

# Prof. Maurice Lugeon at the Geological Society of London

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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### New Official Language.

By 573,958 votes to 51,643, the Swiss electorate accepted the Government's proposal to make Romansch the fourth national language. The decision has been received with much rejoicing in the Canton of Grisons, where the language is spoken by nearly 45,000 persons. The figures (not complete) are as follows:—

Zürich	112,571	8,342
Bern	56,535	7,036
Luzern	19,526	1,138
Uri	3,002	464
Schwyz	7,132	1,402
Nidwalden	1,471	134
Obwalden	1,671	146
Glarus	5,647	320
Zug	3,159	116
Freiburg	14,801	1,152
Solothurn	16,733	583
Basel-Stadt	35,151	2,501
Basel-Land	11,395	659
Schaffhausen	10,864	543
Appenzell A.-Rh.	8,056	805
Appenzell L.-Rh.	1,739	275
St. Gallen	47,138	4,396
Graubünden	21,568	1,692
Aargau	51,755	6,940
Thurgau	24,887	2,121
Tessin	11,725	677
Waadt	72,071	8,422
Wallis	13,680	1,848
Neuchâtel	8,602	438
Genève	11,437	117

Total 572,129 52,267

#### New Swiss Minister in Berlin.

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Hans Frölicher, Counsellor of Legation, to the post of Swiss Minister in Berlin, in succession to Minister Paul Dinichert.

Minister Frölicher is at the present at the Foreign Office in Berne; he has occupied various posts at Swiss Legations abroad. The new Minister hails from the canton of Solothurn and is nearing the age of 50.

Minister Dinichert will shortly be appointed to the post of Swiss Minister to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, with residence at Stockholm; this post is at present occupied by Minister Charles Louis Lardy, a brother of M. Etienne Lardy, Swiss Minister in Turkey.

#### Swiss National Costume Festival at the French Embassy.

The French Ambassador in Berne gave a reception at his Embassy; the guests were asked to appear in national dress. A large number of guests attended in Swiss national costumes, so did a number of foreign diplomats. M. Baumann, president of the Swiss Confederation, was amongst the numerous guests. (But not in "Appenzellertracht."—Ed.)

#### Swiss Arms Control.

As the result of a referendum in Switzerland, a proposal for Federal control of private armament undertakings was accepted by 392,731 votes against 149,440.

#### Anglo-Swiss Convention.

H.M. Stationery Department has published the text of the Anglo-Swiss Convention in regard to Legal Proceedings, which was signed in London on December 3rd, 1937. (Cmd. 5658, price 2d.)

#### International Ice-Hockey Match.

The Swiss National Ice-Hockey Team, which is competing at the International Ice-Hockey Tournament in Budapest, has been beaten by Czechoslovakia (1:2), after extra time having been played.

## LOCAL.

### ZÜRICH.

M. K. E. Hilgard, a well-known consulting engineer and a former Professor at the Technical University in Zürich, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary.

### BASEL.

All the four Socialist candidates for the cantonal government were elected in the first ballot, a second ballot will have to be held for the three members of the Bourgeois party; the Socialists, therefore, are still in the majority. The elections for the Grand Council (Grosse Rat) show the following result:—Radicals, 22 (22); Liberals, 17 (16); Cath. Popular Party, 14 (13); Nat. Popular Party, 6 (11); Socialists, 51 (46); Communists, 15 (16); Evangelical Party, 1 (3); "Freiwirtschaft" Party, 0 (3); Landesring (Duttweiler), 4 (0). The Socialists and Communists have, therefore, the majority in the cantonal Parliament.

Doctor Hans Iselin, Professor of Medicine at the University in Basle, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Professor Iselin enjoys an international reputation as a surgeon.

Dr. Paul Häberlin, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Basle, has reached the age of 70. He is the author of a large number of books on philosophy.

### FRIBOURG.

M. Jules Glasson, from 1911 until 1938 manager of the "Greyerzer" Volksbank, has died at the age of 66. The deceased was for a number of years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg.

