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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz gave particulars of the steps taken in America with a view of exempting Swiss citizens living in U.S.A. from serving with the American Army. The Federal efforts were not concerned with persons of dual nationality. Swiss-Americans were regarded in the U.S.A. exclusively as U.S. citizens. The U. S. law of 20th December, 1941, had created an obligation of military service for all foreigners resident in the U.S.A. including neutrals and had thereby created a delicate problem. Foreigners could avoid this obligation by making a declaration to the effect that they renounced for ever their claims to U.S. citizenship. He added that after negotiations with U.S. Government the position now was that Swiss nationals resident in U.S.A. need not renounce formally all their rights to naturalisation, but had simply to declare that they did not intend to undertake military service in the U.S.A.

Some light was also thrown on the efforts made by the Federal Council to stop agitation abroad prejudicial to the safety of our country. The German and other governments were approached but the efforts to stop the subversive activities of the so-called Swiss "renovation movements" had not everywhere achieved the desired result. It was, however, recognized that the toleration of these activities were not compatible with correct and amicable relations. It was hoped that the necessary measures would be taken the more so as the Swiss authorities strictly forbade foreigners residing in Switzerland to conduct intrigues against their own particular governments.

The two Houses of Parliament met in joint session on June 16th, 1943, to consider an appeal against death sentence made by trumpeter Heinrich Reutlinger, born in 1906, domiciled in Neftenbach, Ct. Zurich. Contrary to the usual procedure particulars of the trial were released to the press. Reutlinger a staff trumpeter of a territorial battalion had on several occasions disclosed military information vital to National Defence and incited others in procuring such information. In June 1941 he attended a course of

sabotage abroad and managed on his return to assemble the necessary materials for turning out explosives which he secreted in the house of a friend. It was proved that from June 1941 to August 3rd 1942 (the date of his arrest) he actually supplied to foreign agents information of military dispositions on fortifications and airfields; he was in possession of a short wave transmitter. The appeal was rejected by 176 votes as against 18.

By a decree of the Federal Council dated May 25th, a small political group styling itself "Eidgen. Arbeiter- und Bauernpartei" is to dissolve. The party was formed in summer 1941 in Basle by one named Lothar Zumosen and is stated to harbour elements inimical to the safety of the country.

The initiative on the "right to work" launched by the independent party (Duttweiler) obtained 72,920 signatures which were lodged at the Federal Chancery at Berne.

The Federal Council appointed M. Mouri to be director of the P.T.T.; so far he was in charge of the local office at Lausanne.

A national meeting of Swiss Christian Socialist Workers took place in Baden. A number of speeches dealt with the protection afforded to labour by Christian Socialist activity and with social and

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economic support provided by Christian Socialist employers and institutions. In a manifesto the Swiss Christian Socialist Workers' Group declared itself for Swiss democracy and independence. The manifesto calls for collaboration of all workers in the interest of Christian social reform measures aiming at the protection of the workers and his family and the abolition of excessive economic and financial power. The State is, however, asked to intervene only where private initiative proves insufficient. The manifesto denounces state controlled unions.

### Cantonal

At the Landsgemeinde in Stans the "Nidwaldner" took over four hours to dispose of the tractanda list; the official proposals led to animated discussions but in the end received approval. Of the four naturalisation petitions only one was accepted. On the other hand at Sarnen the "Obwaldner" insisted on adopting two Germans and two Italians whose naturalisation was officially opposed. The elections to fill the different posts vacant by rotation in the cantonal administration followed traditional lines but an insurance scheme against unemployment was contested by the labour elements and will now be submitted to a secret ballot. The parish-president of Sachseln, Ludwig von Moos, was elected to the Ständerat and being only 35 years old is thus the youngest member of that distinguished assembly at Berne.

The accounts of the canton Lucerne for 1942 close with a small deficit of 813,862 francs the budget having anticipated an adverse amount of 2.6 million francs. The favourable result is due to increased revenue from taxation and to savings in wages equalisation payments.

The election result for members of the Grosse Rat in Lucerne showed little change. This council numbers now 167 seats against 151 previously; the "Landesring" which entered the political arena for the first time in this canton secured no less than ten seats.

