan whose principal is a well-known Swiss has secured Signor Mussolini's copyright. The firm will have the sole right, for a period of ten years, of printing and publishing any books or speeches by the Italian Prime Minister.

#### THE S.F.R. AND THEIR COMPETITORS.

The unfair competition of the privately owned motor transport undertakings against the Swiss Federal Railways has after lengthy negotiations been disposed of. An agreement has been concluded which reserves long distance traffic to the railways "short" distance being the domain of road transport.

#### SWISS FACTORIES AND THE DEPRESSION.

The number of factories operating during the 12 months to end of December last has decreased by 111, and the number of workpeople by 40,580.

#### OUR "FASCISTS."

The many small political groups, so called "Fronten," which each in their own particular fashion are anxious to emulate, or improve upon, the German pattern do not seem to capture the imagination of the populace. The section commanded by Col. Sonderegger who has been somewhat discredited on account of ascribed dealings with the Russian Soviet convened a mass-demonstration for last Sunday at Sursee (Lucerne). Apart from the valiant colonel, Dr. Ursprung of Zurich was billed to address the meeting which consisted of a few lorryloads of henchmen that had been sent from Berne, Basle and Zurich. Before the orators were able to commence their invocation it was found desirable to clear the hall of a few muscular local farmers; the juvenile stewards, however, were not quite up to their task and an invigorating contest of fist-cuffs was the result. A strong force of police, which the authorities kept in readiness, restored order. Though peace and quietness reigned inside the hall a lusty jodelling competition intermingled with a "Hand and Muhl Harmonica" concert outside muzzled the harangues of the official speakers. In the end the "would be patriots" had to beat an ominous retreat to the accompaniment of the jeers and gibes of the mocking bystanders.

#### THE FUTURE OF THE "STUMPE."

The additional tobacco duty imposed last month seems to result in a considerable reduction of smoking if the manufacturers concerned are to be believed. It is stated that of the 6,000 hands

employed in about a hundred small factories half will have to be dismissed, and that the thrifty man's Havana will cost 64% more. As is the case with their famous prototypes no machinery is used; it is all hand labour, and some of the coveted brands will become a whiff of the past.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

Nearly two million francs have been left to various institutions by Fräulein Susanna Bertha Reiser who died on June 16th at the age of 91. The Zoological Garden (Zurich) will receive Frs. 500,000, the "Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft" Frs. 250,000 and Frs. 100,000 each go to the Municipal Theatre, the "Tonhalle," the central library and the University. The remainder is distributed among a large number of hospitals and general utility institutions amongst which figure the Swiss Benevolent Societies in Paris and Berlin with Frs. 25,000 each.

A recent issue of the "Kämpfer," a leading communist publication in Switzerland, contains a full apology for and an unconditional recantation of slanderous attacks printed in previous issues against the six catholic bishops in our country.

Popular indignation is running strong against one of the German professors at the local university, Dr. W. Freytag. He was appointed district leader of the German Nazis in Zurich, an office which he has now relinquished, but his removal from the teaching staff is being insisted upon in certain quarters.

#### BERNE.

Damage to the tune of nearly half a million francs has been caused by a fire which destroyed part of the factory and stock of "Progressa," a large wood-working undertaking at Oberburg near Burgdorf.

#### ST. GALL.

The trustees of the "Eduard Sturzenegger" fund have distributed, as a first of August present, about Frs. 10,000 to 450 aged embroiderers. The trust was created about two years ago when this well-known benefactor bequeathed Frs. 200,000 for the purpose of alleviating the lot of necessitous workers in this particular industry.

#### SOLOTHURN.

The cantonal accounts for the year 1932 close with a deficit of nearly four million francs; a specially appointed financial expert is preparing a report with a view to economies.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE "1st OF AUGUST."

