

# News at random

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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The Federal Council announces the following changes in the diplomatic representations abroad.

Monsieur Jean Frédéric Wagnière, at present Ambassador to Yugoslavia, has been transferred to Iceland as Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary in succession to Monsieur Otto Seifert.

Monsieur Anton Roy Ganz, Ambassador in Iran, and Minister to Afghanistan, is going to Yugoslavia in succession to Monsieur Wagnière.

Monsieur Walter Bossi, of the Federal Political Department in Berne, has been appointed Ambassador to Cuba, and Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the Dominican Republic with residence in Havana.

Monsieur Roy Hunziker, of the Federal Political Department, has been nominated Ambassador to Finland in succession to Monsieur F. Real.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 18 million passengers during the month of December 1958, or 200,000 fewer than in December 1957. Receipts: 27.6 million francs (December 1957: 27.9 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 1.97 million tons, which is 140,000 tons more than during the same period in 1957. Receipts: 41.6 million francs (December 1957: 38.5 million francs).

\* \* \*

### Cantonal

A stranger entered the bicycle shop Wirth & Arnold, at the Seilergraben in Zurich, and without uttering a word fired a shot at the proprietor, Mr. Franz Arnold, which hit him near the heart. He was taken to hospital and underwent an emergency operation. So far no arrest has been made. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A man, who has since been identified as the notorious British bank robber, Donald Brown, alias Donald Hume, entered the Rämistrasse branch office of the "Gewerbebank" Zurich. Jumping on the counter and brandishing a revolver, he demanded the handing over of the money from the cashier, who

refused — whereupon he fired a shot at him wounding him in the stomach. He then attacked another employee by hitting him on the head with his revolver. An attempt to open a safe proved unsuccessful. Brown then hurriedly left the premises, hotly pursued by one of the Bank's employees and an apprentice.

Near the Oberdorf, a taxi driver, Arthur Maag (50) tried to stop the gangster but was shot at and killed. A cook (35) took over the pursuit and, tackling him, managed to wrench the revolver from his hand; then, with the assistance of some passers-by, he overwhelmed and detained Brown until the police arrived.

The cook who courageously stopped the murderer received a reward of 1,000.— francs from the police. The dependants of the taxi-driver who was killed will receive 50,000.— francs from an insurance taken out by the police. [A.T.S.]

A fire which broke out at the "Metallveredlungs Anstalt" at the Freilagerstrasse in Zurich-Albisrieden caused damage estimated at several hundred thousand francs. [A.T.S.]

The accounts for 1958 of the canton of Zurich close with a credit balance of 8,286,143.— francs. [A.T.S.]

The commune of Regensberg has nominated Paul Haupt, publisher in Berne, and Heinrich Hedinger, a teacher in Zurich, as honorary citizens. [A.T.S.]

During the year 1958, 400 traffic accidents were reported in the canton of Zug. 332 persons were injured, 10 of them fatally. [A.T.S.]

A coloured man entered a gunsmith's shop at the Rosiusplatz in Bienne apparently wishing to buy a revolver. After having chosen one he suddenly ran out of the shop and was pursued by the proprietor, who called on passers-by to stop the thief. On the Platz

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der Burg a policeman intercepted him, but was shot at and wounded in the stomach. Some workmen were able to surround the assailant, who was handed over to the police. The policeman who was shot is not seriously injured. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Five youths skating on the lake of Mooseedorf (Ct. Berne) fell through the ice. Four of them were rescued, but the fifth, Hans Dreier (19), of Münchembuchsee, was drowned. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Burglars removed a small safe containing 14,000.—francs, and various deposits of hotel guests, from a hotel on the Wengernalp (Bernese Oberland). The empty safe was later found on the railway track. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mme. Ameline Bechir, of Boncourt, has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A Mr. William Meier, cycle mechanic, of Herzogenbuchsee (Ct. Berne), was murdered in his workshop by a man who knocked him down with a hammer and stole 70.—francs and a wrist-watch. The attacker later surrendered to the police, and was identified as being Walter Bütikofer (30), of Summiswald, living at Herzogenbuchsee. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The West German Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Ernst-Günther Moor, paid an official visit to the town of Basle. He was received at the Town Hall by the members of the cantonal Government, and entertained to luncheon at the "Wiltsche Haus". [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Otto Kopp, since 1947 a member of the Government of the canton Basle-Country, is retiring from his post on 30th June, for health reasons. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A motorist, who through dangerous driving caused the death of a seven-year-old boy, was sentenced to ten months' (!) imprisonment by the Police Court of Basle. He had been charged for dangerous driving on a previous occasion. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Thirty women teachers at Basle Girls' High School went on strike in protest against the result of the referendum in which the electorate rejected a proposal to give Swiss women the vote in national affairs. The 1,650 girls of the school were given a day's holiday. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

