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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The new Swiss federal loan, the subscriptions to which were closed on the 14th inst, proved an unexpected success; 500 million francs were submitted and 950 million were actually subscribed. The original offer consisted of 175 million 3½% stock repayable after 20 years, 150 million 3¼% repayable after 10 years and 175 million 2½% treasury bonds.

A Belgian trade delegation in which Luxembourg also takes part has arrived in Berne to prepare the way for opening economic relations between the two countries.

The Federal Council lodged a protest with the Japanese government against the vile treatment meted out to our nationals resident in occupied countries and the difficulties placed in the way of our Legation at Tokio in the discharge of their duties. In Manilla, several Swiss have been killed by Japanese soldiers.

The Federal Council decreed on May 8th, that under existing conditions no German Government can be officially recognised; in consequence the legation and consulates were closed and sealed and the contents taken charge of. However, to attend to registrations and other consular business in the interest of the German colonies in our country, five unofficial German Administration offices have been opened as from June 1st at Berne, Zurich, Basle, Geneva and St. Gall. These offices will be under the direction of officials from our political department and will be superintended by Legationsrat Dr. H. Zurlinden of Berne.

News has now been received about the secretary of our Budapest Legation, M. Feller, who when the staff evacuated to Istanbul was missing. It seems that during the Russian attack he had been aiding or hiding Nazi friends and when it became known was promptly dismissed by the Swiss Minister; he is now a Russian prisoner.

For reasons so far not disclosed some of the staff of our Legation at Berlin arrived at Moscow; amongst the party is Councillor Zender, Chargé d'Affaires.

After consultation with the army chief and government departments concerned, the Federal Council has abolished as from the 18th June, press censorship, matters concerning our military security being excepted.

* * *

A complete volte face in the attitude of the Federal Council was brought about by agitation in the Swiss press. Our supreme magistrates decided on June 1st that the German Minister Dr. Otto Koecher, is to be excluded from the general Nazi ban, as he had always shown sympathy for our country and had tried to smooth away difficulties and disputes between the two countries. However, the attacks in the press continued and a further search by the police at the German Legation at Berne revealed a labyrinth of massively-walled underground rooms built like bank strong rooms and containing secret wireless transmitting and receiving equipment. In the meantime, the loving Minister relying on the promise from the highest quarter had entered into negotiations for acquiring a cosy residence on the lake of Lucerne but the cantonal authorities turned their back on him. There was nothing left for his

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Berne friends than to bestow upon him the order of the boot by giving him three months notice. So good-bye!

Our economic conditions are dealt with plainly and frankly in a long survey published in the "*Statist*," June 16th, 1945. We reprint that part dealing with the outcome of the one-sided bargain concluded last February in Berne — stated by our own delegates to be very satisfactory though full particulars were withheld from our own people.

"Switzerland's foreign trade figures for the first quarter of the present year, compared with those of the corresponding period in 1944, show that imports had fallen roughly 90 per cent. in volume and 75 per cent. in value, and exports 70 per cent. in volume and about 45 per cent. in value. This is the background to the further reduction in the rations of several essential food commodities early this year, and to the high hopes built up in the Republic on the opening of negotiations between the Swiss and Allied Governments in Berne last February. The main points at issue during the negotiations were briefly as follows: Swiss exports to Germany, the transit of foreign goods through Switzerland, German capital invested in Switzerland, the problem of Swiss raw material and essential foodstuff supplies and, lastly, the re-establishment of transit traffic through France. Complete agreement was reached on all the points under discussion. The Allies fully recognised, according to official Swiss advices, that active commercial relations with other States were vital to Switzerland's national survival, whether in times of war or of peace. They also admitted, a message from Lausanne states, that Swiss neutrality is of European interest and that consequently it would not be reasonable to impose on this country such conditions as would conflict with its policy of perpetual neutrality. This was therefore "the spirit in which the Allied delegations gave Switzerland the guarantee that, to a certain extent, she would be able to obtain from overseas supplies of vital foodstuffs and raw materials such as iron, wool and cotton." Further, Switzerland was also granted transport facilities through France and the use of the Port of Toulon. Nevertheless, despite the encouraging results obtained, Switzerland's situation, it is stressed, will remain precarious for a long time yet."

