

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss Legation in the South African Union has been raised to the status of Embassy, and the Minister, Monsieur Franz Kappeler, to the rank of Ambassador.

Dr. N. Diederichs, Economic Minister of the Union of South Africa, has paid a courtesy visit to Federal Councillor F. T. Wahlen, head of the Federal Economic Department.

Customs receipts for the month of October 1960 amount to 114.3 million francs. Of this amount the Confederation (Bund) receives 81 million francs, or 11.1 million francs more than it received in October 1959. During the first ten months of the current year the receipts for the Confederation amount to 730.9 million francs, which is 131.8 million francs more than during the same period in 1959.

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 18.8 million passengers in the month of September 1960, or 1 million fewer than in September 1959.

Goods traffic is returned as 2.66 million tons, which is 310,000 tons more than during the same period in 1959. Receipts: 53.9 million francs (September 1959: 46.7 million francs).

The Swiss Government has announced emergency measures to curb the purchase by foreigners of land in Switzerland. The measures, which will be retrospective to 5th October 1960, and remain in force for 10 years, are to go before Parliament next month and are believed certain to be approved.

A draft message from the Government said that last year foreigners bought more than 25m. francs (about £2m.) worth of land in the canton of Lucerne and over 20m. francs worth in the Italian-Swiss canton of Ticino.

Any foreigner wishing to acquire land will have to submit all details for approval by the Swiss authorities. An application can be refused if it is thought that the purchase is for speculative reasons, if the land is near Army installations, or if it is considered that the purchase interferes with the development of Swiss estates.

Cantonal

Two members of the Bienne section of the Swiss Alpine Club, on a climbing excursion in the Frinvillier district, slipped and fell 140 feet. Hans Kocher (29), of Bienne, was killed, whilst his companion, Werner Stamm-bacher, who had been roped to him, got entangled in a tree and escaped uninjured. [A.T.S.]

The oldest female inhabitant of the town of Bienne, Frau Wwe. Amelia Kammermann-Sunier, has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

Dr. jur. Carl Knab, a member of the editorial staff of the "Schweiz. Depeschagentur" for the last thirty-two years, has retired. [A.T.S.]

The Basle etcher, Celestino Piatti, has been awarded first prize for his poster for the "Kieler Woche 1961". [A.T.S.]

Owing to the death of Beat Doerig, late "Landammann" of the canton of Appenzell I.Rh., the post of "Landammann" will be occupied by Dr. Albert Broger until April 1961, when a new occupant will be elected. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Jakob Zuend, the oldest inhabitant of the commune of Altstätten, has celebrated his 100th birth-

Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The high costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Friday, December 2nd, 1960, together with remittance for 10/-.

day. Frau Emilie Maeder-Straumann has also reached the age of 100; she is the oldest female inhabitant of the town of Olten. [A.T.S.]

The commune of Parpan (Ct. Grisons) has bestowed honorary citizenship upon Mr. Ulrich Schumacher and his wife Vrona. [A.T.S.]

The "Bremgarter Bezirksanzeiger", published in Bremgarten, has celebrated its 100th jubilee. [A.T.S.]

M. Francis Liardon (48) has been elected Head of the airport Blecherette in succession to M. Alphonse Kammacher, who is vacating this post at the end of the current year. [A.T.S.]

The University of Neuchâtel has honoured with the degree of *doctor honoris causa* Mr. Fritz Richner, President of the Board of the "Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft", and M. Albert Dubois, a member of the Board of "Saurer A.G. Arbon". [A.T.S.]

The population of the town of Geneva numbers 212,000, and the total population of the canton is 260,000. [A.T.S.]

The 12 million loan, at 3½ per cent, of the "Caisse hypothécaire du canton de Genève" has been considerably oversubscribed, and allocations have had to be reduced. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Charles Bächtold, chief of the security service at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, has celebrated his fortieth service jubilee. He was for twenty-five years in the security service of the League of Nations, and for fifteen years has occupied the same post with United Nations. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Beat Doerig, "Landammann" of the canton of Appenzell I.Rh., in Appenzell, at the age of 55.

Dr. Hans Gwalter, President of the Board of the "Maschinenfabrik Rüti, A.G." Rapperswil, in Rapperswil, aged 75.

Dr. A. Brueschweiler, a teacher at the "Progymnasium" Thun, and historian, at the age of 68.

Oscar Cattani, a painter of religious subjects, and at one time Professor at the "Technikum" Fribourg, in Lucerne, aged 73.