A clerk in the municipal insurance office of Zurich has been charged with fraudulent entries; it was subsequently discovered that during the last 10-15 years he had secretly abstracted sums totalling about a quarter of a million francs.

Adolf Hug, the principal of the famous music business Hug & Co., died in Zurich at the age of 76; he was a grandson of the founder of the firm.

The picturesque protestant church of Thalwil, a widely seen landmark on the lake of Zurich, was destroyed by fire in the evening of May 19th. During reparations in the bell chamber the flame of a soldering lamp is supposed to have attacked a wooden beam and fed by a violent gale blowing at the time spread down to the roof which collapsed before the arrival of the fire brigade. The church was built in 1846/47 and the damage is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of a million francs.

Engineer Dr. Schoop, in Zurich, who is well-known for his method of spraying metal has just terminated some successful experiments in his laboratory, where

by clogs and wooden soles had a metal cover sprayed on. The protecting layer proved to adhere well and to be durable.

In the night of 18th May foreign aircraft dropped two bombs on the periphery of the town of Zurich without causing any casualties. One of the undesired presents fell into a nursery where it caused a deep crater and covered the plantations for a great distance with earth. All the windows in the neighbourhood were smashed. The other fell on a railway track without, however, exploding. It was removed by a squad of experts and made harmless.

The Grosse Rat of Berne has voted a number of substantial credits, notably Frs.460,000 for re-instating the Grimsel Road damaged by the gradual appearance of a glacial lake; Frs.139,500 for the construction of a high-water dam along the Saane between Gümmenen and Marfoldingen; Frs.470,000 on loan to the reconstructed Montreux-Berner Oberland railway after an amount of over one million francs was lost in the old company; it is also being asked to grant a credit of one million francs for the purpose of easing the housing crisis.

The Fribourg Grand Conseil re-elected Bernard de Weck, a member of the local government, as States Councillor by a small majority of 86 to 83.

The Fribourg government has issued a decree prohibiting throughout the canton the publication of advertisement offering loans without the usual securities or guarantees; it is directed against the activities of professional moneylenders.

Two workmen lost their lives in the lignite mine near Pont-la-Ville (Gruyère) when suddenly one of the galleries caved in.

The accounts for 1942 of Basle close with a deficit of nearly five millions francs.

The general shortage of housing accommodation was specially acute in Basle during the Fair. In order to ease the position, sleeping and restaurant cars of the S.F.R. were made available to visitors wishing to stay overnight at prices ruling locally for bedrooms.

A remarkable mentality has been exhibited by the electors in Basel-land who by a very small majority presented their government with an initiative demand to prepare legislation for allowing unregistered and unqualified medical practitioners (Kurpfuscher) to carry on their trade in the canton. Only 35% of the voters recorded their opinion and it is extremely doubtful whether the measure will ultimately become law.

A bye-election in the canton of Schaffhausen for a new member of the States Council resulted in a victory for Dr. Julius Bühner (liberal), the general manager of the local iron and steel works; his opponent was Walter Bringolf, the socialist president of the municipal council who was beaten by a small majority.

The Appenzell A. R. Landsgemeinde was held at Hundwil when over 8,000 burghers attended. The proceedings and ceremonial enlivened by the participation of the traditional drums and fifes lasted just over an





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Evidently some interested party wanted to stop the transport of German coal to Italy. Without Ruhr coal, Italian industry will be brought to a standstill, for there is only a fortnight's reserve in the country.

If the Nazis exploded the St. Gotthard mine, then their motive must have been to threaten the Italians that coal supplies would be cut off if they tried to get out of the war.

But perhaps non-Nazis were at the back of the affair.

There are various methods by which the Gestapo could have carried out this sabotage. A truck-load of coal may have exploded as it passed through the tunnel.

On the other hand, the job may have been done by Italians.

Not daring openly to leave the Axis camp, they may have cut the coal line in the hope of bringing about a situation that made Italian resistance to an Allied invasion practically impossible.

More will be heard about this affair in the near future. The Swiss take a grave view of it, as the speech by the Defence Minister last week indicated."