The same issue in referring in a condensed form to Federal finance says:

"Swiss Federal State returns for 1944 show a deficit of 168 million francs for the ordinary budget, and of 1,032 million for the emergency budget (emergency war-time expenditure). On adding to these sums previously accumulated deficits, 6 milliard, 750 million francs are reached, representing the Government's debt as at the end of 1944. By the end of 1945, the debt will probably reach 9 milliard, including the 900 million reserved to redeem the Swiss Federal Railway debt. This, it is freely ad-

mitted, is an enormous debt for a small country like Switzerland, but Swiss authorities point out that it is due to various exceptional factors: the manning of the frontiers, the emergency measures resulting from war-time conditions, Government subsidies, compensation funds and the economic and social measures adopted by the Government. All these measures, it is urged, have enabled Switzerland 'to secure her liberty, and the nation to go on living and working, despite the difficulties which have had to be faced. This expenditure was, therefore, not only necessary, but indispensable'."

Some relief from this gloomy picture may be gained from the following, culled from "*The Financial News*," June 13th, 1945, which presages a similar profitable financial operation that recommended itself after the last war:

"Any devaluation of the Swiss franc will at most be slight and will be preceded by an international agreement, according to Federal Councillor Stampfli, in a declaration on Swiss economic and monetary policy made in the Swiss Parliament.

'The aim of our monetary policy is full employment, an aim which will take precedence over a rigid stabilisation of currency. There will be no deflation through curtailment of credit, and there is no need for an adjustment of the Swiss currency to other currencies,' Mr. Stampfli stated.

'The Swiss National Bank has pursued a policy of restrained fiduciary issue to avoid inflation. Wages have not followed the general increase in prices'."

Cantonal

The new Ständerat for Uri in place of Dr. Leo Meyer, recently deceased, is Dr. Gustav Muheim, a lawyer of

Altdorf.

The commune of Brunnen, after rejecting a naturalisation demand, decided that for the next five years no such applications shall be considered.

The peace demonstrations in Zurich terminated with an invasion of the German travel and tourist office in the Bahnhofstrasse by a large crowd after midnight. Furniture, pictures and Hitler portraits were lustily kicked through the show windows and tossed along the streets to be thrown into the Sihl. A large force of police restored order.

A ten-years' lease has been obtained of a field along the slopes of the Albis near Zurich for the exclusive use of gliders.

In Zurich a demonstration of about 2,000 Socialists demanded from the Federal Council the immediate expulsion of all Fascists and Nazis. It was stated by Regierungsrat Henggler that about 17,500 Germans were residing in the canton of which no more than 350 were believed to belong to the party organisation.

The Glarner Landsgemeinde held on May 6th spent a busy Sunday afternoon. Of the twenty proposals, fifteen were approved and four were referred back to be included in next year's agenda. A bill to pay an



annuity of Frs. 2,000 to members of the Regierungsrat after at least four years uninterrupted service was rejected with a small majority. The New Landammann is Dr. Hans Hefti-Haab (liberal).

A petition signed by 36,000 women and 11,000 citizens residing in Berne was presented to the chancery demanding the collaboration of women in the municipal administration.

In the Basle Grosse Rat a socialist member insisted that the German consulate and the German railway station had been veritable nests of espionage and demanded a thorough scrutiny of the contents. It was stated officially that a certain number of Nazis had already been escorted across the frontier but that a general action depended upon instructions from the Federal authorities at Berne. Latest reports state that altogether 158 Germans — mostly officials of the railway and consulate — had been expelled with their families.

Schaffhausen will celebrate on July 10th the 900th anniversary of its foundation. Here follows a reprint from an old English Chronicle * which describes this event probably slightly different from the official version now accepted.

A cause similar to that which had brought Zurich into early notice collected, at a time of which no record is now extant, some contiguous habitations near the great cataract of the Rhine, where the navigation of the river being interrupted, the assistance of the villagers was necessary for conveying goods across the fall. *Shaffhusirun* (ship or boat-houses) occurs in records of the year 800. *Ascapa*, the ancient name of this town, was no doubt derived from *scapha*, a skiff. A ferry at this place could not well be dispensed with. Inn-keepers, butchers, bakers, and various mechanics, soon found this a place of advantageous traffic; and, because the surrounding woods were infested by robbers, many nobles and freemen of the neighbouring country took shelter behind the twelve towers that had been built for its security. Everard Count of Nellenberg, the chief proprietor of the rich lands in the vicinity, built near it the convent of St. Saviour and all Saints, and placed in it an abbot, with twelve monks of the Benedictine order. Pope Leo the Ninth in his way to Germany consecrated the altar. Besides ample estates, from the Black Forest to the Rhaetian Alps, the founder endowed it with various tolls and taxes within the town; and after a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostel, died a monk in his own abbey. Burcard, the son of Everard, exempted it from the advocacy of the house of Nellenberg. It became an asylum for persons accused, who sued in vain for justice; a sanctuary in times of war and devastation; and the friendly guardian of an accumulated and prosperous population."

