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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### NEW APPOINTMENTS AT THE SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS.

The Federal Council has appointed M. H. Etter, at present General Manager of the Swiss Federal Railways, to the post of President of the General Direction, in succession to Dr. Anton Schrafl, who recently has been appointed to the post of Director of the Central Office of International Transport by Rail. —

M. Hans Etter was born in 1874 at Schaffhausen, he studied at the Technical Universities in Zurich and Munich. After having been for some years on the engineering staff of the Gotthard Railway he joined the Swiss Federal Railways in 1912, and five years later he reached the post of chief engineer of the S.F.R. In 1926 he was elected a member of the General Management. —

In addition, the Federal Government has appointed Dr. W. Meile, Director of the Basle Fair, to the post of General Manager of the Swiss Federal Railways. —

Dr. Meile is fifty-one years old, he hails from the canton of St. Gall. He studied at the Universities of Berne, Munich and Berlin. In 1917 he was elected Director of the "Schweizerischen Mustermesse" in Basle, a post which he occupied with great distinction. Two years ago he was elected a member of Parliament. (National Council).

#### ZURICH PREPARES.

The city of Zurich is already working feverishly to prepare the 1939 Swiss National Exhibition, for which hundreds of thousands of visitors are expected. Road approaches are being constructed, old buildings are vanishing and new ones springing up in their places. Amongst the latter, the Congress Hall should be specially mentioned: 8 million Swiss francs are being spent on this alone, and it is said to be a model example of modern architecture. The setting of the Exhibition will be unparalleled: it will lie in two luxuriant parks renowned for their beauty, and will include both shores of the lake which will be connected by a special quick steamer service: as a background it will have the massif of the alps rising on the horizon over the lake.

#### ELECTRICITY MOST WIDESPREAD IN SWITZERLAND.

According to statistics drawn up by the German engineer, B. Seeger, the following percentages of the population of various European countries are able to make use of electric current:

Switzerland, Denmark	100%
France, Belgium	98%
Great Britain	97%
Holland	96%
Italy	93%
Sweden	92%
Germany, Spain	88%
Czechoslovakia	72%

These percentages then decrease from 69% for Norway to 22% for Rumania.

#### AIR AND SHIPPING TRAFFIC IN BASLE.

The town of Basle shows record figures for the year 1937 both for air and shipping traffic. The Basle aerodrome was used by 21,358 passengers, as against only 18,214 in 1936. The air mail increased by 50%. Punctuality of the air lines improved from 90.1 to 95.6%.

In the Rhine docks at Basle, about 3 million tons of merchandise were unloaded, 0.7 million more than for the same time during the preceding year.

#### SWISS PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

The two Federal Chambers will assemble for an extraordinary meeting on February 7th, the session is expected to last a week.

### DIPLOMATIC NEWS.

The Czechoslovakian Minister in Berne, Monsieur R. Künzl-Jizerski, has paid his farewell visit to M. Baumann, President of the Swiss Confederation. Monsieur Künzl, who has represented his country since 1932, has been transferred to Vienna. The Federal Council entertained the departing diplomat to a dinner.

#### NEW APPOINTMENT IN THE SWISS DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

M. Emil Fontanel, Counsellor of Legation, who at one time, acted as Chargé d'Affaires in Madrid, has been appointed Chargé d'Affaires in China, he will also act as General Consul in Shanghai.

#### SWISS BANK DIVIDENDS.

The following Bank Dividends for 1937 have been declared:

Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft, 5 per cent. (1936: 5%); Schweizerische Bodenkredit-Anstalt Zurich, 5 per cent. (1936: 5%); Spar und Kreditkasse Suhlental 5½ per cent. (1936: 5½%); Gewerbebank in Bern, 6½ per cent.; Schweizerische Volksbank 4 per cent. (1936: 4%).

#### COLONEL OF DIVISION O. HILFKE.

Colonel of Division O. Hilfke, chief of arms of the Corps of engineers, has celebrated his 40th service anniversary. Colonel Hilfke was born in 1873 at Kolliken, Ct. Aargau. He entered in 1902 the army as an instructor and until his appointment as "Waffenchef der Genietruppen" he held various important commands in the Army. In 1933 he was promoted to the rank of colonel of division.

#### SWISS RAILWAY LOANS REPAYMENT.

It is announced that two Swiss Federal Railways 3½ per Cent loans, of the series A-K, and the first issue of 1910 totalling 400,000,000f. are to be repaid on April 30th next.

It is uncertain whether any conversion issue will be made.

#### RHINE NAVIGATION RECORD.

Rhine navigation figures constituted a new record last year, when a total of 2,960,265 tons of goods passed through the Swiss port of Basel, against 2,291,206 tons in 1936, and 2,216,995 tons in 1935. In 1937, up-river traffic reached 2,741,240 tons, and down-river traffic 219,025 tons. Work is progressing in Basel, where new basins and wharves are being constructed at a cost of £162,000, which will enable the handling of over 3,500,000 tons a year.

