

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

On the 18th of this month the Swiss electorate went to the poll in connection with the initiative on Economic Reconstruction and the Right to Work. (Wirtschaftsreform und Rechte der Arbeit) introduced by the socialist party. This measure was rejected by 537,813 against 243,756 votes, as can be seen from the figures below:—

	For	Against
Zürich	54,305	87,671
Bern	41,260	72,360
Luzern	6,579	33,027
Uri	1,179	3,851
Schwyz	1,498	8,477
Obwalden	165	2,997
Nidwalden	453	2,615
Glarus	1,936	5,040
Zug	1,532	5,381
Freiburg	2,612	17,409
Solothurn	9,759	17,561
Baselland	9,407	14,188
Baselstad	9,054	11,907
Schaffhausen	5,110	8,356
Appenzell A.-Rh.	2,024	7,915
Appenzell J.-Rh.	122	1,955
St. Gallen	13,345	43,576
Graubünden	3,898	16,368
Aargau	21,053	44,559
Thurgau	7,864	23,751
Tessin	7,297	10,615
Waadt	22,203	52,658
Wallis	4,315	18,002
Neuenburg	8,389	13,753
Genf	8,397	13,761
TOTAL	243,756	537,813

Swiss Parliament will make special provisions for conscientious objectors to military service.

Some time ago the motion, carried in Parliament by a narrow majority, placed the matter in the hands

of the Government, which will draw up a Bill providing for non-combatant service for men whose conscience prevents them from serving in the armed forces.

At present no reason other than ill-health will secure dispensation, and refusal to bear arms is punishable by imprisonment.

M. Kobelt, head of the Federal Military Department, who opposed the measure, said that, out of a million men called to arms during the war, only 76 refused to serve for reasons of conscience, and of this number only those who refused to serve as hospital orderlies were sent to prison.

A *modus operandi* between Spain and Switzerland has been reached whereby trade between the two countries will be greatly increased. Spanish business men can now apply for export and import licences to Switzerland. Agreement has also been reached for 5,000 tons of bananas to be sent from the Canary Islands to Switzerland this year.

Two items have been dropped from the rationing list in Switzerland. Households are no longer checked on consumption of gas, but coal allocations to gas-manufacturing plants are limited.

Rationing of unsugared condensed milk, imported and domestic production was lifted.

Monsieur Jerzy Putrament, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland in Berne, who has been transferred as Ambassador to Paris, gave a farewell dinner to mark the occasion. Dr. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor Petitpierre and Minister Stucki, as well as members of the Diplomatic Corps were present.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

MONTHLY MEETING

followed by an address by

COMMANDER STEPHEN KING-HALL

on

TUESDAY, JUNE 10th, 1947

6.30 for 7 p.m.

at

BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, W.1

The Committee.

Cantonal

The consecration of the new Abbott of Einsiedeln, Dr. Benno Gut, took place on Monday, May 5th at Einsiedeln.

The papal Nuntius, Archbishop Bernardini, celebrated the "Pontifikalamt" in the presence of several bishops and representatives of the cantonal government.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

A distinguished citizen of the canton of Obwalden has died at Sarnen in the person of Otto Seiler, who occupied the post of "Kantonsingenieur" from 1900-1932. He was a member of the "Obwalder Kantonsrat" for fifteen years, and reached the rank of colonel of infantry in the army. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Hans Hellmüller, from 1908-1942 head of the Municipal control office in Lucerne, has died at Lucerne at the age of 68. He occupied the rank of colonel of infantry in the army, having been commander of the mountain infantry regiment 47. The deceased took a great interest in the musical life of the town of Lucerne, where he was for many years President of the "Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft."

[A.T.S.]

* * *

An English woman, Mrs. Beryl McCarthy, was awarded the Zurich silver life saving medal. Last April she dived, fully clothed into the lake of Zurich in an unsuccessful bid to save a drowning man.

[A.T.S.]

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—555—

The medical practitioners of the canton of Zurich have gone on strike. Some time ago, a dispute had arisen between the doctors and the "Verband der Krankenkassen" with regard to the fees to be paid.

As no satisfactory solution could be found, the medical practitioners have refused to attend the members belonging to the "Krankenkassen." [A.T.S.]

* * *

A memorial service was held on Friday, May 9th, at the Mittelholzer monument at Dübendorf on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his death.

Amongst those who attended the simple but impressive service, were the managers of Swissair, E. Groh, Dr. G. von Meiss, and E. Bethge, as well as the wife and son of the late aviator; and members of the staff of the company.