*History of the Helvetic Confederacy by Joseph Planta, F.R.S., 3 vol. published 1807 in London.



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In order to express thanks for the always debonair way in which local frontier questions were discussed and settled, the Stadtrat of Schaffhausen has invited the staff of a French regiment stationed at Singen to an official visit. The officers arrived during the morning of May 28th in full uniform in their cars and after a tour of sight-seeing were entertained to the traditional banquet at which town-president Bringolf and the French commander, Col. Colliou, exchanged the appropriate rhetorical compliments.

Prof. Dr. Ernst Ruedin of St. Gall has been deprived of his Swiss nationality; he acquired German nationality in 1912 while retaining his birthright. He is a well-known lecturer on psychiatry and held a chair first at the university of Basle and then at Munich. No accusation has been levelled against him for political activity against Switzerland, though in the scientific field he was closely identified with Nazi doctrines.

The Grisons authorities have pardoned and released David Frankfurter, a German medical student of the Jewish faith, who in December, 1936, was sentenced to 18 years' penal servitude for having murdered Wilhelm Gustloff, the appointed Gauleiter for Switzerland.

In the Grisons Grosse Rat the authorities were subjected to severe criticism for allowing members of the "fifth" column (Nazis) to reside undisturbed in some of the health resorts of the canton, where their arrogant and self-asserting attitude was generally resented. It was common talk in Davos that the so-called German consumptives in the sanatoria were organised in Nazi "cells" and ran a propaganda net-work. In his weak

reply the spokesman of the government retorted that the cause of justice should not be precipitated and that any untimely steps might have been followed by ruthless reprisals in Germany (!).

With an overwhelming majority — about four to one — a new taxation bill was accepted by the electors of the canton Aargau. Taxation is placed on a socially fairer basis than heretofore. The new plan is the life-work of the late Emil Keller, cantonal exchequer.

The news of the end of hostilities offered in some of the Ticinese towns a welcome opportunity to settle outstanding accounts. Shops, particularly in Lugano and Locarno, whose proprietors were under the suspicion of harbouring fascist sympathies were besieged by angry crowds. Free fights ensued but all the combatants left the battle fields without serious injuries, some of them minus fragments of moustachios or other hirsute embellishments. A few days later Mendrisio witnessed some lively scenes. Italians on leaving the local cinema were abused, some shops were plundered and the contents burned in the town square. The Central cinema belonging to an Italian was stormed, the electric lamps smashed and a number of fauteuils set on fire. In most of the frontier villages shops known to belong to Italians are exhibiting large posters asserting their Swiss citizenship. No casualties are reported from any district as the intervention of the police and a liberal application of tear bombs soon restored order, but the cantonal authorities have been forced to issue an order for the immediate expulsion of fascists thus anticipating action by the Federal Council.

Normal frontier relations, i.e., those existing in January, 1938, between the canton Vaud and the French departments Doubs, Jura and Haute Savoie have entered into force again.

The dismissal of an Armenian who was employed by the International Red Cross Committee has led to an official enquiry into the circumstances of certain correspondence having been disclosed to Leon Nicole. It seems that the Armenian on being examined at the frontier was found to be in possession of certain documents abstracted from the files of the I.R.C.C. and a letter of recommendation to the Soviet Embassy in Paris from Nicole.

Army

Our army budget for the year 1946 has been agreed by the Federal Council at just over 47½ million francs; this is about 8½ million less than the amount to be spent in the present year.

The Federal Council has accepted with sincere thanks the resignation of General Henri Guisan to date as from August 20th, when the demobilisation of the army is expected to be completed. His chief of staff, Col. Huber and his adjutant, Col. Dollfus will resign on the same date.

