

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1934)

Heft: 679

Rubrik: Home news

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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: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 13—No. 679

LONDON, OCTOBER 27, 1934.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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



HOME NEWS

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

FEDERAL.

NEW ARMY-CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS.

The Federal Council has promoted Colonel Rud. Miescher, commander of the 4th Division, to the post of Army-Corps Commander, in succession to Colonel Biberstein, who recently died. Colonel Miescher will be at the head of the 3rd Army-Corps.

Colonel Eugen Bircher, hitherto in command of the 12th Infantry Brigade, has been promoted to colonel of division, taking over the command of the 4th division, which became vacant through the promotion of Colonel Miescher.

Colonel Miescher was from 1914-1931 a member of the government of the canton of Basle. At the outbreak of the war he was on the staff of the 2nd Army-Corps. As major, he commanded the 54th battalion, and later on took over the leadership of the Infantry-regiment 22. In 1927, he was entrusted with the command of the Infantry-Brigade 13, and four years later he succeeded to the command of the 4th Division. Colonel Miescher is 54 years old.

Colonel Bircher was born in 1882, and before he took over a successful Army career he was a medical doctor, he is at present commander of the Infantry-Brigade 12. Colonel Bircher is also President of the Swiss Army officers Association. He has the reputation of a brilliant leader of troops.

100TH JUBILEE OF THE CANTONAL BANK IN BERNE.

The Cantonal Bank of Berne has celebrated last Saturday their hundredth birthday anniversary. The official "Festakt" took place at the Session Hall of the Grand Council, where over three hundred guests were present, amongst them Federal Councillor Minger, and representatives of the Federal, cantonal and municipal authorities, as well as various delegations from the banking and commercial world.

M. Stauffer, head of the government of the canton of Berne, extended to the Bank the congratulations of the Bernese government, thanking the Management for their help which they have given during a century to the commercial and industrial community of the canton.

States-Councillor Moser, Chairman of the Board of Directors, gave an exposé of the achievements of the institution since its Foundation. He said that the turnover in 1835 amounted to 7,893,000 frs., the staff then numbered 6. In 1910 the figure of the turnover reached the figure of 2,560,450,000 frs. and the staff numbered 178. Ten years later the turnover increased to 7,734,833,000 frs. with a personnel of 447, and in 1933 a turnover of 6,131,628,000 frs. with a staff of 500 was registered.

M. Spycher, President of the Grand Council mentioned, as a point of interest, that in 1834 the State Budget of the canton of Berne showed a total revenue figure of 2,515,351 frs., with a net surplus of 251,137 frs. Dr. Guggisberg, the cantonal Finance Minister pointed out, the important rôle which the institution played in the capacity of bankers to the numerous communities of the canton, and the liberal financing of the railways and electric power stations.

M. Aellig, Manager of the Cantonal Bank, who has been connected with the institution for the last 53 years, gave an interesting comprehensive of the achievements of the Bank, he pointed out, that apart from the Head Office in Berne, the institution possesses altogether 36 Branch and Agency Offices in 37 towns and villages of the canton.

Later in the day a Banquet was held at the Casino at which 900 persons took place, including the various authorities, guests and the whole staff of the Bank. Director Ryffel, from the Federal Finance Dept. delivered the greetings of the Federal Council.

The following speakers also spoke: M. Merz (President of the Bern. Hypothekarkasse); States-Councillor P. Scherer (Basle) on behalf of the "Verbandes der schweiz Kantonalbanken"; General-Manager Jöhr of the Crédit Suisse for the "Kartell schweiz. Banken"; General Manager Schnyder von Wartensee of the Swiss National Bank; M. Raafaub for the "Einwohnergemeinde"; and M. Degenmois (Münster) for the "Bernischen Gemeinden" and professor Dr. Amonn, on behalf of the University of Berne.

SWISS RAILWAY PROBLEM.

One of the most important factors in Swiss national life, the State railways, is threatened with financial strangulation.

The railway system itself is technically excellent, but in order to pay the rather high salaries and wages the tariffs are the highest in the world. In the best of times the State railways yielded only very small surpluses, while for the past two years they have been run at a loss of about Frs. 50,000,000 per annum, and the prospect for this year is no brighter.