Colonel Edwin Schwarzenbach, a member of the Board of Swissair, and a personal friend of Mittelholzer, paid a moving tribute to the great aviator, and placed a laurel wreath on his resting place.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The old, old tale of a rich uncle in America, still finds believers. A twenty-five year-old married woman in Zurich, who has been arrested, has managed within three years to swindle three people to the tune of 150,000.— frs. (100,000.— frs. in one case and 50,000.— frs. in two other cases.) This expectant heiress kept an expensive establishment, and entertained lavishly. Her husband an artist (stateless) will be charged with complicity. [A.T.S.]

* * *

From Zurich comes the news of the death of Dr. Hermann Stoll at the age of 84. The deceased was one of the founders of the well-known Maggi concern in Kempthal. In 1889, he was appointed General Manager of the firm, and later on occupied the post of Vice-President, since 1939 he acted as Chairman of the Board.

Dr. Stoll also held the post of President of the Board of the "Schweizerischen Kredit-Anstalt" from 1929-1940. The University of Zurich conferred on him the degree of *doctor honoris causa* in 1928. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The heirs of the late Dr. Karl Gyr, head of the firm Landis & Gyr in Zug, have presented the town Council of Zug with a cheque of 100,000.— frs. for the foundation of an infant welfare centre. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death occurred in Zug of Fritz Kunz, one of the best known church painters in Switzerland. Some of his most important paintings can be found in the churches of Zurich, Olten, Romanshorn, Ingebohl, Menzingen, Stans, Disentis and Cham. He reached the age of 79. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A fisherman from Ligerz, caught near the St. Peter's Island, lake of Bienne, a pike measuring 1m.25cm., weighing 25kg. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Mayor of Berne, Dr. E. Bärtschi, has informed the Mayor of the town of Budapest, who recently was his guest, that a couple of bears, coming from the well-known bear pit in the Federal capital, will be sent to Budapest as a present from the town of Berne. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A "Piper" machine crashed at the "Burgerallmend" in Thun. The pilot, a flying instructor from Berne and his passenger received serious injuries, and the machine was badly damaged. [A.T.S.]

Colonel Dr. Fritz Maurer, chief veterinary surgeon of the 1st Army-Corps, during the last war, has died at Lyss at the age of 59. [A.T.S.]

The married couple Schwitzguebel-Schmid in Bienne have celebrated their diamond-wedding anniversary (60 years). The husband is 95 and the wife 87 years old, both enjoy good health. [A.T.S.]

Ernest Schneeberger, Manager of the Watch Manufacturing Works, Frey & Co., in Bienne, has died at the age of 53. [A.T.S.]

Street accidents in the canton of Berne are still on the increase; during the month of April, 184 persons were injured of whom twelve died. [A.T.S.]

The oldest member of the Association of advocates of the canton of Berne, in the person of Oskar Salvisberg, has died at Grünen near Sumiswald at the age of 80. [A.T.S.]

Since, the beginning of this month the railway-line Fribourg-Payerne has been electrified. To celebrate this event a banquet was held at Fribourg, at which members of the cantonal government were present. The Swiss Federal Railways were represented by M. Paschoud, General-Manager. [A.T.S.]

Jules Bovet has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary in Fribourg, which coincides also with him being a member of the cantonal government for the last twenty years. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Rolf Meier, Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Basle, has been made an Honorary member of the medical academy of Barcelona. [A.T.S.]

General A. Osborn, Head of the Salvation Army, has arrived in Basle, and was received by officials of the local branch of the Salvation Army. The General is visiting several towns in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Basle, of Dr. Schär at the age of 79. The deceased was for many years closely connected with the Swiss Co-operative movement and President of the Swiss Co-operative Society.

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LAST DAYS

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From 1905-1938 he was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle. In 1917, he was elected a member of Parliament (National Council) to which he belonged for twelve years. [A.T.S.]

For the first time in the history of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle, this body will be presided over by a communist (G. Baumann). G. Wenk (socialist) has been elected President of the cantonal Government. [A.T.S.]

Professor Julius, D. Pratere, the founder of the Basle Fair in 1917, has died in Basle, he was also the founder of the "Gewerbeschule" in Basle and a painter of repute. [A.T.S.]