General Guisan in an order of the day of May 8th thanked our troops for having during six years so valiantly fulfilled the task allotted to them. During that time our country had been seriously threatened on several occasions but particulars could only be made public at a future date. The experience gained and individual trials would not be lost and he hoped that

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if the soldiers of 1939/45 should again be called up to defend our neutrality, the old comradeship would continue to offer a united and unpenetrable front.

As a result of a collision between two military aircraft, the pilot of one machine, Lt. Hans Rickenbacher, age 31, an engineer from Zurich was killed, whilst the pilot of the other was able to parachute near Payerne.

The chief culprits sentenced by the territorial tribunal 2B in connection with exploits at the German Railway station at Basle are: Albert Fuchs, age 39, stamp dealer at Basle and residing since 1942 in Germany is to be shot when apprehended; Adrien Dubois, age 43, from Travers, a hotel employee in Basle, will have to end his life in penal servitude the same as Albert Suter, age 46, a motor lorry proprietor in Basle. Three others were sentenced to from four to ten years hard labour.

A meeting took place on Friday, May 18th, between Général Guisan and General de Lattre de Tassigny, the commander of the 1st French army whose H.Q.s. are at Lindau. The French general accompanied by a number of prominent staff officers, crossed the frontier at Ramsen and was conducted to Stein a/Rh where the official reception and inevitable banquet with speeches took place.

General Guisan has decided to hand every soldier mobilised for at least 30 days a war souvenir in the form of a testimony signed by himself and the recipient.

Traffic

The first fast train between Paris and Lausanne arrived at 9.25 a.m. at Vallorbe station on May 7th. There is no reliable news that this is the start of a regular service, but trains between Lyons and Geneva (Cornavin) are said to be fairly normal.

The first Swiss passenger plane since the suspense of the Stuttgart service left Geneva on Friday, May 11th, for Portugal carrying 21 representatives of Swiss trade and industry on a visit to the exhibition at Porto. On arrival at Lisbon they were welcomed by M. Henri Martin, our Minister, and other notable members of the Swiss Colony.

Economical

At the delegates' meeting at Rheinfelden of the Schweiz. Kauf. Verein, the general secretary, Nat. Council, Schmid-Ruedin, gave a somewhat gloomy picture of the immediate difficulties which were confronting the majority of the 46,000 members on demobilisation. The economic position of the commercial employee had deteriorated and the whole profession was over-stocked; the mechanisation of office work had a tendency to lower salaries.

An agreement has been reached between Swiss customs officials and the English and American occupation commands, which restores the frontier traffic along the south and south east of the Ticino to pre-war conditions with very few exceptions. Trade, i.e. the exchange of goods grown or manufactured within a zone of 10 km. on each side of the frontier line is free of duty and practically unrestricted. Farmers and other genuine inhabitants may cross the frontier on production of local passes specially issued for this purpose.

The British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland celebrated on May 26th the 25th anniversary of its foundation. The speeches did not hold out great hopes for an early renewal of Anglo-Swiss trade relations but the learned and witty addresses delivered at the subsequent "jubilee dinner" by Clifford J. Norton, H.M. Minister at Berne, and Prof. William Rappard offered ample compensation for any disappointment that might have been harboured in the mind of some of the 200 members present.

Humanitarian

It is officially stated that over a million francs have been spent by communal and private organisations to house, clothe and feed Russian civil refugees who have found shelter in our country since the beginning of 1943. A similar amount is likely to be raised mostly among the working classes to look after another 5,000 Russians who escaped from Germany after the collapse. Altogether about 11,000 Russians are stranded in our country, for whom, we gather, not the slightest compensation has been received from their mother country. The continued attacks in the Russian press about their treatment remain a mystery which cries for an enquiry. It looks as if some intrigue is played behind the scenes which the ordinary man is unable to comprehend. It is now stated, but not confirmed, that as a reprisal the repatriation of Swiss nationals in Russia is being stopped. It can also be stated that the Soviet Union, for so far obscure reasons, has practically made no efforts to assist in the repatriation even ignoring five

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separate attempts made by our authorities to bring this about. No transport facilities have been placed at our disposal and without the consent of the governments concerned, Switzerland has no right to organise convoys through foreign countries.