Hugo Doeblin, well-known actor and author, in Zurich, at the age of 85.

Canon Alois Buenter, in Thusis, aged 68. The deceased was from 1925 to 1930 priest in Sachseln, and afterwards until 1951 in Stans. In 1940 he was nominated resident canon at the cathedral of Chur.

Wilhelm Straumann, senior partner of an important building concern, in Basle, at the age of 82.

Bernard Didisheim, manager of the watch manufacturing firm "Juvenia", La Chaux-de-Fonds, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, aged 93.

Dr. jur. Robert Briner, in Zurich, at the age of 75. The deceased was elected a member of the Government of the canton of Zurich in 1935, which post he held until 1951. The University of Zurich honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. For a number of years Dr. Briner was president of the Democratic Party of the canton of Zurich. In the army he reached the rank of Colonel (Assistant chief of staff of the 3rd army-corps). [A.T.S.]

ANNIVERSARIES

A. V. Thornton (70), of Basle. The "Jubilar", a British subject, has lived in Basle since 1913, and during that time was conducive in promoting good relations between the two countries, especially as president of the Anglo-Swiss Clubs in Switzerland.

Dr. phil. Alfred Fankhauser (70), of Berne, journalist, critic and author. He has written a great number of novels; amongst them are best known "Der Messias", "Wahlenwart", and "Die Allmend". He has also written several plays in Bernese dialect.

François Gos (80), of Geneva, eminent Swiss painter. [A.T.S.]



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LEGACIES AND DONATIONS

The late Thomas C. Maurer, a resident in the United States of America, has left to his native commune, Zollikon (Zurich), the amount of \$70,000 towards the cost of a local library.

The heirs of the late Giuseppe and Anna Lazzarini-Dosch, of Samedan, have made a donation of 10,000.—francs towards the cost of a "Kindergarten".

Frau Bertha Ryniker-Blunk has made a donation of 10,000.—francs to the commune of Habsburg, in memory of her late husband, Dr. h.c. Adolf Ryniker. The money is to be used for school excursions and school furniture. [A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. and Mrs. F. Barbey-Ador of Geneva (Mr. Barbey was at one time Swiss Minister in Belgium), Mr. and Mrs. W. Weder-Kluser of Oberriet, Mr. and Mrs. A. Jely-Chaboudez, of Roselet nr. Breuleux, Mr. and Mrs. L. Heer-Halblützel of Winterthur, Mr. and Mrs. Simon Wiegert-Steiner of Basle.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Lippuner-Vetsch, of Grabs, have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65). [A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Two persons were killed and three were seriously injured when a motor-car collided with an engine at a level-crossing near the railway station at Winterthur-Wülflingen. Those killed were Richard Neukamm (30), of Schaffhausen, and Wilhelm Epper (65), of Beringen.

At the Goods Station Schaffhausen a motor-cyclist, Hans Airaghi (52), customs official, and father of five children, collided with a tractor engine, receiving fatal injuries.

Bruno Largo, master-mason of Schwanden, when cycling, was killed at a level-crossing between Leuggelbach and Nidfurn (St. Gall); he failed to notice an approaching train.

Two persons were killed and one was injured when a motor-car on the road between Echallens and Moudon took a corner too sharply and overturned. Those killed were Pierre Gasser (31), industrialist, of Pully, and his father, Paul Gasser (63), factory manager, of Lucens. [A.T.S.]

* * *

VARIOUS

Switzerland has so far contributed 5,967,020.—francs during the World Refugee Year. It is expected that the amount will have risen to well over six million francs by the end of the year. [A.T.S.]

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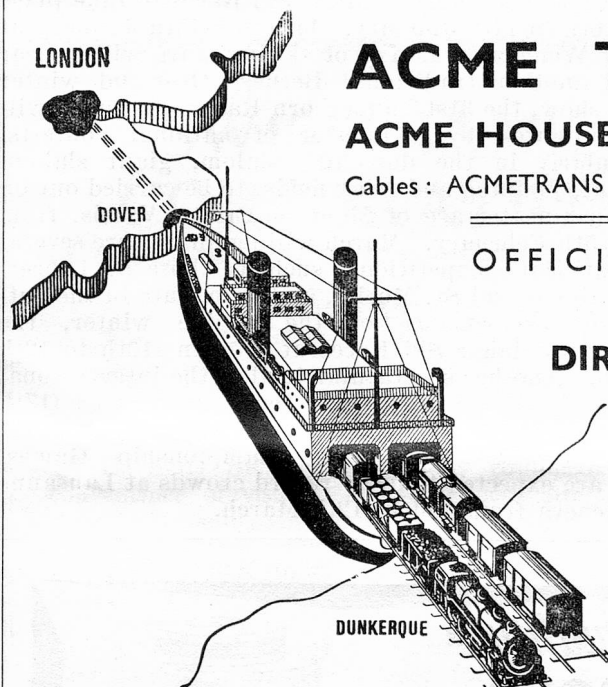
The accounts of the "Schweizer Auslandhilfe" show that the sum of 1,282,396.—francs was collected in 1960 (1959: 898,367.—). [A.T.S.]