The enterprise is already burdened with an enormous debt, amounting to about Frs. 3,300,000,000, and it is able to pay the interest only on about two-thirds of this sum. The fact that interest on over Frs. 1,000,000,000 has to be provided from the taxes, and the certainty that this obligation will increase every year, are now alarming the business men as well as the taxpayers.

As there is no prospect of reform by political methods a large number of prominent persons have signed a petition for a referendum in the matter and are endeavouring to obtain the support among the public required for the legal application of this measure. This step has been rendered the more urgent by the growing popularity of motor carriage for goods and passengers.

The signatories say that the only hope for the State railways lies in de-politicising them and in making them economically responsible. They propose that the railways shall be self-administering, but under the control of the State. This is the system that has been adopted and works well for the National Bank, the cantonal banks, the production of electric power and fire insurances.

The signatories state further that the technical efficiency of the railways and the fitness of the personnel, which are beyond question, do not suffice and that the conduct of the enterprise must be in the hands of men responsible to it alone who will administer it on sound business principles. It is proposed that half of the capital shall remain the property of the State and that the other half shall be subscribed by banks and other corporations and directly by members of the public. The Federal Council would exert an effective control over the administration and over the working of the railways, and the annual financial and other reports must be sanctioned by it before publication.

Should this referendum receive the requisite support from the nation the Federal Council would be compelled to act on it.

SWISS ALPS SNOW.

Exceptionally heavy snowfalls for the time of the year are reported in the Swiss Alps, and an excellent season for winter sports is anticipated.

NEW JAPANESE AMBASSADOR IN SWITZERLAND.

The Japanese government has appointed Monsieur Masaaki Hotta, diplomatic representative in Berne. M. Hotta was formerly accredited to the government of Tschecho-Slovakia.

SWISS TO ARRANGE TURKISH CENSUS.

Dr. Brüscheiler, Director of the Federal Statistical Office, has been asked by the Government of Turkey to organise the census which is

to be taken shortly. The Federal Council has granted leave to Dr. Brüscheiler, who has left for Ankara.

GOLDEN MOLES.

Catching moles is a profitable business in Switzerland.

A mole-catcher working near Zurich has earned £180 in three months.

He caught 10,000 moles and received a bounty of 4½d. for each skin.

LOCAL.

BASLE.

A terrible motor accident happened last Saturday near St. Sulpice (between Lausanne and Morges) causing the deaths of three well-known personalities in Basle. The driver of the car, has been seriously injured.

The victims are, Dr. J. Aemmer, member of the Government of the canton of Basle, Dr. Schill, President of the "Spitalpflegeamt" and K. Goetz, "1. Adjunkt" of the "Bürgerspital." M. Moser, Director of the "Bürgerspital" has received serious injuries.

The car which was driven by Director Moser, tried to overtake another car travelling in the same direction, when a limousine, approaching in the opposite direction, suddenly appeared; owing to the great speed at which the two cars travelled, a collision was unavoidable. The car in which the three victims travelled, hit the back wheel of the approaching vehicle and then ran into a tree, where it was totally wrecked.

Dr. Aemmer was born in 1867, the son of an industrial of the town of Basle; after completing his studies at the University, he opened a practice as a medical practitioner in Basle.

Taking a great interest in politics he was in 1911 elected a member of the cantonal government (although by origin a Bernese), in succession to Colonel Bischoff, and the "Sanitäts Dept." was allotted to him, which Dept. he kept until his tragic death. During the war, Dr. Aemmer was responsible for an adequate food supply of the town and canton of Basle, a problem which he solved with great ability.

The deceased was an untiring worker for the betterment and improvement of the hospitals, and under his direction he assembled a most competent staff.

Dr. Aemmer was also the Founder of the "Basler Mustermesse," which has since become one of the most important Fairs in Switzerland. Thus for nearly a quarter of a century Dr. Aemmer has rendered great services to the canton and town of Basle and his untimely death is a great loss.

Dr. F. Schill, was born at Basle in 1886, where he studied law at the University. In 1925 he entered the Grand Council, over which he presided 7 years later. Shortly before 1914 he opened a practice as an advocate together with Dr. Peter, and soon became one of the most sought after counsels. His services rendered to the community, as a member of various commissions were numerous, the "Bürgerspital" was especially much indebted to him.

Karl Götz, who was born in 1897 entered in 1918 the "Sanitäts Dept." in the capacity as a clerk, through sheer hard work he soon advanced to the position of "1st Adjunkt."