The first of August celebrations took an official character for the first time in 1891 when on the 600th anniversary a general chiming of bells was heard throughout Switzerland at eight in the evening. Seven years later a petition was presented to the Municipal Council of Berne by the late Mr. Rudolf Mürger, to the effect that the chiming of bells should be repeated every year on the 1st of August. The request was passed on by the council to the cantonal authorities and by the latter to the Federal Council. The cantons were finally consulted and eighteen of them were in favour from the beginning.

On the 22nd July 1899 the Cantons were invited by the Federal Council to bring about a general chiming of bells from 8.30 to 8.45, and five years later this time was fixed half an hour earlier. At the same time it was suggested that flags and pennants should be flown from public buildings. In 1911 the offices of the Federal administration were for the first time closed at 5 p.m.; since then early closing on the first of August has become general.

A petition presented to the Federal Council in 1916, with a view of turning the first of August into a public bank-holiday did not find favour with the two Houses of Parliament. It was held that solemn chimings calling for a few moments of meditation after a day's toilsome work was more dignified than a whole day of festivities and jollifications.

Bonfires never formed part of the official commemoration; they are a remnant of ancient folklore. Since 1910 collections (by the sale of badges, etc.) for the benefit of some Swiss institution of general utility have formed a popular feature of the First of August.

## Notes and Gleanings.

By KYBURG.

### Bank Holiday:

You will all have plenty of time to read your Swiss Observer and inwardly digest the excellent articles written for your delectation and instruction or amusement. Most of you, I take it, will be at the sea-side, or else roaming among the hills and dales of our beautiful English countryside, that is, if you are not among the very fortunate ones who, like our friend A. ST, have gone to our native land, there to drink in the beauties of our Eternal Alps, our lovely lakes, our forest-clad hills and the countryside which, seen from on high, like the Rigi, for instance, looks ever so much like a mosaic or a cross word puzzle, with the colours of the little acres and fields making a lovely pattern, intersected here and there by silvery rivers. Maybe, of course, that you who are over there and to whom, we less fortunate ones, send the old greeting "Von ferne sei herzlich gegruesst" drink in other good things apart from the beauties of nature and, maybe again, you wonder afresh why it is that in England no Brewery has yet found the real secret to brew real Lager beer, although, to my mind, Wessex Lager comes very near the real thing and is, at any rate, a very good substitute for it in hot weather. Not that I despise Röstic Ale or kindred beverages. However, this threatens to turn into an advertisement for well-known brands of liquid food of which, as the slogan goes, "a glass a day keeps the doctor at bay" and, as I shan't get any commission, nor even a crate of the stuff for boosting it, I will cease. Besides, there are among our readers some very good people who drink nothing stronger than Barley water and I might make them go off their New-Year's resolutions if I kept on.

However, Bank-Holiday is near. It's the last Bank-Holiday this side of Christmas, so make the most of it and enjoy yourself while you may and while the sun is shining. According to the latest weather reports it will be a very fine and hot Bank-Holiday and there will be little excuse for any fit person to stay indoors. And here comes a WARNING: Like everything else, the SUN can also be abused. I draw your attention to the following article from "Lady" 20th July, and urge you to draw your lesson from it:

### This Sunbathing Folly:

Sun bathing is fashionable, and is being written about daily by men of standing and renown. Yet much of what is being written is rubbish.

Sunshine is dangerous. When the ignorant apply it to their bodies it can be as harmful and uncertain a plaything as a still deadly Mills' bomb. During the Whitsuntide heat wave there were many opportunities for observing the foolhardiness of this blind abandoning of the human body to the sun. One saw people lying about in the broiling sunshine for hours on end, their faces and bodies turning a horrid red, their skin burnt off as though boiling water had been poured over it, and one saw, too, ambulance men busily engaged in treating cases of sunstroke, the result of this folly.

#### Scientific Sun Cures.

Little children, some of them but a few weeks old, were placed unprotected in the open sunshine. Mothers thought it was for the good of their children's health, but many little ones must have spent days and nights of agony following this exposure to heat. Does sunshine have any beneficial effect on the human body? Of course it does. It is like certain medicinal drugs, however. A correct dose is a boon, an overdose is harmful. How, then, is one to know the correct dose?

