

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has promoted Mr. Fritz Hegg to the rank of Ambassador. At present Swiss Minister to Budapest, he will in his new position represent our country in Tunisia.

* * *

In the presence of several important personalities the French Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilfrid Baumgartner, has given a lecture in Bern on the world's present economic situation.

* * *

MR. MAX PETITPIERRE

Mr. Max Petitpierre, chief of the Federal Political Department, who has handed in his demission, served three times as President of the Swiss Confederation. Born in Couvert in 1899, he studied Law at the Universities of Zurich, Neuchâtel and Munich. After the conclusion of his studies he established himself as an advocate and notary in Neuchâtel. From 1926 to 1931, and again from 1938 to 1944, he was Professor of International Law at the University of Neuchâtel. In 1937 he was elected a member of the Grand Council of his native canton, and five years later (1942) he entered Parliament (States Council) as a Radical. On 14th December 1944, Mr. Petitpierre was elected a member of the Federal Government in succession to Mr. Pilet-Golaz. Since then he has been in charge of the Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office). Mr. Petitpierre was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1950, 1955 and 1960.

* * *

We learn from official sources that Ex-President Peron of Argentina has been refused a visitor's permit into Switzerland. Strange, indeed, when one remembers that only a few years ago Mrs. Eva Peron was paying an official visit to Bern.

* * *

On the other hand, President Bourguiba of Tunisia has been spending many weeks in Switzerland and recently visited the Federal Palace.

* * *

OPTIMISM — AND THE WILL TO WORK

Switzerland can face the future economic situation with optimism — as long as the Swiss maintain their high standards of workmanship and their will to work. The Swiss Federal President, Friedrich Wahlen, told the "Société d'études économiques" the other week: "We can do it. We've shown that in the past. But we must stick to our traditions and culture and keep the 'entente cordiale' between workers and employers".

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M. Wahlen warned that the future would not be easy. The European economic situation was already extremely complex. Switzerland had to fulfil her obligations both to EFTA and to the rest of the world.

M. Wahlen said that at the moment 55 per cent of Swiss exports went to Europe and 45 per cent to the rest of the world. The country had to maintain contact with other continents, where great opportunities for increasing Swiss exports existed.

It was the State's business to encourage this expansion of exports. The dynamism of private enterprise must not be restricted, but it might sometimes be necessary to support investments abroad and also firms who were trying to open up new foreign markets. In this way private enterprise and the State were complementary.

* * *

Celebrations have just taken place in Switzerland, of the centenary of the birth of a great scientist, to whom we owe capital discoveries in the domain of watchmaking. Charles-Edouard Guillaume first studied in his native Canton of Neuchâtel, from where he went to the Federal Polytechnical School in Zurich, and then, in 1883, entered the International Bureau of Weights and Measures at Sèvres, where he made a brilliant career. The son and the grandson of watchmakers, he had been interested, right from his earliest

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childhood, in the variations, due to external conditions, to be found in apparatus for measuring time. He directed all his career to the search for a solution to this problem and if, to-day, the wrist-watch has achieved its present development, this is due, to a great extent, to the discoveries made by Charles-Edouard Guillaume. It was he who invented the metals known under the names of "Invar" and "Elinvar", which are alloys of nickel steel with the addition of chromium, used for the making of pendulums for watches, which are insensible to the variations in temperature, and replace the rare and costly metals which had been used previously for this purpose. Decorated for his work by an impressive number of countries belonging to the two hemispheres, Charles-Edouard Guillaume, who was the Director of the International Bureau for Weights and Measures, also received the Nobel Prize for Physics, this being the crowning of a particularly fruitful career, dedicated entirely to science. It was only proper to call to mind the memory of this great scientist, who died in 1938, at a time when scientific research was advancing to the forefront of the preoccupations, not only in the watchmaking domain, but in that of the entire Swiss industry.