At the elections for the re-newal of the cantonal government of Baselland the following have been elected: Dr. H. Gschwind (k.k., hitherto); H. Abegg (socialist, hitherto); Dr. E. Erni (liberal, hitherto); Dr. L. Mann (socialist, hitherto); O. Kopp (socialist, new). H. Leupin (dem.), a former member was not re-elected.

The community of Merishausen (Schaffhausen) has celebrated its 1,100 anniversary. A letter of congratulation from the Federal Council has been sent to the President of the community, Jakob Werner. [A.T.S.]

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Federal Councillors Petitpierre and von Steiger have paid a visit to the Pestalozzi children's village at Trogen (Appenzell). [A.T.S.]

Dr. Rolf Bühler, in Uzwil, has informed the President of the Young-Liberal Party that he intends to resign his seat in Parliament. (National Council). [A.T.S.]

A motor boat crossing the "Wallensee" capsized near Quinten, of the eight passengers two were drowned. [A.T.S.]

The "Aargauer Tagblatt" has issued a Jubilee number on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The A. G. Adolphe Saurer works, at Arbon, have made a donation of over two million francs to various Funds for benefitting their staff. [A.T.S.]

A former cashier of the "Thurgauer Kantonal Bank" Fritz Albrecht, died owing to an accident, when opening a window. He slipped and fell from the window into the garden. He was 70 years old. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the canton of Thurgau for the year 1946, show a credit balance of 17,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Molo, until recently in the employ of the cantonal administration in Bellinzona, has been appointed head of the studio Lugano by the committee of the "Co-operativa Radio Svizzera Italiana." Dr. Molo, who was born in 1916, studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Hamburg and Berne, he was, for a number of years, connected with the "Agence Telegraphique Suisse." [A.T.S.]

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of Alexandre Vinet, the great Vaudois thinker, writer and patriot, a service was held and wreaths were placed at his grave in Clarens. [A.T.S.]

Georges Bridel has been elected President of the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud. He belongs to the Liberal Party. [A.T.S.]

The accounts for 1946 of the canton of Valais show a deficit balance of 350,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

A lorry near Visp (Valais) was caught by a local train on a level crossing. The driver was badly hurt, and the lorry smashed. [A.T.S.]

Pierre, Auguste Leuba (radical) has been elected a member of the government of the canton of Neuchâtel with 11,941 votes. His opponent, Henri Perret (socialist) received 10,406 votes. The following parties are represented in the government: 2 radicals, 1 socialist, 1 liberal, 1 progr. national. [A.T.S.]

Claude Du Pasquier has been nominated Professor of Philosophy and social insurance at the University of Geneva. [A.T.S.]

Paul Pictet, the founder of the paper "La Suisse," and a former President of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva, has died at Geneva at the age of

86. The deceased played for many years an important role in the political sphere of the canton of Geneva.

Army

Captain Aschwanden, a member of the Swiss Flying Corps, crashed with a Messerschmitt machine on the "Almenfirm" (Valais), the machine and the body was located by a "Storch" plane, after a long and thorough search.

Traffic

"The Motor," in their issue of May 14th, gives a valuable tip to motorists visiting our country, by writing:—

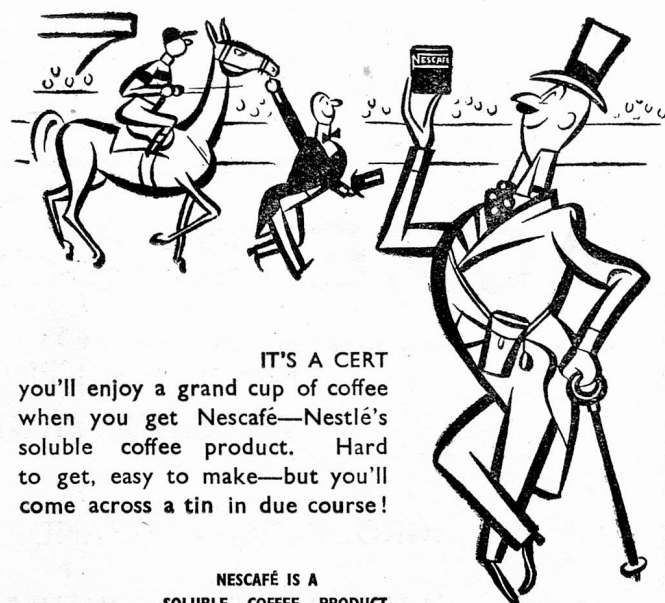
Motorists going to Switzerland this summer will find it a great help if they remember Number Eleven. By dialling this on any telephone, one can get road information, details of what passes are open, a weather report, and the results of the principal sporting events. But not only that: the omniscient young lady at the other end of the wire will also give stranded motorists the name of the nearest garage that is open, and the details of the chemist and doctor on duty in the neighbourhood in case of emergency. So dial One-One and get what you want to know.