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Mr. Heinrich Abegg, a member of the Government of the canton Basle-Country, whilst driving his motor-car, collided with a stationary vehicle. He received injuries and was taken to hospital. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

During 1958, 1,142 traffic accidents occurred in the canton of Grisons. 650 persons were injured, 21 of them mortally. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A Hungarian, Sandowne Csonka (19), residing in Bregenz (Austria), travelled to Rorschach to induce his Austrian woman friend, who was employed at a restaurant in Rorschach, to return with him to Bregenz. The woman, although reluctant, agreed to accompany him to the railway station, where on the platform a violent altercation occurred.

To avoid publicity the couple adjourned to one of the waiting rooms, where the dispute continued. Efforts by the railway officials to end the row were unsuccessful and the police were called. On their attempting to arrest the Hungarian, he suddenly took a revolver from his pocket and fired point blank at the two policemen. Police Corporal Max Rechsteiner (51), father of four children, and Constable Walter Berger



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(28), recently married, were shot dead. The murderer and his woman friend then escaped, but were later arrested by the Austrian Police at Bregenz. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Alfred Baerlocher, President of the "Kirchenvorsteherschaft" Rheineck (Ct. St. Gall), has made a donation of 10,000.— francs to the Evangelical Church Community of Rheineck. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A fire which broke out at the "Werkzeugfabrik Ammann & Soehne, A.G." in Taegervilen (Ct. Thurgau) caused damage reckoned to be about 300,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Carl Haselbach, "Ortsvorsteher" of Bissegg (Ct. Thurgau), has been honoured by the commune of Bissegg with honorary citizenship. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The recently elected President of the Federal Supreme Court for 1958 to 1960, Dr. Carlo Pometta (Broglio), was officially received at the Town Hall in Bellinzona. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Three new members have entered the Government of the canton of Ticino, namely, Dr. jur. Franco Zorzi (Radical), Dr. phil. Plinio Cioccarei (Radical), and Dr. jur. Tito Tettamanti (Conservative).

Dr. Zorzi was born in 1923 at Bellinzona. He studied Law at the University of Basle. Since 1950 he has been States Prosecutor of Sopra-Ceneri.

Dr. Cioccarei was born in 1918 at Biasca. He studied Philosophy at the Universities of Rome, Lausanne and Berne. Since 1946 he has been States

Chancellor of the canton of Ticino.

Dr. Tettamanti was born at Lugano in 1930. He studied Law at the University of Berne, and practised for some time as a lawyer in Lugano. Until recently he was Vice-President of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Tribunal of Vevey has sentenced a 50-year-old merchant to six months' imprisonment and a fine of 200.— francs for driving a motor-car whilst under the influence of alcohol. The delinquent had been previously convicted for the same offence. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mlle. Alzire Robert, of Chardonne (Ct. Vaud), has celebrated her 101st birthday. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