\* \* \*

During firing practice with revolvers M. Luigi Lesnini, aged 53, was accidentally killed; he was a farmer at Gordola (Ticino) of which place he was the Mayor.

\* \* \*

Two further army pilots, both 22 year-old university students, lost their lives when their machines

crashed; they are Lt. L. Bärtsch, from Dübendorf, and Lt. Max Krause from Männedorf.

\* \* \*

For committing acts of sabotage and giving military information to an agent of a belligerent power a soldier, named Hans Grobli, from St. Gall was condemned to death and executed.

\* \* \*

For repeating and circulating a defamatory rumour about a certain highly-placed officer the military territorial tribunal arrested 49 persons in the neighbourhood of Lucerne; 45 of them were sentenced to imprisonment ranging from four to 45 days. The source of the rumour remained undiscovered and it was admitted that all the accused enjoyed a good reputation and had no malicious intention.

\* \* \*

The Federal press bureau has addressed a public official warning to the "Tribune de Lausanne" and the "Volk" (Olten) for serious offences against the neutrality decrees.

\* \* \*

The army exemption tax (Militärsteuer) brought in during the 12 months ending December 1942 nearly 3.2 million francs or about Frs.200,000 less than in the preceding year; this amount is paid by 48,867 "Staatskrüppel" including the "able-bodies" residing abroad.

\* \* \*

At a very appropriate moment a pamphlet has been published in French and German, written by Colonel Louis Couchepin, entitled "The Redoubt — How our army is defending Switzerland." — The booklet shows in a convincing and easily comprehensible manner the possibilities and purposes of the well-planned central position in the alps. It shows how the redoubt, which at the same time is also a citadel, is the pivot of a fortress. Our country is "A fortress which is defended on all sides. The heights of the Jura and the fortifications and positions of the central plateau are its outer walls and its advanced bastions. Never was the thought entertained to abandon these outposts at the outset on account of the fortress having such a strong centre. Neither for a moment nor with a single word has the General altered the orders to the frontier guard troupes. These troupes, in conjunction with the other forces which have the task of resisting outside the central position, will defend the country inch by inch, starting from the furthest point at the frontier. Not one single foot of Swiss territory will be allowed to fall into the hands of an aggressor intact or without a fight. A citadel for valiant defenders is never a place of refuge neither is it a prison. The defenders of the redoubt will be active and eager to attack. Redoubt means, defences built to prolong the defence of the country and eventually to drive the enemy out of it." ...

### Rationing

An addition or mixture of 15% to 20% of potatoes to the ordinary bread has been officially sanctioned as from May 17th as a result of experiments recently made in Winterthur. This will extend the life of the existing stock of bread cereals the majority of which are imported from oversea countries.

\* \* \*

Solid fuels are to be rationed for all consumers. So far quotas were granted to the trade on the basis of previous sales; under the new system licences will

be issued. The supplies for 1943/44 will be considerably smaller than those released in the last period.\*

Swiss chocolate is world renowned as a first class quality product. The war with its transport difficulties and the shortage of sugar has caused a stoppage of sale of chocolate and confectionery for several weeks. As from the middle of June chocolate and confectionery of all kinds (bonbons) will be rationed and the monthly allowance will be 100 grammes (about 3½ oz.) per person.

About 220 persons residing in different cantons are involved in proceedings for violation of the rationing orders. In a large dairy farm in the canton of Lucerne a quantity of 190,000 kilogr. milk was not officially accounted for and it was subsequently ascertained that it was used for the unlicensed manufacture of cheese. The cheese was sold in the black market without coupons being surrendered. Another farmer in a large way of business in the canton Aargau in similarly charged.

The official investigations into the inter-cantonal activities of a black market gang have led to further arrests. Due to an indiscretion of an agent in Sion (Valais) the head of the cantonal rationing office in Aarau has now been put under lock and key; he is Oscar Amsler, aged 50, a civil servant who had so far enjoyed the full confidence of his superiors. Amsler, whose annual emoluments reached about Frs.8,000, is stated to be in financial difficulties. Coupons representing about 350,000 kilogr. rationed food were abstracted and sold illicitly in the cantons of Valais, Vaud, Geneva and Aargau.