This terrible accident has caused a great stir in Basle, and an inquiry into the cause of it has been ordered.

M. Ernst Dörr, organist and conductor of the choir at the "Klarikirche" has celebrated his 50th Jubilee as a conductor.

BERNE.

From Berne comes the news of the death of the famous dialect writer, Rudolf von Tavel, at the age of 68.

Dr. R. von Tavel, one of the most distinguished contemporary authors in Switzerland, was born on the 21st of December, 1866 in Berne. On the conclusion of his studies at the Universities of Lausanne, Leipzig, Berlin and Heidelberg, he acted as Editor of the "Berner Tagblatt" from 1891 until 1896 and again from 1905 until 1915. From 1896 up to 1905 Dr. von Tavel was convert Jaeck's pass, having retrieved the ball on the goal line. And in the last minute the Czech inside trio overplay our centre-half and from 20 Secretary of the "Schweizerische Mobilienversicherung-Gesellschaft" in Berne. During the years from 1892-1917 he also occupied the editorial chair of the "Berne Heim" and up to

CITY SWISS CLUB.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Admission by ticket only, obtainable from Members of the Committee.

his death he was Editor in chief of the illustrated paper "Die Garbe."

The deceased was principally known as the author of a number of novels and plays in the Bernese dialect. His best known dramatic works are the tragedy "Major Tavel" (1901) and the plays "Johannes Steiger" (1892) and "Zwingherrenstreit" (1894). In 1902 his best known novel "Ja gall so geits" was published, followed in 1903 by its continuation "Der Houptme Lombach" and two years after by the conclusion "Götti and Gotteli." In 1909 appeared the novel "Der Stärn vo Buebebärg" and in 1927 "Gueti Gspane." A further novel in Bernese dialect "Der Donnerneg" was published in 1915 and two years later he wrote the novel "Die heilige Flamme" this time in high German. Further dialect stories appeared in 1916 and 1918. In 1931 he published the large "Bubenber" novel "Ring i der Chetti" and in 1933 "Meister and Ritter." Switzerland has lost in Dr. von Tavel one of its most distinguished authors.

* * *

The Government of the canton of Berne has officially expressed their sympathy to the members of the family, a free burial place has been offered for the distinguished writer.

LUCERNE.

Dr. Oscar Brun, the doyen of the medical practitioners of the town of Lucerne has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary.

* * *

Dr. Emil Cattani, a noted nerve specialist, who died recently, has left an amount of 30,000 frs. to charitable institutions.

VALAIS.

The tribunal at Sion has condemned the paper "Courrier de Sion" to a fine of 5,000 frs., and costs in connection with a libel action, which M. Cyrille Pitteloud, member of the cantonal government, has brought against the paper.

VAUD.

The population of the town of Lausanne on October 1st was registered at 85,784.

* * *

On Saturday last the new Quay was opened at Vevey, the length of same is 131m. with a width of 18m., the cost amount to 1,250,000 frs.

FOOTBALL.

SWITZERLAND 2 CZECHO-SLOVAKIA 2

The general interest as evinced by the number of spectators was at a low level in Geneva, estimates varying between 10 and 20,000, yet the lesser figures being nearer the mark, by all accounts. Can you wonder at it when a seat in the stand, mark you, anywhere in the stand, costs just over fifteen shillings and standing room only was considered to be worth three shillings. I am afraid England v. Italy at Highbury would break the low record of attendance at such prices. Thank heaven they have more sense.

