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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Towards the end of September 1940 the number of wireless-licence holders in Switzerland was assessed at 634,248. During December 5,000 new licences were taken out and the total increase during 1940 amounted to 40,888.

* * *

A memorial tablet has been erected in honour of National Councillor and Dr. med. Stucki in the hospital at Meiringen.

* * *

The 23rd January was kept in remembrance of the anniversary of the death of Giuseppe Motta, third National Councillor of the Ticino, by all the schools in his canton. A memorial service was held in the Lugano Cathedral and in the Holy Trinity Church, Berne.

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A "Heimatschutztheater" has been opened in Aarau.

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From Grindelwald we hear of the death of Fritz Kaufmann, the well-known Skier, aged 35 years. Kaufmann won the Swiss High-jumping Championship twice and also participated in the Olympic Winter-sports in the U.S.A.

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On February 3rd, the Swiss Forestry Association met and Head Forester Winkelmann, Director of the Forestry Commission in Solothurn, spoke on the present-day problems of utilisation of the woods and asserted that an effort to use them more advantageously than hitherto must be made. The assembly declared itself against the "Rebwaldinitiative."

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In the Wallis a coalition of the parties of the cantonal Government has been established.

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The Swiss War Food Office has issued a Declaration concerning deliveries of corn and grain. The Declaration is to be posted up in market places, squares, etc., and a copy will be sent to every corn producer.

* * *

The following amendments have been accepted by the Chief Council (Grosse Rat) of Kt. Waadt:

- a) A plan for obligatory old age insurance, still to be worked out, and
- b) Improvements in working conditions for agricultural workers.

The liberal and radical parties of Kt. Basle have decided to work together MM. Imhof und Ludwig (Lib.) and Zweifel (Rad.) will stand again for election.

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As in most Cantons, all "Fastnacht" arrangements have been cancelled in the Ticino for this year.

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On February 10th it was announced that a party of skiers were taken unaware by an avalanche in Dohl in the Waadtl. Jura. One of the party, a young man of 25 was killed. The body was recovered shortly afterwards.

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Kt. Neuenburg has decided that all concerns working for the Government or dealing with orders connected with the State must be registered in the "Registre de Métiers."

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A first train with 72 children has arrived in Geneva from Paris under the scheme for Swiss help to French children. The children will be billeted on families in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

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The death of National Councillor Dr. Schaefer in Arosa was announced on the 13th February. Dr. Schaefer who comes from Basle, was a member of the Citizens Council and of the Chief Council, over which he presided during 1917-1927. He furthermore belonged to the Town- and National Council.

* * *

From Grossau we hear of the death of the centenarian, Jakob Ernst. Jakob Ernst, who celebrated his hundredth birthday last January, was one of the Veterans of the "Grenzbesetzung," 1870.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

la REUNION MENSUELLE

aura lieu Samedi, le 1er Mars à 12.45 p.m. au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, (near Green Park Tube Station).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.

Démissions.

Admissions.

Divers.

Dejeuner à 1.0 h. précises. Les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Mons. H. Bingguelly, 167 Clapham Road, S.W.9 (Téléphone: Reliance 4150).

Le Comité.

The Tourist Association in Switzerland met in Zurich on the 15th February to evolve a plan of procedure which takes into account present-day conditions in the Swiss Hotel Trade.

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Postal services between Italy and Switzerland have been interrupted.

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When Basle was bombed in the night of December 16th-17th, a woman was killed in a house on the Winkelriedplatz and some people injured. Several houses suffered heavy damage so that some of them have to be completely pulled down. The Güterstrasse, two railway tracks and some houses on the Zentralbahnstrasse have equally suffered.

Loss of life also occurred on the Höhenweg in Binningen, where three people were killed and several injured. In all twelve H.E. bombs were dropped as well as a number of incendiaries, the latter fortunately fell all in open fields round Binningen.