### GRISONS.

Four lives were lost in an avalanche disaster on the slopes of the "Muttlers" in the Engadine. The names of the victims are: Miss Kappeler, Bülach; Miss Büchel, St. Gall; Miss Hottinger, Herliberg; Miss Lewin, Harrogate (England). Two members of the party, a Miss Schmid from Zürich, and a gentleman from Czecho-Slovakia, were saved.

### AARGAU.

The late Albert Meyer, Manager of the "Freiämter Bank," in Wohlen, has left an amount of 27,000 frs. to charitable institutions.

Mme Sophie Hämmerli-Marti, the well-known dialect writer, has celebrated her 70th birthday anniversary.

### VAUD.

The late Pastor Albert Lagier, the doyen of the Pastors of the canton of Vaud, has died at the Castle of Perroy, where he had lived in retirement since 1914.

Pastor Lagier, who had reached the age of 90, was for 21 years officiating in Commugny, near Coppet. He launched in 1910 a campaign against the sale of absinthe, with the result that a few years later the sale of this beverage was prohibited.

### TICINO.

The death is reported of Dr. Sebastiano Martinioli from Dongio at the age of 65; the deceased was at one time a member of the government of the canton of Ticino.

### "NON-STOP" FLIGHT LONDON-SAMADEN.

A non-stop flight between London and Samaden (Engadine) was made on Saturday last, by a liner of the Swissair, to which members of the English Press, the B.B.C. and Tourist Agencies were invited.

Through the courtesy of the Swissair, the Editor of the SWISS OBSERVER was invited to take part in this flight that has since made history.

A full report of the flight and the official reception in St. Moritz will appear in subsequent issues of the SWISS OBSERVER.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

Please reserve

SATURDAY, MARCH 12th, 1938.

for the

DINNER AND DANCE

at the

MAYFAIR HOTEL, Berkeley Square, W.1.

## LA POLITIQUE.

### La votation fédérale.

Des trois questions (nous disons trois, car l'une, bien quelle comportât deux réponses, visait un seul et unique objet) que le peuple suisse était appelé à trancher dimanche, la première avait une importance surtout sentimentale. L'admission du romanche au rang de langue nationale n'aura pas des effets considérables, puisqu'il ne s'agit pas d'en faire une langue officielle. Mais c'est une satisfaction légitime que l'on accorde à une minorité. Et l'empressement apporté par les votants à accepter ce projet, par 572,192 voix contre 52,267, soit à une écrasante majorité, ne laisse pas d'avoir un sens politique. Il est permis d'y voir, en effet, une intention clairement manifestée de défense spirituelle, de maintien des traditions régionales et du particularisme, devant l'insolente propagande des régimes totalitaires et les prétentions à l'hégémonie raciale des dictatures. A cet égard, les récents événements d'Autriche montrent bien, qu'un danger d'absorption n'est pas inexistant et qu'une protection vigilante de toute ce qui constitue la Suisse et diverse est devenue nécessaire.

Du point de vue intérieur aussi, il n'est pas indifférent d'enregistrer une décision qui — pour une fois — n'équivaut pas à une nouvelle conquête centralisatrice, mais traduit au contraire le respect de l'autonomie cantonale. Les résultats sont significatifs, puisque, dans la plupart des Etats, les majorités acceptantes sont aussi fortes que dans les Grisons mêmes. Notons avec plaisir que Genève, a témoigné remarquablement de son esprit confédéral, dans cette occurrence, puisque le nouveau texte constitutionnel y a été adopté par 11,437 voix contre 117.

