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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### STATISTICS ABOUT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

The Swiss Parliament, by electing M. P. Etter as a member of the Federal Government, has at the same time elected the 55th Federal Councillor since the 1848 Constitution.

The average age of the "Landesväter" on their entry into the Government is 48 years, whilst the average on their departure stands at 60 years. The years of service per member amount to about 11 years. The earliest entry into the Federal Executive was at the age of 31 (Federal Councillor Droz), and the earliest departure was at 40 (Federal Councillor Borel). The oldest entry was registered with 72 years (Federal Councillor Ador), and the oldest departure with 81 years (Federal Councillor Deucher). Federal Councillor Schenck beats the record as to years in office; he was a member of the Government for 32 years.

The average age of the present Government is 56; two of the members entered at the age of 60.

The following cantons have furnished over 50 per cent. of the elected Federal Councillors: Vaud (10), Zurich (8), Berne (6), Neuchâtel (4). The cantons Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Schaffhausen and Wallis have never yet furnished a member of the Government.

#### NEW CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL MILITARY INSURANCE DEPT.

Dr. Friedrich Schnitz, President of the Tribunal at Aarberg, has been appointed Chief of the Federal Military Insurance Department.

#### HUNGER MARCHERS IN SWITZERLAND.

A committee consisting of Socialists and Communists has invited the unemployed of the town of Biel to a meeting.

After a prolonged discussion, it was decided to organise a march of the unemployed to Berne. Over 600 of the "sans travail" have agreed to take part in the march.

#### CIVIL AVIATION IN SWITZERLAND.

According to the latest statistics there are 84 aeroplanes registered in the country, of which number 25 are commercial and 59 light machines. Of the latter, 36 are owned by private individuals, while 23 are the property of flying clubs. The oldest machine dates from 1923. There are no fewer than 23 makes to be found among them, including de Havilland, 18; Comte, 15; Klein, 11; Fokker, 9; Raab Katzenstein, 4, and Morane, 3. The aggregate engine rating covering 100 engines is given at approximately 15,400 h.p., the leading makes being British.

In 1933 the Swiss Government expended 557,000 francs in subsidies to air lines and 33,000 francs for the encouragement of sports flying. The Federal estimates for 1934 provide for an expenditure of 523,000 francs in subsidies, 42,000 francs for sports flying, 7,000 francs for flying grounds, and 120,000 francs for maintenance of aerodromes. The 1934 estimates of the Federal Post Office for allocations to the various air navigation companies provide for an expenditure of 610,000 francs for air mail transport, at the rate of 30c. and 60c. per kilometre flown, according to the importance of the mail carried. As in past years, subsidies granted to foreign air navigation companies will be calculated in accordance with international agreements.

The Federal Council have decided to create a special organisation, under the title of "Commission d'études pour l'aéronautique à l'École polytechnique fédérale," for the purpose of promoting the development of aviation in Switzerland and of co-ordinating the activities of the various Government departments in matters relating to aviation. The new organisation will comprise members of the Federal Technical College, the Federal Military Department, and the Federal Department of Posts and Railways.

#### SWISS GOLD LOSS.

The Swiss National Bank last week lost Swiss francs 36,000,000 (£2,250,000 at current rates) from gold reserves, caused by continued withdrawal. At the same time the note circulation decreased by Swiss francs 36,500,000, so that the gold cover is practically unchanged at 92.86 per cent.

#### SWISS ELECTRICAL EXPORTS.

The exports of electrical apparatus and instruments from Switzerland during the past year attained a value of £687,520, as compared with £659,920 in 1932.

#### PLANS FOR DEVELOPING USE OF THE B.I.S.

New plans for increasing the usefulness of the Bank for International Settlements, which was originally founded to handle the transfer of German reparations to Germany's creditors, are rapidly nearing maturity.

One plan provides that the bank shall act as clearing house for all the postal administrations of the world. Germany and Switzerland have already agreed to this proposal, and it is hoped shortly to secure the assent of other countries.

A similar arrangement in regard to international railway accounts is also contemplated.

New Zealand and Canada may, it is believed, shortly become shareholders of the bank, the capital of which is entirely held by governments, and open credits as soon as their currencies have been definitely stabilised.

#### EXPULSION OF FRANZ BURRI.

M. Franz Burri, formerly editor of the "Auslands-Schweizer," which is published in Graz, has been expelled from Austria owing to anti-government activity.

#### LOCAL.

##### ZURICH.

M. Otto Karrer, Professor of Chemistry at the University in Zurich, has received the dignity of *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Madrid.

The death is reported from Zurich of M. A. H. Hürlimann-Hirzel, at the age of 77. M. Hürlimann was "Seniorchef" of the well-known brewery firm Hürlimann. In the army he reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel; he was at one time Adjutant of the 3rd Army Corps.

##### LUCERNE.

From Lucerne comes the news of the death of Dr. Emil Cattani, a noted nerve specialist, at the age of 74.