Cantonal

The oldest restaurant car of the Swiss Federal Railways has been given to a transport company in Lucern. Built in Prague in 1914, this restaurant car was used until October last year on the Basel-Luzern-Bellinzona route.

Smugglers have been caught at Ponte-Chiasso on the Swiss-Italian border. A Swiss citizen was found carrying the sum of 8 million lire, and some 850 Swiss watches were discovered in two Italian cars.

"NO" TO DEARER PETROL

About 60 per cent of Switzerland — 1,500,000 voters — went to the polls and turned down the federal government's pay-as-you-go autobahn plan by a 6.75 per cent majority.

On a cantonal basis, the vote was 13-12 against the seven cents per litre increase. They were as follows:

Against: Zurich, Berne, Lucerne, Freiburg, Solothurn, Basle (city), Basle (land), Aargau, Tessin, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, and Geneva.

In favour: Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Zug, Schaffhausen, Outer Appenzell, Inner Appenzell, St. Gall, Grisons, and Thurgau.

But all the cantons voted that the State should negotiate all future pipeline deals — by a total majority of 42.94 per cent, including the four cantons (Grisons, Tessin, Valais and St. Gall) which have already prepared the way for pipelines.

The "première" of a new version of the opera, "Frank V", by Friedrich Duerrenmatt, was given at the Comedie Theatre in Basel. It is a dramatic comedy about a bunch of crooks working under cover of a private bank.

The Swiss composer, Frank Martin, who has just celebrated his 70th birthday, was given the title of Docteur Honoris Causa by the University of Lausanne.

NEWS AT RANDOM



According to recent statistics, Basel now comes in fourth position as a Rhine port. The order reads: Duisbourg-Rhurort, Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Basel, Koln, Strasburg, Karlsruhe.

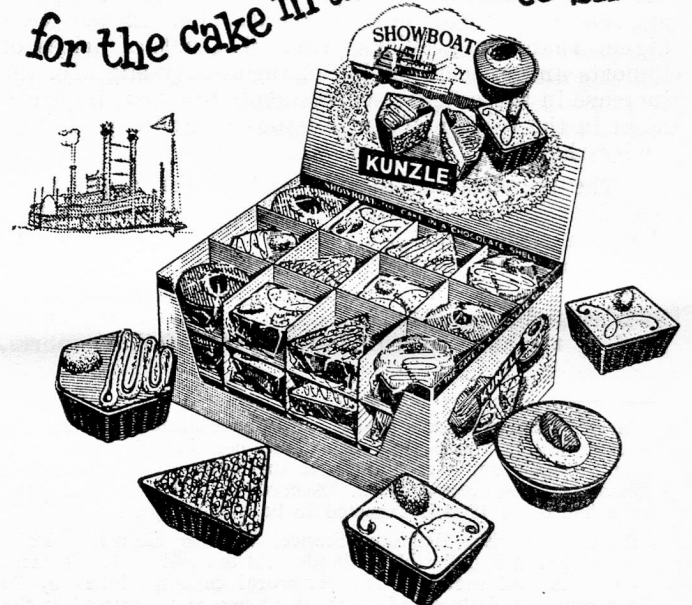
A huge private hotel is to be built in the country at Bude, Petit-Saconnex, Geneva. The hotel will comprise no fewer than 400 rooms. There will be a swimming pool, and parking for 200 cars. It will be built by private capital, and American as well as European enterprises are investing in the project.

Owing to lack of manpower the Basel public transport has decided to engage women as conductors. Instruction courses for women have just begun.

Three people were killed and many severely injured in a tragic traffic accident at Lommis, Thurgovie. A column of cars in a wedding party coming from Zurich were approaching Lommis when suddenly the fourth car accelerated to overtake the first three. It hit the one immediately in front of it and was projected across the road and overturned.

For his 70th anniversary, the Basel poet and writer, Edi Wirz, has been given a donation of 1,000 francs by the Basel literary commission.

The New Look
for the cake in a chocolate shell



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