The only safe way is to make sure that too much sun-bathing is not indulged in, and to err on the right side by not taking enough if any uncertainty exists. Peeling and blistering are signs that injury is being done to the sun-bather. Frequently this peeling and blistering does not commence until some time after a person has removed his, or her, body from under the sun's rays. Thus it will easily be seen that there is real need for under, rather than over, indulgence.

To obtain the maximum of benefit from sunshine, the aim should be a steadily deepening tan acquired during a period of several days. Tan is the skin's defence against the

harmful elements contained in sunshine. Once a good, smooth tan has been acquired, the skin can resist these elements and allow the penetration of the beneficial qualities without harm.

For a number of years I have had the opportunity of studying scientific sun-cure as practised in the Swiss Alps by the world's most renowned sun-specialist, Dr. Auguste Rollier. Here, in a mountain village, some 5,000 feet above sea level, one sees sunshine applied scientifically to cure a multitude of complaints ranging from tuberculosis in all its forms to that terrible malady, rheumatoid arthritis. On the beaches in England you will see sun-bathers anointing their limbs with oils as a protection against blistering. In Switzerland you will see neither oils nor blisters. The Alpine sun specialists treat their medium with too much respect.

The sun-bather starts his treatment modestly. He exposes first his foot, then his ankle, then up to his knees, and so on, by steadily increasing periods of time, which commence with a mere five minutes. The skin begins to show signs of pigmentation, and slowly the patient acquires a deep mahogany shade of tan which allows him to take the full dose of sunshine. All the time he is watched by qualified nurses, his temperature is taken and his pulse observed. If any ill effects are noticed, he is withdrawn from the sunshine immediately.

What is the result of all these precautions? I have seen poor, emaciated people, riddled with tuberculosis — spine, hip and limbs eaten up with this disease. I have seen these unhappy folk brought to Switzerland, their bodies encased in wicked plaster-of-paris "collars." I have seen these casts broken and taken away from the bodies of these living skeletons, so that the carefully applied rays of sunshine can play round their sun-starved limbs. I have seen these people get up from their beds, cured, after one, two, three or more years in the sunshine.

One only needs to look at the limbs of these people to see what has been done for them. They look well-nourished, clean-limbed, muscled and content. Sunshine definitely feeds tissue and muscle, and the patient invariably grows too big for his clothes.

#### *Drink Barley Water.*

Few people in England realise the absolute necessity of drinking while taking the sun. The sun-bather perspires more than he realises; he must drink as much as possible to counter the effects of this perspiration. Sunshine will sometimes have a harmful effect on the heart and kidneys, so that it is a wise proceeding to cover these organs with a dark pad of cloth at first. Drinking helps the kidneys, whether there is any weakness there or not, therefore, when you wish to lie in the sunshine, drink. Barley water is a simple thing to make and is the most suitable beverage.

In mid-winter in the Swiss Alps, men and women lie out in the sunshine, clad only in loin-cloths. Snow lies thickly on the ground, and the shade temperature is well below freezing. Yet these people's bodies are burned almost black, and there is not a shiver amongst them. Sunshine and fresh air have rendered them impervious to cold. The climate of England will seldom allow this. But when the opportunity does occur — as it did on several occasions last winter — sun-bathing can be a great help to bodies which have become weakened by work in the darkness of our city offices and buildings.

One final word of warning. If you have auburn hair or fair colouring, be doubly careful how you take your sun-bath. The skin of fair people does not pigment easily; in some cases it does not tan at all; there is then nothing to give protection from the ray which burns the flesh. Fair people can often benefit as much by lying in the shade on a sunny day. They thus obtain the goodness contained in the indirect, reflected ray. Sunshine in moderation is the gift of God; in excess it is a curse.

J.D.S.