* * *

On the occasion of the Centenary Celebration of the "Verein Deutscher Eisenhütteleute", Dr. Robert Durrer, Professor at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, and President of the Board of the "von Rollschen Eisenwerke A.G.", was presented with the Carl-Lueg Commemoration Medal, which is the highest distinction the German iron industry can award. [A.T.S.]

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The organising committee of the 25th Federal Singing Competition, which was held in Geneva from 17th to 28th June 1960, has closed the accounts with a credit balance of 45,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

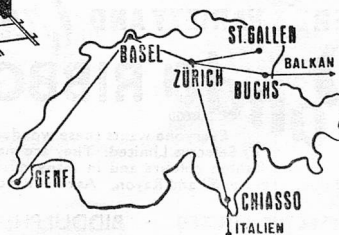
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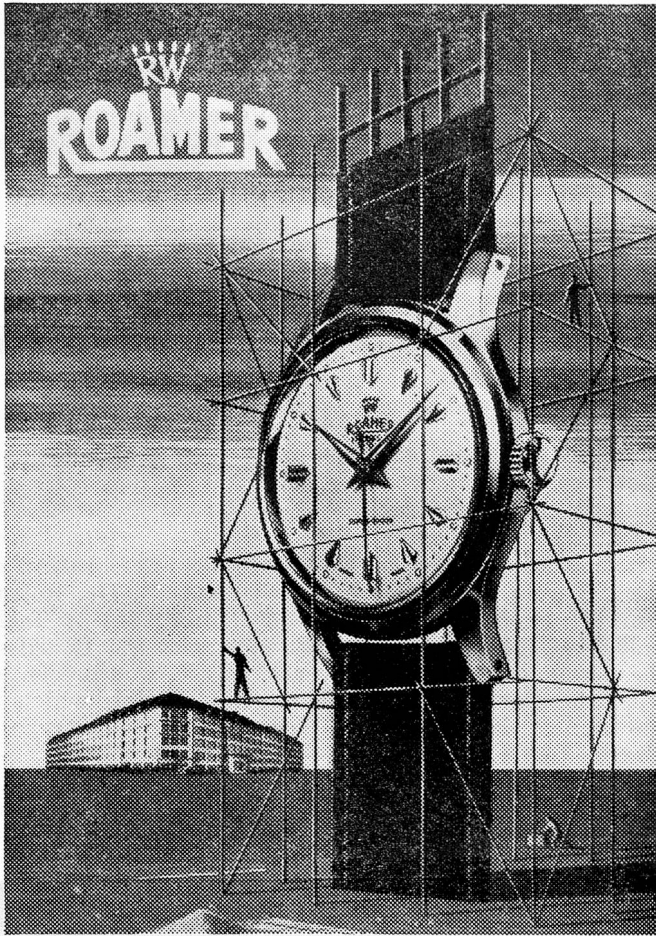
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The Federal Council has put at the disposal of the Swiss Red Cross an amount of 40,000.—francs for the victims of the cyclone in East Pakistan. The Swiss Red Cross has made a donation of 5,000.—francs for the same purpose. [A.T.S.]

The Marcel Benoist Foundation, for the promotion of scientific research, has awarded the 1959 prize to Dr. phil. and Dr. med. Albert Wettstein, of Basle. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Paul Risch, of the "Forschungs Institut für Fremdenverkehr" at the University of Berne, was granted a two months' leave to advise the Israeli Government on matters of tourism. [A.T.S.]

During the first nine months of the current year Switzerland has exported 30,632,000 watches, to the value of 858.5 million francs. This represents an increase of 15 per cent both in number and value of watches. [A.T.S.]