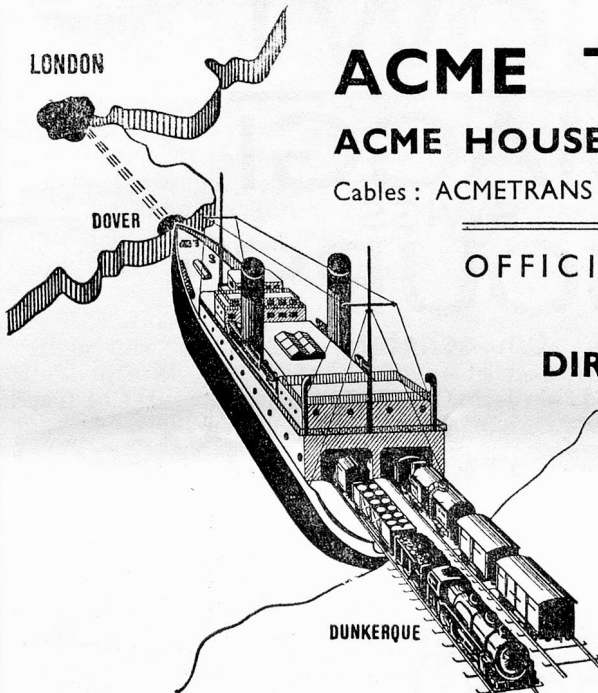
The 60 million francs loan at 5½ per cent, of the Grande Dixence S.A., underwritten by a number of Swiss Banks, was heavily over-subscribed, and allocations had to be reduced. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. med. Olivier Clottu has been made an honorary citizen of the commune of St. Blaise (Ct. Neuchâtel) for services rendered in connection with his work on the history of the commune. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A post-van arrived at the premises of the Swiss National Bank at the Rue Diday in Geneva, and two postmen entered the building to deliver several post bags of money. A porter of the Bank was keeping watch over the van, when suddenly three masked and armed men descended from a waiting motor-car. One gangster knocked down the porter whilst the others



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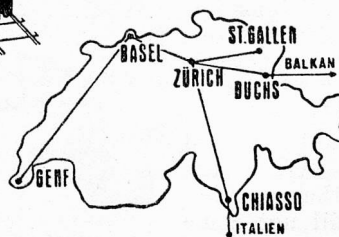
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grabbed a post-bag containing 1.4 million francs in banknotes; all three then boarded the car, which disappeared at great speed in the direction of the Rue de Hesse. The car, which had been stolen at Lausanne, was later found abandoned at the Rue des deux ponts.

The porter of the bank, Pittet, who received head injuries, was taken to hospital, but later was allowed to return home. [A.T.S.]

#### DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Professor Benedict-Pierre-Georges Hochreutiner, in Geneva, at the age of 87. The deceased was for many years conservator and director of the botanical gardens in Geneva, and Honorary Professor of Botany at the University of Geneva. In 1943 he received the "medaille de la reconnaissance" of the town of Geneva for his 47 years' work as a scientist. Professor Hochreutiner was the author of a great number of works on botany. In his younger days he worked for some time at Kew Gardens.

Edouard von Goumoens, in Thun, aged 85. He was at one time a member of the Instructors Corps (Artillery), Chief of Staff of the 3rd Division and Commander of the 3rd Artillery Brigade. On his retirement from the army he was appointed manager of the "Viscose A.G.", Emmenbrücke, and later on President of the Board.

M. Edmond Barde, at one time general secretary of the "Journal de Genève", and a member of the Board of the "Schweiz. Depeschen Agentur" Berne, in Geneva, at the age of 85. [A.T.S.]

#### ANNIVERSARIES.

Dr. Wilhelm Faessler-Hufenus (80), of St. Gall. The "Jubilar" has played a distinguished role for many years in the political life of the canton of St. Gall.

M. Ernest Béguin (80), of Neuchâtel, formerly President of the District Court Neuchâtel, States Prosecutor of the canton of Neuchâtel, member of the States Council, President of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways, and President of the Swiss Liberal Democratic Party.

Professor Gottlob Schrenk (80), of Arosa, for twenty years Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich. He is a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Münster in Westphalen.

Professor Dr. h.c. Auguste Piccard (75), of Basle, *doctor honoris causa* of the "Ecole Polytechnique" of the University of Lausanne, and Professor at the University of Brussels, eminent scientist and well-known balloonist.

Adolf Fehr (70), of Zurich, the well-known painter. [A.T.S.]

#### ARMY.

The Federal Council announced that the commission appointed to advise on the type of fighter aircraft suited to Swiss geographical conditions has already examined various models in the United States, Sweden and Italy, and has attended trials of these machines in the countries concerned. All the types already examined will eventually have to be tested in Switzerland. The commission's report is not expected to be forwarded to the Government before the beginning of March, and the question of the purchase of 100 fighters of one type or another will not come before Parliament before the middle of June.

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Mr. Hans Scheurer, an agricultural expert, of Ittigen (Ct. Berne), has been appointed "Oberfeldkommissar" of the Swiss army in succession to the late Walter Schiltknecht. [A.T.S.]

#### SWISS TOWN POPULATIONS.

On 31st December 1958 the population of the following towns numbered:— *Lausanne*: 121,210; *La Chaux-de-Fonds*: 38,240; *Olten*: 18,907; *Tramelan*: 5,665; *Bienne*: 56,565; *Winterthur*: 77,417.