As we grow older and, perhaps, wiser or at least try to impress the younger generation of the fact, which, like most facts, is purely relative, we begin to realise, slowly and painfully, the justice of the concluding remark of the above article. We begin to experience that "a little bit of what you fancy does you good" or, in other words, as used by Mother when we were very young "it's best to get up from the table when you feel you could still eat some more."

It is not within the purposes of Nature that the young should believe this. Hence the eternal divergence of opinion between young and old, so aptly expressed in the words: "si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait."

Those delightful evenings spent in drinking beer when we were young students — fortunately,

I understand that Sport is now replacing much of that "Comment-drinking" we used to think so frightfully honorific — laid the foundations for much of our present-day rheumatism or "Zipperlein" and what seemed very funny to us then, is not half so funny now when we actually experience it! An early drink of hot water with a pinch of Kruschen taken over long periods and very regularly gradually ousts the enemy from our system, or, at least, keeps him down, but, the experience is there, all the same.

As with bodily experiences, so with those of the mind. Too much of anything is against Nature's laws. Too much freedom, for instance, develops into licentiousness. Too much Hitlerism creates discontent and sullen unrest, a damped down fire which, sooner or later, will burst into open flame.

These and similar thoughts are produced in my mind by reading the following article from "South Wales Argus" 17th July, entitled

#### **Switzerland and Freedom:**

At a time when Tyranny stalks unabashed through half Europe, — when Liberty is despised and democratic government is suppressed in many lands, — when in all countries there are some who give a new turn to the old persecuting spirit, it is good to know that Switzerland, one of the ancient homes of liberty, is resisting Hitlerism. The outcome of efforts to establish a Nazi supremacy and to imitate the methods of Germany has been a revival of political life.

In Switzerland an effort was made to place the Nazi organisation above the law — to ignore the police, and to set up a force capable of defying them. The Swiss Nazis tried to silence criticism and drive out opponents. It is to the honour of Switzerland that public opinion was strong enough to prevent the latter, and that the forces of law and order proved stronger than the forces of usurpation. As the result of the assault upon Liberty there has come a revival of political life, and expressions of renewed faith in the old democratic institutions. Everywhere Freedom is threatened; everywhere those who have faith in Democracy must recognise the danger.

Freedom is not a free gift to mankind. It has to be bought and paid for. It has to be defended. The price of freedom is sacrifice. When the strong, the wise, the gifted, the fortunate, the wealthy are willing to sacrifice their advantages, their pre-eminence, their riches to the common good; when they are prepared to recognise in practical ways the obligation to share with the weak, the poor, and the unintelligent the gifts of Nature, the material well-being, due to scientific advance and mechanical invention, and the political privileges which are the rights of men and women because of their humanity, — when all they are prepared to give to all what they claim for themselves, Freedom will be secure. But in a world so faulty as ours, the free working of democratic institutions, corrected and directed by an educated public opinion, is the only defence for Liberty, the only assurance of Justice.

The history of the World since 1918 will form a very complicated chapter to study for the rising generation and, in that respect I am glad my school days are over. On the other hand, it is possible that what seems almost impenetrably mixed up and dark to us, may seem much clearer to future generations.

I wonder whether that old slogan "too old at forty" will obtain a new lease of life on the strength of the middle and the frightful international upset which these last 15 years have brought forth. What I mean is, will future generations realise that it will be better to entrust Statesmanship to YOUNG PEOPLE likely to make big mistakes of judgment, but burning with the zest of youth to DO SOMETHING, rather than, as we have done, to ELDER STATESMEN, cautious, trained in all the wiles and ruses of Diplomacy with a Capital "D" and who, as experience seems to show, manage to disintegrate the economic and social fabric of the human family, because they are content to act as brakes to the pushers, rather than to lead?

Again, will the fact that in some countries the WOMEN HAVE THE VOTE be counted as progress by future historians or the reverse?