Zurich — The latest edition of the calendar of events published twice a year by the Swiss National Tourist Office, previews, in an entirely new graphic set-up, a record number of some 900 sports, social and cultural events. The Bernese Oberland, which, together with the Grisons, the Vaudois Alps and the Valais, is one of Switzerland's most attractive ski wonderlands, will as usual open the season of international competitions. Adelboden will hold its 7th International Ski-ing Meet on 8th and 9th January, followed by Grindelwald, which, by the way, also tries to appeal to gourmets from all over the world through a "Culinary Fortnight" (8th to 22nd January), with the 23rd International Ladies' Ski Races to take place from 10th to 14th January. 14th and 15th January at nearby Wengen, a galaxy of ski-ing stars will appear in yet another traditional Bernese Oberland winter sports show, the 31st Lauberhorn Race. February will be highlighted by a number of national contests, particularly in the downhill, slalom, giant slalom, langlauf, jumping and relay fields, to be carried out on the sunshine terrace of Montana-Crans, Valais, from 2nd to 5th February. March will again feature several international competitions, such as those at Lenzerheide, Davos and St. Moritz, and culminate in the outstanding performance of the Alpine winter, the Arlberg-Kandahar Ski Races at Mürren (10th to 12th March). Another spectacular trial of the international ski-ing elite is the Gornergrat Derby at Zermatt (17th to 19th March). Of particular interest are the world and European Ice-Hockey Championship Games, which are expected to draw record crowds at Lausanne and Geneva from 2nd to 12th March.



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Basel. — The construction of artificial ice-rinks in Switzerland has made rapid progress in recent years. Eight years ago a total of only six such ice-rinks existed in Zurich, Berne, Basel, Neuchâtel and Lausanne. Two more, at La Chaux-de-Fonds and Martigny, were added by 1955. Since then 29 cities and towns, among which the Italian-speaking villages of Ambri and Ascona, the watchmaking centres of Bienne, Le Locle and St. Imier and — endeavouring to extend their winter sport season — the winter resorts of Davos, Arosa, Villars, Montana-Crans and Adelboden, have built artificial ice-rinks, bringing the total to 37. Switzerland, therefore, with its 5 million inhabitants, is said to be the world's No. 1 ice-skating nation in this respect.

* * *

Berne. — Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Winston Churchill and Mrs. Churchill, Grand-Duchess Charlotte of Luxemburg and Prince Consort Felix, the Shah of Persia, Pandit Nehru, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, President Sukarno of Indonesia, Germany's President Dr. Theodor Heuss, Austria's President Dr. Adolf Schärf, King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece and — in the very recent past — Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco have been some of the illustrious visitors to the charming manor house of Lohn, near Berne, which, since 1946, has been used by the Swiss Federal Council as a guest house for visiting heads of government from abroad. This beautiful patrician mansion, which was built in 1782-83, has recently undergone a complete renovation and has been refurnished in the contemporary style. With its unique formal gardens modelled after the royal country estates of France, it is considered an invaluable monument of the golden age of the Bernese Baroque.

Ilanz. — What is an Alp? Contrary to what is generally believed in Anglo-Saxon countries, it is not a snow-capped mountain peak but a sort of summer residence for Swiss dairy farmers and cowherds in the midst of lush green Alpine pastures. Some 6,000 feet above sea-level, on the outskirts of the tiny mountain village of Obersaxen, above Ilanz, the "first city on the Rhine", is the "Vorderalp", which is said to be the most modern Alp in Europe. It is a model dairy farm accommodating some 120 cows and featuring such new-fangled devices as Switzerland's biggest mechanized milking stable, a fully automatic collecting and distributing centre for liquid manure, and a complete network of milk pipe-lines. While the cows are looked after with scientific efficiency, the men are not neglected. Their working quarters, bedrooms and social rooms are of ultra-modern design.

* * *

Contrary to the widespread opinion that the Swiss are a nation of Alpine herdsman, the latest figures show that the attraction of Switzerland's cities has increased further in the last decade. One out of every three Swiss now lives in a city of over 30,000. No less than 1,104,000 of Switzerland's five million inhabitants are residents of the five leading cities, Zurich (population 436,000), Basel (205,000), Geneva (174,300), Berne (164,800), and Lausanne (123,300): 412,700 more live in the eight medium-sized cities of Winterthur (78,900), St. Gall (74,700), Lucerne (67,300), Bienne (57,200), La Chaux-de-Fonds (38,100), Fribourg (33,800), Neuchâtel (32,500), and Schaffhausen (30,200).

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