In Lausanne Paul Michaud, a commercial agent and the chief intermediary for the cantons of Vaud and Geneva has also been arrested; the 15% commission for handling these coupons is said to have earned him Frs.18,000.

**Traffic**

As a result of the official enquiry into the railway accident at Kiesen on September 23rd, 1941, when ten people were killed and about thirty more or less seriously injured the station masters and an assistant at Kiesen and Wichtrach were charged with culpable negligence. They appeared before a court at Konolfingen and were sentenced to the payment of the legal costs of the proceedings.

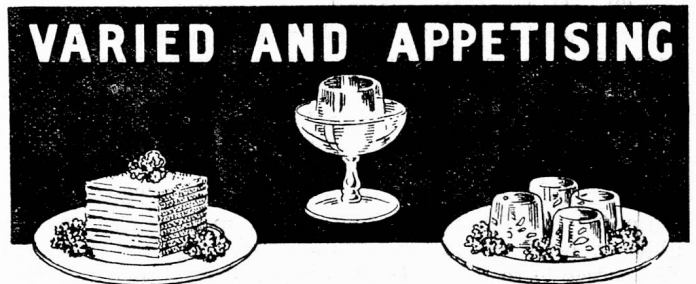
Transport is one of Switzerland's great problems. She relies mostly on her railways and canals for her goods traffic with her neighbours. The Rhine connects her with the North Sea, and it is planned to connect her with the Mediterranean through a canal leading from Lake Geneva to Marseilles. Plans are also ready to link the Rhone with the Rhine by a trans-helvetian canal connecting the lakes Lemman, Neuchâtel, Bienne and the Aar, and passing Geneva underground. This canal would measure some 300km., and would have a lock at about every 13km., and would cost some 300 million Swiss francs. This plan has many economic advantages.

Here is a short description of a shunting locomotive ingeniously adapted to war-time conditions by the

S.F.R. workshop; it is taken from "Modern Transport," June 2nd:

At intervals in the past, more especially in the pre-electrification years, Switzerland produced a number of quaint and even freakish steam locomotive types. As recently as 1940 we encountered a standard gauge 0-4-0 tank with its cylinders above the running-plates, communicating their motion to the wheels through a pair of large rockers. It is doubtful, however, whether anything in the realm of locomotives in Switzerland or elsewhere bears the smallest resemblance to the station pilots at St. Gall and Zollikofen, on the Swiss Federal Railways. A glance shows them to be equipped with such an unusual combination of adornments as a chimney at one end and a pantograph current collector at the other.

These two engines are the outcome of the severe shortage of both fuel and raw materials prevalent in Switzerland as a result of the war, and at first sight look something like products of a mechanical engineer's nightmare, though all credit is due to the ingenuity of those responsible for them. They are Swiss Federal Railways Nos. 8521 and 8522, of a class of 0-6-0 shunting tank still common in large centres such as Berne, Lucerne and Basle, in spite of electrification. Since their conversion, while they are still dependent on steam for their motive power, they have ceased to consume combustible fuel. A pantograph is mounted on each cab roof and air-cooled oil transformers on each side, in front of the cab side-sheets. The engines thus draw their fuel from the overhead contact line and are



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Cooked fresh sausage meat or meat left over from the joints may be used minced. Drop the meat into the jelly before setting and serve with a little watercress or cress.

**FISH ASPIC**

Cod or Salmon remaining from the boiled fish can be used, also prawns or shrimps. Fill the mould ¾ full and when nearly set put in the flakes of fish and fill up.

**ASPIC SANDWICHES**

Spread the slices of bread with margarine and then with a thin layer of jelly. Add grated cheese, watercress, mustard and cress, meat or fish paste.

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fired by two groups of tubular electric heaters, one on each side of the boiler.

We have as yet no detailed particulars of this somewhat startling metamorphosis. An analysis of the electro-steam locomotive's fuel economy would be interesting. The alterations to the 0-6-0 tanks, which appear to have left the engine of each unit unchanged, have been carried out at the Swiss Federal Railways Yverdon works, the electrical equipment being supplied by Brown, Boveri and Company."