The fourth Douglas machine DC-4, ordered by the Swissair has arrived in Switzerland from the U.S.A.

The Swissair has now altogether 21 machines available, amongst them 16 Douglas machines carrying between 14—44 passengers.

Davos has joined the list of towns which possess an air-port. Since the 10th of this month an air taxi service has been inaugurated.

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Economics

With regard to the latest communication from the B.I.S. the "*Financial Times*" in their issue of the 15th inst. writes:—

"The statement of account of the Bank for International Settlements as at 31st March last shows as a separate item the funds invested in Germany. These assets total 291.2 million Swiss gold francs. All have their origin in funds which were placed on the German market in the years 1930 and 1931 in fulfilment of the obligations laid upon the Bank by the Hague Agreements. No new funds have been placed in Germany since 1931.

On the other hand, the long-term deposits received in application of the Hague Agreements are shown on the liabilities side of the statement of account at the total amount of 228.9 million Swiss gold francs. The legal position with regard to the rights and obligations of the bank under the Hague Agreements in respect of its assets in Germany and the long-term deposits entrusted to it has not been altered by the suspension of the annuity payments.

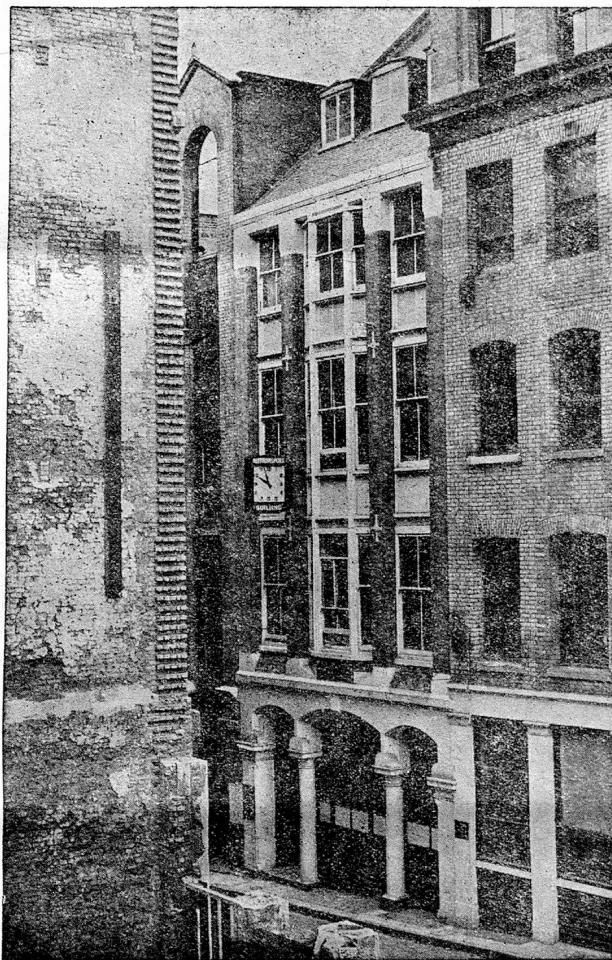
The bank has drawn the attention of the Governments concerned to its rights under the terms of the agreements in force in respect of its funds in Germany and has requested that these should be fully safeguarded.

There is no indication in the accounts or in an

accompanying communiqué if, and to what extent, the bank's assets in Germany are covered by gold deposits and foreign balances owned by the Reichsbank.

The assets of the B.I.S. as at 31st March, other than the funds invested in Germany, amount to about 208,000,000 Swiss gold francs, of which 83,000,000 Swiss gold francs is represented by bar gold, held chiefly in Berne, New York and London. The remaining assets total 125 million Swiss gold francs, and almost the whole is expressed in dollars or Swiss francs, or is repayable in gold.