In Switzerland women have not got the vote, except for church and school and, I believe, in some Cantons, for poor law matters. The men manage the purely political and financial side of the Government. Is that not perhaps a proper way, seeing that Swiss women are co-educated with men and therefore, very much superior, in mental outlook and understanding to women in some other countries. I have talked to many women in Switzerland about this "votes for women" business and in most cases they have explained to me that they were not at all keen in being granted political votes. For anyone who knows Switzerland, its standard of education and

culture, this point of view of its women is perfectly understandable and if you read in the following article that Switzerland's "Liberalism is marred by the fact that women have not the vote and take no part in public life" then you know that Miss F. L. Josephy the author of that article is not quite fully informed of the state of things in our homeland. Having said this, I will now let you enjoy an otherwise very interesting article, published in the NEWS CHRONICLE on 24/7/33 under the title

#### **Youth of Six Nations Talk Liberalism Amid the Alps:**

Forty young people belonging to six different nations, all in bathing-suits; a grassy slope surrounded by pine-trees; a cool green swimming-pool and a hot afternoon.

But for two and a half hours, while the sun shone and the water tempted, those forty Young Liberals sprawled under the trees listening fascinated while a brave man from Germany, who had come on the very evening of his wedding-day and literally at the risk of his personal liberty (rumours are already current that he was arrested on his return home) told them of the march of events in Germany.

He had already lost his job because of his political convictions — "everyone who does not agree with the Government is a Marxist" he told us, and "a Marxist is someone whose job someone else wants" — and his future is more than uncertain; but he has no rancour against his country, only sorrow, and the conviction that not international boycott but universal friendliness can bring the government to their senses.

#### *All Set for the Young.*

It was a fascinating week. Seelisberg stands 2,500 feet above sea-level, and from the terrace of the hotel you look sheer down on to the jade-green Lake of Lucerne, with its toy steamers and model village, the nearer mountains mirrored in its shimmering surface, snow-capped giants towering in the distance.

With its swimming pool and its tennis court, its walks and its flowers, its bright sunshine and pungent, aromatic "Swiss" scent there could be no better setting for a conference of youth.

About twenty Swiss, ten Dutch (the exchange is all right for them), two Danes, a German, a Frenchman and a Briton, we talked and walked and played and danced together, and discussed Young Liberal organisation in our various countries. Culture and Nationalism in Europe, Disarmament, and Economics and the Modern State. The language of this year's conference was German, and such interpretation as was needed was provided by a versatile Dutchman, who can make a speech equally well in English, French, German or Dutch.

For the most part, however, the delegates found no difficulty in understanding one another, and for sheer insight into other people's point of view a week in such circumstances has no rival.

#### *Where We Split.*

On most subjects there was a fair amount of agreement. We deplored the disappearance of democracy in Europe; agreed that for European pacification there must be disarmament as completely and rapidly as possible and the abolition of the private manufacture and sale of arms — France, as usual, wanted "moral" disarmament, i.e., security, to come first; disagreed slightly on questions of Treaty revision; and parted company completely on the question of economics: France, Denmark, and Switzerland being for an "économie dirigée" (national planning), Holland and Great Britain standing firm for freedom from government interference.

There are 16,000 Young Liberals in Switzerland which claims the oldest Liberalism in Europe, marred, to the British and Dutch mind, by the fact that women have not the vote and take no part in public life. So finally we went back to Lucerne, where the Lucerne Young Liberals, 6,000 strong, gave a banquet to the delegates which lasted from one till four. The ten speeches included a vote of thanks to two Swiss Liberal M.P.s, who, evidently believing cleanliness to be next to Liberalism, had arranged for the free use of the swimming pool to the delegates.

At the very last Dr. Steinmann faintly reminiscent of Lord Snowdon in looks and Secretary of the Swiss Liberal Party, suggested that the way to achieve agreement and progress in world affairs was to send the young people as delegates to international conferences.

I have already dealt with that concluding sentence in the above article. So like a woman to put the most intriguing thought at the end, in the "p.s." as it were!

And now, let's see whether we can win that tombstone competition on Bank-Holiday morning!