The Federal Railways, in the fourth year of the war are still experiencing surprising prosperity. The ascending curve of passenger traffic which started in the last year prior to the outbreak of the war, has reached a record with 158.8 million travellers. Compared with the average of the last five peace years the number of passengers has increased by 47.5 millions in spite of the absence of foreign visitors. The receipts from this traffic have risen by 15 million frs. to the highest level of 176.8 million frs. Against this the goods traffic for the first time since 1938 shows a falling off by 900,000 tons to 22.4 million tons. This tonnage is, however, still roughly 8 million tons above the average traffic volume of the last five pre-war years. It is to be noted that 95% of the gross-ton-km. was operated on the electrified lines.

### Economical

A long-standing dispute between shareholders of the Suchard chocolate concern has been disposed of by the judgment of the cantonal court at Neuchâtel. It dates as far back as the year 1930 when M. Willy Russ — a son of the former part-proprietor Russ-Suchard — sold a large parcel of his shares to a Belgian syndicate for 8½ million francs. At the same time he induced his co-directors to consent to the purchase of a controlling interest in the Belgian chocolate company "Poulin"; the shares of the latter company were quoted in the open market at Frs.2,000 but the Suchard concern were made to pay Frs.2,500 a piece. A group of shareholders took exception to the transaction the more so as it proved detrimental. The court has now condemned M. Willy Russ to re-imburse the sum of Frs.300,000 to the old Suchard shareholders.

Coal imports to Switzerland have now come to a standstill and we are entirely dependant on the very limited home resources. Most of our coal is mined in the Valais; last year's total output amounted to about 220,000 tons worth just over Frs.100 per ton. More than half the quantity is used in industry and the remainder goes to domestic consumers; it is of course not first class containing a good proportion of ash.

We hope that Lord Woolton has not come across the following account in "The Times," May 29th; he may be tempted to emulate the achievements of the Swiss chemist. We have heard of people having to eat their hats and this operation may now become more palatable and general after the assurance of our Swiss chemists that woodpulp with synthetic gravy has the same nutritive qualities as meat.

"A dinner, claimed to be the first of its kind in Europe, was served on Wednesday night in Lausanne to find out to what extent chemistry may come to the help of the country's economy. The guests, who included some food experts, were offered *hors d'œuvres* made of chemically treated cellulose, to which a flavour was given by products derived from coal. The principal dish was "meat" made from wood pulp, with synthetic gravy, but the vegetables, though most of them new to this country, were genuine. The sweet contained vanilla taken from coal, while the cream came from the same sort of cellulose which supplied the *hors d'œuvres*.

The chemists who were responsible for the experiment were the hosts at the dinner, and are convinced that they may thus save Switzerland from famine, in the event of all imports being cut off. They state that the cost of the dinner was much lower than if the equivalents in natural food had been served, but that the nutritive qualities were the same. It is claimed that flavour makes it impossible to recognize chemical from natural food."

The Trade & Engineering issue of "The Times," for June, gives import and export figures which differ somewhat from statistics which we published in an earlier issue; statistics in wartime do not necessarily disclose the real position.

"While Swiss imports last year decreased ten per cent. in quantity, they rose in value to 2,049,000,000f. in 1941. It is calculated that in 1942 they were on an average 110 per cent. higher in price than in the preceding year. Exports also showed a decrease in quantity and an increase in value, although the latter averaged not more than 55 per cent. The excess of imports for the year was approximately 477,000,000f., against 561,000,000f. in 1941.

Many manufacturers have been inconvenienced by a shortage of raw materials, particularly non-ferrous, and have had to introduce both new processes and substitutes. Industrial activity as a whole has been maintained at a satisfactory level. A noteworthy electrical order which is being executed is that for lighting and power plant for Ankara. This was arranged in connection with the Turkish-Swiss commercial treaty of October last. At home two units of the new central power station at Innertkirchen, between the lake of Brienz and the Grimsel, have been started up. Its annual output is expected to be 350,000,000 kw.h. Electric railway construction is proceeding. About 80 per cent. of the Swiss railway system is now electrically operated.