Les prévisions généralement faites sur les deux autres verdicts populaires se sont réalisées. L'initiative communiste, relative à la clause d'urgence et au referendum, est rejetée par 485,835 voix contre 87,247. Les socialistes ne la soutenaient pas, et la rédaction absurde et logomachique de son texte ne pouvait que lui nuire. Mais il ne faudrait certes pas conclure du vote de dimanche que le peuple juge tout naturel l'abus — trop fréquent, ces dernières années — de la clause d'urgence, qui, si elle est prévue par la constitution, doit permettre uniquement de prendre des mesures rapides, en cas de nécessité réelle, et non servir de prétexte pour éviter de consulter le peuple. Celui-ci n'a pas voulu d'un projet mal conçu et visiblement inspiré par les doctrines mouscotaïtes. En revanche, le problème de la clause d'urgence reste posé; et le parlement ne devra pas ignorer que sa méthode — celle de la facilité et de la frousse tout ensemble — rencontre dans l'esprit public une croissante opposition.

Pour ce qui touche à la fabrication des armes, c'est la solution moyenne, du bon sens, qui a été admise. Toutefois, là, il suffit de jeter un regard sur les résultats par cantons pour s'apercevoir que le contre-projet du Conseil fédéral n'a pas été approuvé sans quelques résistances: la majorité acceptante n'est que de 392,101 voix, et les "non" sont au nombre de 148,504.

Quant à la participation, elle a été très faible, de 53% en moyenne, pour l'ensemble du pays. Il ne faut certes pas s'en étonner. Les projets en discussion n'avaient pas le don de passionner l'opinion. Et nous aurons sans doute, au cours de l'année, des votations fédérales beaucoup plus courues.

Léon Savary.

(Tribune de Genève.)

## PROF. MAURICE LUGEON AT THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

February 18th, 1938.

The Geological Society of London is the oldest Geological Society of the world. She is a kind of mother with many children in all parts of the world. But like a good mother, she looks for merit in all her children and where it is present in an exceptional way, she rewards the gifted investigator with the Wollaston Medal.

The first Wollaston Medal in 1831 went to William Smith, the founder of British Geology, but in the course of time the following Swiss geologists were honoured in this way:—

1836 Louis Agassiz; 1874 Oswald Heer; 1879 Bernhard Studer; 1904 Albert Heim; and now in 1938 Maurice Lugeon. The Medal was presented to him by the President, Prof. O. T. Jones, F.R.S.,

of Cambridge, in a short but happily phrased speech, outlining the merit of his work as an original investigator of the Alpine problem and touching also on his achievements in the economic sphere. Prof. Lugeon replied in French and with the attractive modesty of the great man he declared "je n'y pensais pas". He recalled what he owed to his teachers and to many of his colleagues in Switzerland and elsewhere and considered it as an award not merely to him, but to the whole brilliant alpine school.

In the evening, there was a dinner and the toast of "The Medalists" was proposed by Dr. E. B. Bailey, the director of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, himself an authority on mountain structures. He said, when looking at the Alps, he saw not merely a mountain called Mont Blanc, or another mountain called Jungfrau, he saw rising out of the mist such resplendent figures as Suess, Marcel Bertrand, Termier, Schardt and Lugeon. Prof. Lugeon replying, made a charming speech in French. "I go back to my students and will say to them: I have in my pocket a medal. What is it made of and they will reply, gold or silver or bronze; not one will guess, I feel sure, that it is made of the rare mineral palladium, discovered by Wollaston, long ago. When *The Times* brought the news of this award to me, to Switzerland, it travelled fast and people looked upon it almost as a gesture by your country to mine, attached as we both are to individual liberty, without which as we both believe progress is hampered. Academic freedom is essential to the spirit of enquiry on which science lives."

Prof. Lugeon takes his honours well with a benign fatherly smile and we all liked him exceedingly.

E.M.

## BRICIOLE.

*Una dolcezza ho qui, stretta in un nodo che non si scioglie, ed è piacere e pena. Vorrei parlare, e la mia gola è piena d'un tacere onde mi tormento e godo.*

Godo ... così, sonnassamente. Dolorosamente quasi. Perché, a volte, innanzi ad uno spettacolo offertoci dalla natura, si rimane muti a guardare. E non si sa se più si si gioisce per tanto splendore o se più si soffre. Il piacere, forse, in fondo altro non è che un dolore soffuso di dolcezza. Roseo.

