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The Swiss Observer

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A Merry Christmas to all our Readers

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

This week we have entered upon the festival of Xmas — the happiest and most precious time of the year.

All over the globe there will arise glad tidings of praise. Let us then, dear readers, lay aside for a few hours, at least, the burden of our work and forget our troubles and worries. Let us be reunited once again in that happy state of companionship and mutual good-will! Let us turn away from our daily toil, and routine, with its restless struggles of life, to welcome the peace of Christmas.

Although the world is still in a turmoil, and the cares and sorrows lay heavily on many shoulders, the spirit of Christmas is the same to-day as yesterday and will be for ever. May this blessed time of goodwill towards mankind remain a daily companion of unfailing help, and an inspirer of all that is good and kind.

Generations come and go, ideas and customs may change, but the spirit of Christmas will remain for ever a vital force. Its message will never grow old nor can it be exhausted.

No matter how fast and feverish the pace of life, Christmas will give us a decided reminder of all that is real in this world and worth while living for. It will remind us more than ever, that we are all God's children, united in one big family, here on this earth, for but a little time, requiring the warmth of human kindness and friendship. Let the Christmas spirit, which is the spirit of active usefulness, perseverance, cheerful discharge of duty, kindness and forbearance come nearer and closer to our hearts. —

Happy Christmas that can win us back to the delusion of our childhood days, that can transport our thoughts, hundreds of miles away, back to our dear ones, back to the land of our birth.

God grants, that the coming year will be for all of us a year of striving to lessen the hardships under which a tired world is labouring; may it once again bring back peace amongst all nations. May the silver lining for which we so often have gazed heavenwards, appear and shed its light over the darkness in which we have tumbled during the last few months.

Far away in the cities, villages and hamlets of our homeland, the bells will ring in the glorious Christmas Day, their sounds will spread the glad message of goodwill amongst the children of this universe, they will pierce the Alps and ride on the ocean waves and will bring to everyone of us the greetings of that dear land of ours. Let us then, dear readers, spread this inspired message, compiled with our sincerest wishes for the land, which has accorded us a generous hospitality, and to many of us a second home.

ST.



HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland, Tribune de Genève and Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale.)

FEDERAL.

NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

The two Chambers of the Swiss Parliament elected on Thursday, December 15th, M. Philipp Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1939.

Federal Councillor Etter was born on the 21st of December, 1891, at Menzingen (Ct. Zug). He received his first education at the "Gymnasium" in Zug and at the "Stiftsschule" in Einsiedeln, afterwards he studied law at the University in Zurich.

In 1917, he was appointed examination judge at Zug, he entered the "Kantonsrat" a year later, and in 1922 he became a member of the cantonal government, over which he presided in 1927/28. Two years later, he was sent to Parliament to represent the canton of Zug in the States Council. (Ständerat), where he soon made a great reputation for himself. He was also Editor of the "Zuger Nachrichten," and in the army he reached the rank of a major. (Infantry). M. Etter is married and the father of ten children, five boys and five girls.

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

M. Marcel Pilet-Golaz was last Thursday elected Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation for the coming year.

M. Pilet-Golaz, who has already occupied the post of President of the Swiss Confederation in the year 1934, entered the Government in December 1928 in succession to M. Chuard, he then took over the Home Office Dept. until a vacancy occurred at the Federal Post and Railways Dept., through the departure of Federal Councillor Dr. Haab, when he took over this Department.

M. Pilet-Golaz hails from the canton of Vaud, he entered the Grand Council of his canton in 1921, where his brilliant qualities made him at once one of the most influential members of this body.

Four years later he was sent to Parliament (National Council.)

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR, DR. ERNST WETTER.