##### BASLE.

M. A. Morel-Vischer died of heart failure at Naples on the eve of embarking for a Mediterranean cruise. By his death the Basle banking world loses one of its most brilliant representatives. He was born in 1866, the son of the former Federal Judge Morel. He spent his youth at Lausanne, where he attended the schools, and afterwards entered the banking house of Masson in Lausanne as an apprentice. On the conclusion of his apprenticeship, he went to London (Swiss Bank Corporation) and Paris (Crédit Lyonnais), where he perfected his knowledge. In 1894 he entered the "Basler Handelsbank," of which institution he became manager four years later (1898). In 1914 he was appointed delegate of the board. M. Morel was also a director of the "Kredit. und Industriebank," "Bank für Transportwerte," "Schweiz. Gesellschaft für elektrische Industrie," "Baloise," "Elektroanlagen A.G.," "Schweiz. Bodenkredit-Anstalt," "Viege-Zermatt Bahn," "Gornergrat Bahn," and many foreign companies.

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The 18th Basle Fair was opened last Saturday. Dr. Meili, Manager of the Fair, received about 200 Swiss and foreign newspaper men. There are altogether 1,222 exhibitors (1933, 1,157), the rental of stalls producing 650,000 frs. (1933, 598,000 frs.), covering a surface of 30,000 square metres.

##### GENEVA.

The Aero Club of Switzerland is organising under the patronage of the President of the Swiss Confederation, an International Show of Sport and Touring Aviation, to take place at Geneva, from April 27 to May 6. Switzerland, which, properly speaking, does not possess an aviation industry of its own, presents, however, an important market, and will attract all the interested circles in Europe and abroad.

This aero show will take place in the Grand Palais des Expositions, Geneva, where the International Automobile Salon is held each year in the month of March. Important aerial displays are planned on this occasion.

M. Spahlinger, the father of the noted Swiss bacteriologist, has died in Geneva at the age of 84.

Sacrifices were endured by Mr. Spahlinger, senior, and his wife, so that the research work of their brilliant son might not be hindered. As the work progressed, every building on the Spahlinger estate at Carouge was given up to research, and in time banks and other demanded securities for advances.

When the old gentleman was 72 he had the bitter experience of seeing his four life insurance policies sold, but he had unbounded faith in his son. Now a stroke has ended his life.

If ever a private and comparatively unknown individual deserves a statue to his memory, it is this Swiss parent, who sacrificed everything he possessed in order that his son might conquer that fell disease which claims hundreds of thousands of victims every year.

\* \* \*

M. Isaak, a former municipal employee, was released a few days ago after serving a sentence in St. Antoine prison, Geneva, for political offences.

Now he has been appointed Governor of the prison by M. Nicole.

M. Isaak was convicted of taking part in the Socialist riots in Geneva in November, 1932.

\* \* \*

A conference of members of the Geneva Government with the Federal Council has taken place in Berne on Tuesday last, in connection with the financial help which is solicited from the Federal Government.

#### SOLOTHURN.

M. Oscar Miller, manager of "Papierfabrik" Biberist, has died. He was known as one of the biggest collectors of pictures in Switzerland. His large collections comprised works of Giacometti, Hodler, Amiet, Auberjonois, Huber, Morgenhaler, Berger, etc.

#### APPENZELL/A.RH.

M. Christian Ruedi in Gais, a member of the cantonal government for 15 years, has expressed a wish to resign on the occasion of the next "Landsgemeinde."

#### ST. GALLEN.

Frau Keller-Giger, who died last December in St. Gallen, has left 175,000 frs. for charitable purposes.

#### SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The government of the canton of Schaffhausen has made an appeal to their employees to spend their holidays in Switzerland, in order to help the hotel industry.

#### NIDWALDEN.

The government of the canton Nidwalden has resigned *en bloc*. The going out of office will be discussed at the next "Landsgemeinde." A violent Press campaign against the government, in connection with the Bannalp Electricity Works, is considered to be the chief reason for the retirement.

\* \* \*

GRISON.

A large part of the village Alt Felsberg, at the foot of the Calanda, has been destroyed by fire.

#### VALAIS.

A smuggler had a miraculous escape from death when, during a desperate chase by frontier guards over the snow and ice of the Alps on the Italian border near Brig, he and a companion slipped over a sheer precipice.

His companion fell 150 feet and was killed; he fell more than 200 feet and was found alive and comparatively unharmed. His fall had been broken by his knapsack catching on the rocky wall of the precipice.

#### FOOTBALL.

8th April, 1934.

#### NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Blue Stars	1	Lugano	3
Basel	2	Urania	2
Young Boys	1	Grasshoppers	4
Locarno	4	Nordstern	1
Servette	0	Concordia	0
Chaux-de-Fonds	2	Young Fellows	0
Lausanne	4	Biel	2

The three leaders are closing up, Bern being still first with 31 points, with Servette and Grasshoppers on their heels with 29 points and one game in hand, fourth and fifth, Biel and Lugano, with 24 points.