L'aurora boreale. Bagliori. Penombre. Chiarore. Incendio immane. Cielo striato. Solcato da lembi di fuoco che fanno fremere. Luci vivissime che tremolano. Guizzano. Fuggono. Si rincorrono. Si annullano. E il popolino, quel popolino buono, ingenuo, pronto a prestar fede ad ogni leggenda, ad ogni fiaba, trema. Trae da questo splendido fenomeno naturale un presagio terribile. Guerra. Forse perché quando l'ultima volta che tale fenomeno si osservò anche nei nostri paesi, poco dopo scoppiò la guerra. 1870. Invece bellezza dovrebbe essere sinonimo di bontà. Questa stupenda apparizione dovrebbe farci meditare. Scandagliare gli animi d'ognuno. Scoprire tutto quanto di buono, in ogni animo umano, sta celato. Manifestarlo, agire conformemente. Ogni nostro atto dovrebbe essere improntato d'un tantino di bontà. Così, allora, i paesi, i popoli, le nazioni soffrirebbero meno. Ci sarebbe maggiore comprensione. Maggior generosità. Indulgenza. Guizzi fulgidissimi in cielo. Serenità chiara in terra!

Fragore immenso. Pulviscolo. Sassi gettati in alto. Lontano. Poi silenzio e rovina. O'era, poco innanzi, una casa solida, ben costruita, ora non sono che ruderi, macerie. Mura sgretolate. S'indovinano le camere che ancora sussistevano alcuni istanti prima. Brandelli di tappezzeria melanconicamente sventolano da quelle poche pareti che, ostinate, non cedettero al colpo fatale! Non si lascia, non domare dalla forza bruta. Una catastrofe? Terremoto? Niente di questo. Solo ... opera dell'uomo. Dell'uomo che costruisce e poi ... abbatte, per ricostruire. Da quel "mai soddisfatto" che è. Per allargare una strada, renderla più comoda e spaziosa si sacrificarono delle case. Crollate da mine preparate con precisione da esperti operai. Fra non molto, chi ancora ricorderà che qui esistettero delle case? Chi potrà immaginarle? Sembrerà che sempre fu così, come ora! Eppure per fabbricarle, quelle case, quanti uomini rudi e forti, sudarono! E tra quelle pareti quante scenette si saranno svolte. Gioie. Rabbuffi. Speranze. Disperazione. Ora più nulla. Sull'ampia via, veloce fila l'automobile. Nervosa, fremente. Per lasciar passar lei, la moderna padrona della strada, si sacrificarono buone case borghesi. Chissà? Domani forse si troverà che la strada è troppo larga ... di nuovo si darà mano al piccone; si suderà di nuovo!

Quando meno te lo aspetti, ecco che t'imbatti in lui. Il marronaio. Bonaccione. E li che ti

attende allo svolto di una via secondaria. Ti sorride sempre, anche se passi via e non badi alle sue caldaroste. Lucide, tonde, brune, scoppettano allegramente nella larga padella. Sotto, la brace arde continuamente. E odor di bruciate, odor di brace, ti stuzzicano anche se non vuoi. Non comperi magari, ma pensi a quelle ottime castagne. Ti prende il desiderio, se pur fugace, di riempirtene le tasche, di portarne a casa, di sbuciarle lentamente e lentamente gustarle! Ti prende forse la nostalgia di quell'ampio camino che una volta era l'ornamento quasi principale delle case dei nostri vecchi. Ai lati una panca. E sulla panca, ci si trovava così bene. Ci si sentiva così buoni, così soddisfatti. Si mangiava le castagne, si sorseggiava il vinello ... si ascoltava i vecchietti rievocare tante scenette della loro vita serena. Le passioni umane erano dimenticate.

Jazz ora. Thè concerti. Ballo sincopatico. Bevande dai nomi esotici, che ti dicono nulla, che ti fanno forse gioire per un momento, ma che poi ti lasciano un senso d'amarrezza infinita.

Il marronaio si soffrega le mani. Scruta le sue caldaroste. Ti lancia un frizzo, fa saltar in aria magistralmente quelle lucide sue amiche. Con pazienza attende. Piova o faccia bello. Tiri vento o nevischi, lui è all'angolo della via!