To aid in extending cultivation, firms employing at least 50 workpeople or those having a capital of not less than 500,000f. are called upon to provide assistance. The agricultural area is to be still further increased by a drainage scheme for which the Confederation has opened credits of over 100,000,000f. All important foodstuffs except potatoes are rationed on a differential system which takes into account four categories of consumers, who receive rations according to the nature of their employment.

Unemployment has been declining, thanks to demands for agriculture, the building trades, and the majority of industries, and at the beginning of the year amounted to only 11,000 workers. Some machinery manufacturers have been unable to find enough hands."

At the moment trials are proceeding at the Federal agricultural experimental station at Oerlikon, as well as at some places in the canton of Berne and even at some sunny mountain slopes, to cultivate the rubber plant *Kok-Saghys*, which is to deliver the valuable juice of the rubber plant. It is foremost a matter of increasing the exceedingly small quantity of seed which was brought into the country, so as to be able to make trials on a large scale. Not for a long time to come will it be a question of relieving the shortage of rubber by this method. In the meantime this is to be achieved by a more severe control in the handing over of old rubber tyres and inner tubes. Great hopes are set on experiments now proceeding with reconstructed tyres from old rubber and artificial wool (Zellwolle).

The board of the "Schweizerische Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft" after considering searching studies made by Dr. P. Gyax, National Councillor Ph. Schmid-Ruedin and Dr. O. Steinmann about the Beveridge Plan came to the following conclusions: (1) the plan is not a general prescription or panacea that can be adopted by other countries; (2) Switzerland will have to develop her own social policy and has during the last three decades made notable progress in this direction; (3) the plan presents an invitation or urge to overhaul our own social legislation and to remedy defects; and (4) in extending our social institutions the federal and liberal structure of our country as well as cantonal and local fiscal conditions cannot be ignored.

This year's "Auslandschweizertag" (Journée des Suisses de l'Etranger) will be held at Rapperswil on the lake of Zurich on August 21st and 22nd. Among other speakers Federal Councillor von Steiger will give an address on "The protection of the State and the Swiss residing abroad."

Earthquake tremors were felt in the night of May 28th. The shocks were particularly noticeable in the cantons of Schaffhausen and Thurgau.

A meeting of the Swiss Patriotic Association (Schweizer Vaterländischer Verband) in Fribourg devoted special attention to the increased influx of foreigners and the problem of naturalisation.

The Swiss colony in Bucharest celebrated the 10th anniversary of the appointment of Monsieur de Weck as Minister to Rumania.

According to the "Kinematograph Weekly," May 13th, Noel Coward's film "In which we serve" is breaking all records in Switzerland. "The Swiss Press has acclaimed this British Lion picture with the utmost enthusiasm. One paper refers to it as "The best film of any type made in any country during the year," and all agree that it helps the Continent to understand an aspect of the British war effort which was previously underestimated.

No higher praise could be paid to the value of a British film in creating good will in neutral countries."

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One of the first persons against whom the recent decree empowering our Government to de-nationalise Swiss citizens will probably be applied is Franz Burri from Lucerne. Already before the war he circulated to all our colonies abroad a news-sheet decidedly hostile to our national policy and institutions. When its further appearance was prohibited Burri fled the country and continued his nefarious propaganda from several places across the Rhine; he finally settled down in Vienna and the "I.P.A." seemed to flourish more than ever. It is known that for the last five years the Federal Council has made diplomatic representations in order to stop the publication. The only result being that Burri transferred his activity to Zagreb. The independent Croat State is of course not recognised by Switzerland and no action can be taken but Burri has now turned up again in Vienna, the reason given being that the Croat Government had suspended his publication for four weeks. Burri has no means of his own and is obviously financed by foreign interests. In a recent leaflet he maintained that after the war Switzerland will revert to the status in force after the treaty of Westphalia.



Are you informing all your acquaintances how much Income-Tax you are paying, or do you broadcast to the world at large of your son's failure in his exam? When about to undertake a business deal, do you explain it to your competitors beforehand?

In the battle of life the strongest weapon is Silence.

Why don't you try and observe the same caution and keep silent where the security of your country is concerned.

Talk about the weather, keep silent about national service.

"Swiss Dailies."