Switzerland, for one reason or another had rather an experimental team in the field. The defence, Séchéhaye, Minelli and W. Weiler, the old guard acquitted themselves very well indeed. The halves, Greiner, Loichot, Schaub were quite a new edition and under the circumstances did even better than expected. The forwards, von Känel, Hufschmid, Kielholz, Jäggi, Jaeck are all familiar names, but whilst the wings and centre played in their accustomed positions, Hufschmid is a half-back and Jäggi a centre-forward. And here lies the rub. Since Trello left for Paris and his brother Xam is no more as young as he used to be, Switzerland appear to have run dry of inside forwards. A serious matter, to be thus handicapped in perhaps the most vital positions. Nevertheless, in the first half the team as a whole played well. Almost immediately after the kick-off, a peculiar incident occurred. The referee (Lewington, England) found it quite impossible to carry on, as it made him dizzy to watch two teams, one playing in white knickers and red shirts and the other in red (!) knickers and white shirts. Blue stockings added thereto completed the Czecho colours. And so they had to leave the field and change from red to blue knickers, perhaps also from blue to red socks, I do not know. After some delay, everything now looking lovely in the garden of roses, play was resumed. The Swiss, finding their wing forwards in great form, definitely dominated in the early stages and in the 14th minute Kielholz headed a great goal from a right wing centre. Slowly but surely the Czechs run into form and our goal has some narrow escapes. Rapid attacks on both goals prove fruitless; more and more the Czechs are gaining the upper hand and just then, in the 41st minute, against all expectation and against the run of play, Switzerland scores their second goal! On a throw-in from Greiner, Hufschmid sends the ball into the middle and Kielholz's head does the rest. 2:0 amidst indescribable enthusiasm. Three minutes later a glorious chance to score again is lost, because no inside forward was up to yards out Nejedly shoots past Séchéhaye; 2:1, half-time.

After resuming, there can be no doubt that the Czechs are the better team. Some of the Reds begin to tire; possibly they did not husband their physical resources sufficiently in the first half. Be that as it may, in the 59th minute Nejedly once more rounds off a nice movement with a hot shot into the net and thus equalises. 2:2. Some say Séchéhaye should have saved. All say he did save many shots that should have scored! In the last half hour the Swiss had a gruelling time. Apart from some sporadic attacks by the wings it was defending all the time until the final whistle.

The result is just. The Swiss definitely held the advantage in the first half and faded away in the second. The game counted in the Europa Cup competition and gave us our first point. From the table below you will perceive that even one point only was very welcome.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	for	agst	Pts.
Italy	5	4	0	1	13	6	8
Hungary	4	2	1	1	8	4	5
Austria	4	2	1	1	10	9	5
Czecho-Slovakia	4	0	3	1	6	8	3
Switzerland	5	0	1	4	6	16	1

On November 4th Holland are due to play in Bern. I think we should succeed and win.

M.G.

SWISS NEED OF MORE EXPORTS.

Can Switzerland for ever be a "price-island?" Or has this country lived for the last two years on its reserves, as the President of the Confederation stated in a speech at the Lausanne Fair?

It is a matter of fact that in 1932 more than 50 per cent. of all limited companies, with a paid-up capital of about 3.5 milliards of francs, did not pay any dividend. The Swiss National Bank stated that in 1933 824 million francs of working capital in banking institutions remained without remuneration, and losses sustained by banks and other financial companies amounted in the same year to 225 million francs.

Foreign trade figures are still very high at 580 francs per head, against 370 francs in England and 173 in Germany. These figures, which refer to 1933 (in 1934 there was another setback), show that Switzerland in 1933 had half of the foreign trade registered in 1925.

Switzerland's prosperity relies to a great extent on her export trade. For this reason the country has to find a way to bring its products within the purchasing power of the principal foreign customers. With the high level of the cost of living index, the advantage for selling goods on the world markets lies well on the side of Switzerland's competitors. The advantage for Italy has been stated by the Swiss statistics with 17 per cent., for France with 25 per cent., England 28 per cent., and United States with 37 per cent.

Budget Deficits.

Big Increase.

The Budget of the Swiss Government since 1932 has shown an increasing deficit. From Frs.24.2 millions in 1932 it became Frs.72.3 millions in 1933, which was the biggest deficit since 1921, when it was Frs.127.6 millions. From 1928 till 1931 there was a surplus.

The consolidated and unsettled debt of the Confederation in 1913 was Frs.146 millions, while in 1933 it was Frs.2,182 millions. In the same time the debt of the federal railways, for which the Confederation assumed the guarantee, showed an increase from Frs.1,494 millions to Frs.3,033 millions in 1933.

For many years observant citizens have been uncomfortably aware of the fact that public expenditures, taxes and borrowings have been increasing much faster than population, wealth and income, and that the time has arrived to retrench if the basis for a sound money policy is to be maintained. Switzerland must overcome the deficit, as a country with its reduced earning capacity is in an impossible position to assume additional charges. If deflation has to be seriously undertaken, railway fares, postal charges and taxes must be reduced, their index being at least 200 per cent. of the pre-war level.

The present standard of life, one of the highest in Europe, is not the consequence of a better economical situation, but only of larger reserves than other countries have, Swiss people must find and adopt the necessary means to ensure that their widely known products are not too dear for their foreign customers.