After a week of feverish excitement and endless conferences amongst the various Parliamentary groups, Dr. E. Wetter, National Councillor and President of the "Vorortes des Schweiz. Handels und Industrievereins" Zurich has been elected a member of the Federal Government in succession to Dr. A. Meyer who has resigned his office as Finance Minister. Dr. E. Wetter (Liberal) received 117 votes, whilst, States Councillor, Dr. Klöti, Mayor of Zurich (Socialist) registered 98 votes.

The new Federal-Councillor is in the real sense of the word a self-made man; born in humble circumstances, he started as a teacher at the secondary schools in Uster and Winterthur, after having saved enough money, he studied National Economy at the Universities of Zurich, Paris and London, and for a number of years he was a teacher at the Cantonal Commercial University in Zurich.

From that post he was called, by the former Federal Councillor, Dr. Schulthess to the "Volkswirtschaftsdepartement" where he occupied the office of general secretary, and later on he became Director of the Federal Commercial Dept. In 1924, he left the Civil Service to enter the administration of the "Vorortes des Schweiz. Handels und Industrie Vereins" of which he became ultimately its President.

Dr. Wetter started his political career in the year 1924 when he was elected a member of the "Kantonsrat," five years later (1929) he was sent to Parliament (National Council) where he at once became one of its most influential members.

NEW PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL TRIBUNAL.

M. Robert Fazy, formerly Vice-President of the Federal Supreme Court in Lausanne, has been elected President of the Court.

Born in 1872, M. Fazy was for many years a Judge in his native town of Geneva. He entered the Federal Tribunal in the year 1921 as successor to Federal Judge Dr. Picot.

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL TRIBUNAL.

M. Léon Robert, a member of the Federal Tribunal, has been appointed Vice-President of the Supreme Court.

M. Robert was born in 1873 at La Chaux-de-Fonds, for a large number of years he acted as a Judge at the Cantonal Court of Neuchâtel. He entered the Federal Tribunal in 1921.

FRIEDRICH GLAUSER †.

M. Friedrich Glauser, the Swiss novelist, has died in Nervi, near Genoa, at the age of 42.

The two best-known works of the deceased are the criminal-novels "Die Fieberkurve" and "Wachtmeister Studer."

AMALGAMATION OF SWISS BANKING CONCERN.

The Swiss Bank Corporation is taking over at the end of this year the Banking House of Eckel, Naber & Cie., in Basle. The entire staff will be taken over as well.

INTERNATIONAL ICE-HOCKEY MATCH.

The second International Ice-Hockey Match between Switzerland and Czechoslovakia was played in Prague. The Swiss team won with one goal to nil.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Oskar, August Gattiker, from Richterswil, is entering Parliament (National Council) in succession to Dr. E. Wetter, the newly elected Federal Councillor.

M. Gattiker, who is a well-known personality in commercial circles of the canton of Zurich, sat in Parliament previously (1934-1935). (The newly elected Member of Parliament is the brother of our friend W. G. Gattiker, of Boreham Wood, Elstree. Ed.)

BASLE.

The death is reported from Basle of M. Emile Zachmann, General Manager and Vice-President of the Board of the "Schweiz. Trenhandgesellschaft" at the age of 64. The deceased was connected with the institution for thirty years, on several occasions he was entrusted by the Federal Council with important missions abroad.

ST. GALL.

Dr. Thomas Holenstein, late National Councillor, has celebrated his 80th birthday; he played for a great number of years an important part in the political sphere of the canton of St. Gall.

Dr. Holenstein was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of St. Gall for forty years, and he sat for twenty-six years in Parliament (1902-1928).

"OLD FOLKS" LUNCHEON.

At the Foyer Suisse, on Saturday, December 17th, 1938.

"What makes old age so sad is, not that our joys, but that our hopes then cease."

Hardly had I left a few hours previously, the youngest members of the Colony, than I had the pleasure to be in the company of the oldest members of the Colony.

As in previous years, the Management of the Foyer Suisse had invited the older generation of our compatriots to a Luncheon at their Headquarters at 12, Bedford Way, Russell Square, W.C.2.