[A.T.S.]

#### DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

Mr. and Mrs. Angst-Oswald, of Zurich, Mr. and Mrs. H. Schill-Dausch, of Zurich, Mr. and Mrs. von Siebenthal-Streun, of Saanen, and Mr. and Mrs. N. Feurer-Berger, of Salez (Ct. St. Gall). [A.T.S.]

#### SWISS BANK DIVIDENDS.

Schweiz. Bankverein, Basle, 9% (1957, 9%); Bank in Burgdorf, 6% (1957, 6%); Sparkasse der Abtei Kriegstetten, 6% (1957, 6%); Schweiz. Bodenkredit Anstalt, Zurich, 6% (1957, 6%); Hypothekarkasse des Kanton's Fribourg, 5% (1957, 5%); Gewerbe Bank, Zurich, 7% (1957, 6%); Leikasse Neumünster, Zurich, 5½% (1957, 5½%); Eigenheim Bank, Basle, 5% (1957, 5%). [A.T.S.]

#### TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

Two persons were killed and two seriously injured in a head-on collision near Bellach. Those killed were Erwin Demmler (49), of Riedholz, and Erwin Haudenschild (26), of Niederbipp.

Two motor-cars collided, in a thick fog, on the road between Büsslingen and Künten (Ct. Aargau). One person was seriously injured, and Mr. Hector Gloor (29), of Niederrohrdorf, and Miss Ida Walther (23), of Wettingen, were killed. [A.T.S.]

#### VARIOUS.

Sixteen countries will again show their latest products of the road vehicle industry, from 12th to 22nd March, at the Geneva International Motor Show, 1959. Passenger and commercial vehicles, road-building and maintenance equipment, camping equipment, motor boats, and accessories will be exhibited in more than 600 stands.

A "Jardin d'Amour", or "Garden of Love", will be one of the many attractions of the 1st Swiss Horticultural Exhibition, which is to last from 25th April to 11th October 1959. This garden, about which no details have been revealed up to now, has been labelled "a modern, but no less promising, copy of our ancestors' arbours". Other "mysterious"

features will be a "Philosopher's Garden" and a "Poet's Garden". In the scope of the rotating special shows, a big International Orchid Show will be held in the first half of September.

How to preserve food by means of atomic radiation will be one of the most astonishing features of AIDA 59, Lausanne's International Food Exhibition which will take place from 13th to 28th June 1959. AIDA has nothing to do with Giuseppe Verdi in this particular case; it is simply the French abbreviation of "International Association of Food Distributors", whose 4th International Congress at Lausanne's Palais de Beaulieu will be attended by some 3,000 delegates from 30 countries. For the exhibition, more than 350 exhibitors are expected, about half of them from foreign countries.

Organisers of large outdoor events often experience anxious moments shortly before the actual date, on account of the weather. There is one event, however, which St. Peter seems to have unfailingly favoured in the past — the great lakeside Night Festival, with a giant fireworks display, at Lucerne. This summer, it will be held on 27th June (guaranteed to be a fine day).

The International Musical Festival Weeks, in which the Philharmonia Orchestra of England will once again participate, are planned for the period 15th August — 10th September 1959.

The first fully automatic aerial cableway in Switzerland was recently inaugurated at the lakeside town of Brusino-Arsizio, in Southern Switzerland. Tickets are issued by slot-machines, and the passengers themselves start the gondolas by pushing a button. By this new cableway the little-known village of Serpiano, affording one of the most impressive vistas of the area, has been made accessible.

The new slogan used in the current advertising campaign of the Swiss National Tourist Office — "All the Joys for Girls and Boys" — has produced a volume of enquiries exceeding all expectations. Switzerland is, of course, especially suited for a family holiday, as hotels usually grant reductions for children under 12. In addition, children under six years of age travel free and those aged 6—16 pay half-fare on Railways, Boats and Postal Motor Coaches.

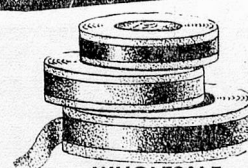
Children love those fast electric Swiss trains, the many different types of Mountain Railways, the gaily painted boats, or the yellow Postal Motor Coaches negotiating those unforgettable hairpin bends in the Alps.



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