#### NESTLE AND ANGLO-SWISS HOLDING.

Preliminary figures of Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Holding Co., Ltd., show a net profit for 1937 of 23,000,000f.

The general meeting of the company, at Cham, approved the reduction of capital from 116,000,000f. to 58,000,000f. by the repayment to shareholders of 100f. per share. The nominal value of the shares is thus reduced from 200f. to 100f.

#### SWISS TRAIN CUT OFF BY AVALANCHES.

Switzerland has been swept by violent westerly gales recently, and much damage has been caused in the forests. At Basle a big crane fell and crashed on a house, but no casualties are reported.

A heavy snowstorm raged last Sunday over the Saint Gothard region, and avalanches blocked a train between Göschenen and Andermatt on the Schöllenen line. Several parties of workmen have been sent to rescue the passengers. Traffic is likely to be held up for some time.

#### BENEFACTION FOR SWISS ALPINE GUIDES.

Sir William Ellis has founded the "Sir William Ellis Trust for Guides of Swiss Nationality," with an endowment of £4,000, to help Swiss guides or their dependents who are now in indigent or necessitous circumstances.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

Please reserve

**SATURDAY, MARCH 12th, 1938.**

for the

**DINNER AND DANCE**

at the

**MAYFAIR HOTEL, Berkeley Square, W.1.**

The administration of the fund is in the hands of trustees appointed by the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club.

#### NEW SWISS CHILDREN'S MATINEE LAW.

The Cantonal Director of Police for Zurich has elaborated a new regulation for cinematographic shows for children, in order that the number shall not be too great.

Henceforth cinemas in the Canton of Zurich may only give one matinee every month at which children are admitted. The programmes must, in addition, be approved by the Film Supervision Commission. Children are forbidden to go to cinemas in Switzerland under the age of 16 years, with the exception of special films and matinées.

#### GOVERNMENT TO SUE PRESS.

The Swiss Government has lodged a formal complaint to the courts against the author of a publication in the Swiss Socialist Press that the Government was preparing a further devaluation of the Swiss franc, which they claim is false.

#### GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON AWARDS.

The council of the Geological Society has made the following awards: Wollaston Medal to Prof. Maurice Lugeon, of the University of Lausanne, in recognition of the value of his researches on the mineral structure of the earth, particularly in respect of the geological structure of the Alps and of mountain building.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

The Senate of the University of Zurich has elected Professor, Dr. Ernst Howald, as rector for the period 1938/40.

Dr. Carl Keller, a former member of the Superior Court of the canton of Zurich, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. Dr. Keller was for 46 years in the service of the canton of Zurich. Born in Winterthur, on the 31st of January, 1858, he started his career at the District Court in Bulach and Zurich (1881-85); from 1886-1898 he was a District judge in Zurich. In April 1898 he was appointed President of the District Court in Zurich and a year later he entered the Superior Court of the canton of Zurich of which he was a member until 1927, when he resigned from his post.

#### BERNE.

M. Alexander von Steiger, since 1927 "Eidgenössischer Oberbaudirektor," has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

#### SOLOTHURN.

M. Fritz Eckinger, Manager of the "Birsek" Railway, has resigned from his post which he has held for 35 years. M. Eckinger, who is 76 years of age, was for over 20 years a member of the "Kantonsrat" over which he presided on several occasions.

M. Jules Schweizer-Senn, Manager of the "Waldenburger" Railway, will be his successor.

#### BASLE.

At a General Meeting of the "Basler Casino-Gesellschaft" it was decided to start immediately with the building of the new Casino, the costs of which will be in the neighbourhood of 2,324,000 frs.

#### BASLE-COUNTRY.

Dr. Rudolf Niederhauser will succeed to the seat in the National Council, vacated by Dr. Meile, on his appointment as General Manager of the Swiss Federal Railways.

#### ST. GALL.

Dr. Ernst Wanner, from 1902 to 1918 teacher of the French and English languages, and from 1918-1932 rector of the cantonal-school in St. Gall has died in St. Gall at the age of 66.

#### VAUD.

M. Ernest Bonzon, notary in Nyon, and for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud, has died at the age of 60.

Mlle Marie-Thérèse Brenzinger has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary in Lausanne.

#### AARGAU.

The late M. Max Matter, manufacturer in Kolliken has left an amount of 144,800.— frs. for charitable purposes.

#### VAUD.

The canton of Vaud has voted in a plebiscite for a Bill suppressing the Communist Party. The vote was 34,600 in favour of the measure and 12,700 against.