Only One Way Open.

Real Deflation.

To reach this desirable state there is only one way open — real deflation in every field of human activity — because a country which has to import almost all raw materials (in 1933 Frs.481 millions) and a great deal of the victuals (in 1933 Frs.400 millions) cannot solve the problem by devaluation or inflation.

The financial basis of the country is still very good. The foreign balances of Switzerland are by some milliards higher than the engagements Switzerland has to meet with other countries.

With her principal debtor — viz., Germany — an agreement for five years has become effective, on the basis of which there is a certain probability that Switzerland, with a highly active trade balance in favour of Germany, is not likely to suffer so much by the abnormal situation of its northern neighbour.

Switzerland has now a good opportunity to prove to the world that its device. "All for one, one for all," is not forgotten in modern times and that democracy is willing to support heavy charges and sacrifices with the sole aim of keeping the house in order and to be, as in the past, a nation with world-wide connections.

FREDERIC BEK.
"Financial Times."

THE SCHWABRIG.

A Children's Country Home.

(Continuation).

At the beginning of this century the writer was invited by Pastor Bion to visit the Schwäbrig. He was told that the hill-top was completely bare when it was purchased by subscriptions and mortgages. So Bion went to the nurserymen and asked for their refuse to provide shade. They gave generously, and Bion planted. And, with a chuckle, he remarked — "In a few years there will be enough timber to pay off the mortgages."

The children were then housed in a wooden barn in charge of a *Hausater* and his wife. There was a cow, goats, pigs, and hens, and plenty for the children to wonder at. They did not like the milk. It was too thick! But they revelled in the view. To the south lay the Säntis, which forms the chin in the outline of the Altman, Eastwards lay Austria, as far as the Silvretta peaks. Northwards was the Lake of Constance, and west the hills of home. Factory smoke was absent, the sun shone clear, and oceans of pure air sent the blood coursing through the arteries.

As a result of that first visit the Children's Village at Humble came into existence.

Later Visits

Twenty years later a second visit was paid. The pines had grown strongly. In the undergrowth children were playing at Red Indians. They held the writer to ransom, and gained possession of the chocolate he had brought for use on wet days. Morning and evening there was tooth-brush drill, and after dinner a general siesta. And there was a staid old horse, a general favourite — by Pound-a-Leg out of Also Ran — and the *Hausater* wore the same big watch-chain, with which, the children said, he tied up the cow at night.

A few weeks ago a third visit was paid. The road has grown steeper and the forest thicker; but merry cries dispensed with sign-posts. The great building, with its outside fire-escapes and well-laden fruit trees, was easy to recognise. But a change had taken place.

The home has taken on much of the character of a Boy Scout camp. It is now open for ten weeks only in summer, and the campers are stronger and better built. General treatment has given way to special treatment. Sickly children are now sent to special resorts, to Davos or the sunny slopes that gaze down on Piedmont. Deaf and dumb children are taught to dance, as a possible remedy. And expenses have risen.

By means of an annual grant of 100,000 francs from the town, the Zürich Committee is able to maintain forty camps for 1700 children. The gross cost is four francs per head per day. One-quarter of it is covered by parents' subscriptions, about 50 pay in full, and some 270 children are guests. To prevent damage to trees and fences, games are organised. Choral singing and acting prevent a wet day from becoming dull. And the assistance of teachers, readily given, assures an effortless discipline. And now there is a new interest — watching aeroplanes; the red Arosa mail to keep the clock right, and the London-Zürich one to test keenness of sight.

Parents are still apt to conceal personal characteristics of their offspring — e.g., sleep-walking — but there is less desire to cheat the doctor, who rejects cases of vermin and eczema. The chief complaints against parents are that they will send tuck and will come on visits.

A Wisely Chosen Site.

Bion was wise when he chose the Schwäbrig, for it is three miles from a station and all the way is uphill. Newcomers do the journey on foot, and so are ready for supper and bed on arrival. Mothers do not like the climb, and mothers are not wanted: for they leave homesick children. The food is good; children beg for copies of the day's menu to send home. But the absent parent is not convinced. It is estimated that over £300 is spent per annum by parents in sending tuck. If paid to the excursion fund, this sum would be of much greater service. By camp law, all tuck is common property, but much of it arrives in a state not fit for consumption.

A.J.P.