* * *

On February 15th the British Government sent an answer to the protest of the Federal Council against the bombing of Basle and Zurich which resulted in some casualties and caused a great deal of damage. The British Government do not consider the proofs of responsibility of the R.A.F. as conclusive; however, in view of the friendly relations between England and Switzerland the British Government is prepared to admit that there are sufficient reasons for accepting the responsibility and making good the damage. The Federal Council have learned of this decision with satisfaction.

NEWS FROM THE ENGLISH PRESS.

The chief item enlarged upon in the English papers since our last issue was the repatriation of the 300,000 French soldiers who crossed the frontier after the collapse of France, and who were interned in Switzerland; the arms and equipment were surrendered to Germany. In view of the comparatively small number of British soldiers being deprived of a similar treatment our conception of neutrality has been adversely criticised the more so as the German airmen who at different times crashed on Swiss soil have also been released. Nobody can maintain that under present economic conditions these "visitors" constitute a welcome source of revenue, but our English critics omit to enlighten us how the British contingent can be safely consigned to its destination.

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According to "*The Times*," February 7th, all passenger traffic with Italy has been stopped the frontier being practically closed. Later reports, however, seem to contradict or modify this statement in so far that applications for visas require an unduly long time for consideration by the Italian authorities.

* * *

Our Minister, Monsieur W. Thurnheer, was the recipient — on behalf of a distinguished Swiss scientist — of the much coveted "James Watt" medal bestowed by the Institution of Mechanical

Engineers. It will be transmitted to Dr. Aurel Stodola of Zurich. We reprint from the "*Engineer*," January 31st, the following Appreciation which was delivered by Dr. Guy in the course of the ceremony on January 24th:

Professor Aurel Stodola, the Senior Honorary Member of this Institution, was born in 1859 in a small Slovakian village in the shadow of the Tatra Mountains. A brilliant scholar from his earliest days, he graduated with highest distinction at the Polytechnikum in Zurich. His practical training was obtained in the workshops of the Hungarian State Railways, followed at Berlin and Paris by further practical work and studies in technical, physiological, and economic subjects. After supervising the building of a leather belt factory for his father, he became a designer in the engineering department of Rustons, of Prague, who introduced the Corliss engine to Austria and enjoyed a considerable reputation as builders of the steam engine. With eight years of such practical work as a preparation, Stodola was in 1892 appointed Professor of Mechanical Engineering of the Swiss Polytechnikum at Zurich, where he has remained with such advantage to the land of his adoption that the eminent position occupied in engineering by so small a country as Switzerland, is due in no small measure to the skill and inspiration of his work and teaching.

Watt's vital improvement of the steam engine began with studies of the sources of loss in the engines of his day in the light of the scientific knowledge then available. Stodola, also endowed with great analytical ability and a capacity for sure and illuminating experiment, isolated and studied the losses and structural elements of steam turbines in the light of the accumulated knowledge of thermodynamics, of the flow of fluids and of heat, of elasticity and of stress analysis, and constructed a scientific basis for steam turbine design which directly and materially aided its development and improvement.

Watt gave the centrifugal governor to the steam engine. Stodola's earliest scientific work was concerned with problems of the stability of governing by means of the servo motor which in steam turbine practice was added to Watt's governor.

If Watt by inventing the indicator enabled engineers to understand and measure what went on inside the cylinders of his engines, Stodola's investigations and researches enabled the designers of his day to picture, understand, and calculate the operation of steam in the nozzles and blades which in the turbine replaced Watt's piston and cylinder. He demonstrated experimentally the fallacy of the belief that velocities of steam higher than that of sound were associated with prohibitive loss. He established the correct principles for the design of divergent nozzles, and the moving blades which co-operate with them and explored and explained the significance of steam shock.

Watt experimented on latent heat and the properties of steam and discovered the importance of cylinder condensation. Stodola experimentally investigated Martin's suggestion that "under cooling" explains an anomaly of the expansion of steam in a turbine, and proved that with commercial steam