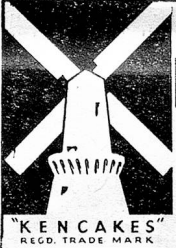
Our Political Correspondent writes: The future of the B.I.S. and the effect of the outcome of the war on the control of its share capital is the subject of two questions tabled by Colonel Crosthwaite-Eyre. It is now believed in usually well-informed quarters that, contrary to their original intentions, the Allied Governments do not at present intend to liquidate the

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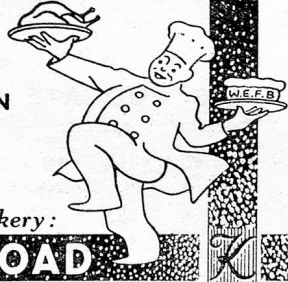
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bank, and the resolution passed to that effect by the Bretton Woods Conference will not be carried out."

Humanitarian

The first batch of British War Invalids have arrived in Prévéranges near Morges, where they will stay for three months. An amount of Frs.300,000 has been collected in Switzerland for British War Invalids of which nearly half of this amount has been collected in the canton of Berne.

—oOo—

The Swiss "Schiller Foundation" held its Annual Meeting in Zurich under the Presidency of Professor Robert Faesi. The following awards for 1946 have been accorded :—

German language sphere : Ernst Zahn, frs.2,000.— on the occasion of his 80th birthday; Albert Ehrismann (Zurich), Hermann Hiltbrunner (Uerikon), and Werner Kaegi (Basel), frs.1,000.— each; J. V. Kopp (Lucerne), Cecil J. Loos (Basel), and Emanuel Stickelberger (Basel), frs. 1,000.— each; Marie Frei-Uhler (Zurich), Max Pulver (Zurich), and Karl Schoelly (St. Gall), frs.700.— each.

French language sphere : Renè Morax (Morges) frs.1,500.—; Léon Bopp (Geneva) frs.800.— and Maurice Kuès (Geneva) frs.700.—.

Italian language sphere : Ulisse Pocobelli glanco (Melide); and Enrico Talamona (Lugano) frs.500.— each; Felice Filippini (Lugano), and Giovanni Boffa (Agne) frs.300.— each.

Romantsch language sphere : Frs.1,000.— to the "Lia Rumantscha."

* * *

The next Federal Singing competition will take place in Berne in the month of June in 1948.

* * *

Five members of a Swiss mountaineering expedition which will soon start climbing operations in the Karakoram and Gangotri ranges in the Himalayas have arrived at Karachi. The expedition will divide itself into two parties. One will proceed to Gilgit, reaching the foot of the Karakoram in June, while the second party will follow the pilgrims' trail through Badrinath to the Gangotri peak, where the River Ganges rises.

* * *

Statistics for last year show a great improvement in Switzerland's demographic situation which for years has been causing considerable concern.

Last year the number of marriages was 38,747, the highest ever attained in Switzerland.

Births also show a considerable increase — 89,102 — only 8,000 less than the highest figure ever recorded, which was in 1901.

Last year the birthrate exceeded 20 per thousand, the minimum recorded being approximately 14 per thousand in 1937. The proportion of births over deaths was 38,867 beating the 1902 record by 88.

The situation is stated to be due to progressive social legislation and improved economic conditions.

During the last 30 years military statistics show that the average height of males in Switzerland has increased about two inches.

72nd FETE SUISSE.

As announced elsewhere in this paper, the traditional Fête Suisse — the 72nd of its kind — will be held on Saturday, 14th June, at 5.30 p.m. at the Central Hall, Westminster.

This ancient annual reunion, which dates from 1864, needs no introduction to the Swiss residents of London. Its popularity, its strong patriotic appeal have made it what it is. And well they know why more hundreds from year to year have flocked to it until the 1,000 mark was passed in 1935 to reach nearly 1,600 in 1939. Then came the war, which put a temporary stop to this great gathering and sent home a good many of our young people. Last year, this annual event in the Swiss colony was renewed; over 900 compatriots and friends patronised it and showed that the Fête Suisse had not been forgotten but, indeed, had remained dear to their heart.

Once again, an attractive programme has been arranged which will delight all, old and young, and will bring back happy memories, to many. Real alpine flowers freshly gathered from our mountains will, it is hoped, arrive in time to bring greetings from our homeland.

The doors will open at 5 p.m. There will be the usual long interval in the programme to enable friends to meet, and the end is timed for 9 p.m. There will be teas and light refreshments for all, and how good they always are!

So do come to the Central Hall on Saturday, 14th June. Tickets at 2/- for adults and 1/- for children can be obtained in advance or at the door on the day. Incidentally, you will help the Swiss Benevolent Society.

J. Z.

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