E. G. L.

Lugano, febbraio 1938.

## MR. J. MESCHINI'S WEDDING.

The marriage took place on Saturday, February 19, at St. Edward's Catholic Church, Finchley Road, Golder's Green, of Mr. José Meschini, the second son of Signor Arturo Meschini and Signora Meschini, of 55, Woodstock Road, N.W.11, and Miss Jeanne Flageolet, eldest daughter of Monsieur and Madame L. P. Flageolet, of Stereden, 97, Woodlands, Golder's Green, N.W.11. The Rev. Canon Sims officiated, assisted by the Rev. Father Enffin.

Both bride and bridegroom, tall and extremely good-looking, were escorted to the altar by three bridesmaids, in attractive sky-blue costumes, a shy little maid of honour-bearing the bride's long train, the best man and their parents.

During the imposing ceremony, Signor Gino Berni sang a particularly fine "Ave Maria," and a piece composed by the bridegroom's younger brother, Mr. "Fernic" Meschini, was played on the organ.

The reception followed at Pagan's Restaurant. At the end of a sumptuous bridal banquet, the bride's father started a long bout of speech-making, broken only by the singing by Signor Berni of popular Italian songs. As one of the speakers remarked, the quality of the orations was well varied, going from M. Flageolet's moving welcome to the guests to Signor Meschini's touching well-wishing, from the bridegroom's sincere thanksgiving to the bride's shy attempt, and from Canon Sims' fine allegory to the breezy asides on connubial bliss by Councillor Stiles-Allen, the Mayor of the Borough of St. Marylebone, not to mention the spirited self commendation of the best man and M.C., Mr. Carlo Meschini, the 'groom's elder brother.

To the happy couple, who then left to spend their honeymoon motoring in the South of France, we renew our best wishes.

eusj.

MADAME THEODORE DECOMBAZ  
(MADAME CAVIN.) †

Le 31 janvier est décédée à Genève à l'âge de 83 ans, Madame Théodore Décombaz-Genet, sans doute connue d'un bon nombre de Suisses et surtout de Suissesses sous le nom de Madame Cavin, car, veuve de bonne heure de M. Cavin, elle dirigea de 1892 à 1906 le Home Suisse de Londres, Mecklenburgh Square.

Pendant ces années, d'innombrables jeunes filles ont fait au Home des séjours plus ou moins prolongés et elles ont joui de l'affection éclairée et fidèle, des conseils de sagesse, du dévouement sans limites de cette femme distinguée, de cette chrétienne qui avait la main aussi ferme que son cœur était chaud. Nombreuses sont celles qui ne peuvent oublier les heureuses fêtes de Noël que Madame Cavin préparait avec soin et qui mettaient une douce lumière dans les yeux et dans les esprits, au milieu des jours brouillards de Londres et parfois des tristesses de l'exil et du "Heimweh." Tous gardent envers Madame Th. Décombaz une profonde gratitude.

L.S.P.

## "A DOLCE SIMPOSIO ..."

The "Unione Ticinese" take pleasure in making known to their members and many friends in the Colony that the Society's Annual Banquet and Ball will be held this year at Pagan's on the evening of April 4th, next.

A special effort is being made by the organizing committee to add to the attractions of this ever popular function: an efficient orchestra has been engaged, and a 'cabaret' is being arranged.

Tickets are obtainable from all Committee Members (price 16s. 6d.), or direct from the Secretary, P. De Maria, 4, Luxemburg Gardens, W.6.

## CORRECTIONS.

In our issue No. 848, of February 12th, we reported that the net profits of the *Swiss Bank Corporation* for 1937 were Frs. 51,798,340, compared with Frs. 52,021,449 in 1936, this was obviously an error, the figures should read Frs. 8,275,271 against 8,242,828.

*Schweizerische Kredit Anstalt* (Issue No. 849 February 19th) the dividend for 1937 should read 5% and not 6%.

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