This year's 1st of August collection will go to a special fund benefitting necessitous mothers; next year's result will be earmarked for the Swiss living abroad.

The repatriation of a large number of political refugees still sheltered in Switzerland is likely to meet with difficulties as many of them refuse to return to their country of origin; the German jews in particular reject any suggestion to settle down in the Reich again.

The following is taken from "The Times," June 16th, 1945:

"The negotiations begun last April to enable American troops to spend their leave in Switzerland are now well advanced. According to arrangements made between the Swiss Federal Government and the American High Command, American soldiers would be allowed to come in groups, in uniform and under their own officers; that is, they would be under military discipline.

A monthly contingent of 10,000 is likely to be admitted, probably for three to four weeks' stay, provided that the American Army supplies them with certain categories of foodstuffs now almost non-existent here, such as maize, rice, sugar, bacon, and eggs.

The question has also been examined of facilitating the admission to Switzerland of British officers of technical and motorized units who need some rest, and of colonial officers or officials needing a change of climate."

—oo—

After the bad things said about us in a certain quarter it is refreshing to read what the "Irish News," May 24th, 1945, prints about our country, though some of the statements strike us as somewhat "naive":

"The Swiss form of Government is probably the best in Europe. The country is governed as if it was a private business enterprise, and as a result the people live as happily together as kittens in a basket. Although 57 per cent. of the population is Protestant and 43 per cent. Catholic, there is no religious dis-

crimination or gerrymandering to cause discontent. Years ago it got rid of politics. It is a country without politicians, and even its bureaucrats are practical competent people. Nearly half of the people live by industry and a quarter of them by farming.

At the head of the Government is a Federal Council of seven men. They act like seven managing directors. They serve for seven years, and may be re-elected. One of them is chosen to be President. Those at the head of the Government do not have to be thinking and planning for the general election. They can give their whole time to management and not to political schemes, which unfortunately is the rule in this part of the world. Any citizen can propose a new law. Then if he gets 30,000 signatures to a petition there is a referendum, and the people vote in favour or against his law. Switzerland has only 4,000,000 people, but because of their practical system of government they have achieved the highest standard of living in Europe."

Swiss football enthusiasts will have a crowded programme of events to follow next month when the 50th anniversary of the Swiss Athletic and Football Association will be celebrated. The chief attraction will be a match played on the Wankdorf Stadium at Berne on July 21st against a team of British Soccer stars drawn from the services. The last match between our two countries was in June 1938 and ended with a two to one victory for Switzerland. Another school match will be played in Zurich by a Swiss Youth team against the Staffordshire team who are the champions in this year's F.A. County Minor tournament.

The "Evening News," June 7th, 1945, gives the experiences of an English scientist who remained fixed at Basle when war broke out:

"Some people in this country think we don't get enough to eat. But to-day I met a man who is staggered at the quantity and cheapness of our food.

He is Dr. Charles W. Shoppee, who in 1939 was elected to a Rockefeller Research Fellowship and went to Basle, Switzerland, to work (for a year) with Professor T. Reichstein on vitamins. His wife and small daughter Adrienne went with him.

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Dr. Shoppee is now working at the Research Institute of the Royal Cancer Hospital, Fulham-road, where we had our talk. But for the Rockefeller Foundation life for the doctor and his family would have been grimmer than it was during these last six years, when they tried three times, in vain, to get home.

For as a British visitor the doctor was not allowed to earn money or take a job. 'People here do not realise the conditions in Switzerland,' he told me. 'Everything was rationed except vegetables.'

They were allowed to use one gas burner for one hour a day to cook with. There was hardly any coal. Fuel and soap were so short that in hotels it was possible to have a bath only once a fortnight. Bread has been rationed for three years — just under half a pound a day each person.

Now, in London, Dr. Shoppee finds himself lingering outside bakers' shops, staring at the golden bread. If a normal white loaf were sold in Basle to-day it would cost about five shillings, so high is the cost of living."

In another interview to a reporter the English medico let it be known that his family was of Huguenot stock and migrated to this country in 1685 after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and that at that time his family name was Chappuis. We shudder to think of the evolution or corruption which some of the good old Swiss names honoured in this country will have to go through during the next hundred years or two.

* * *

Some of the ladies who have worked on behalf of the British prisoners as members of the International Red Cross were received and personally thanked by H.M. the Queen; among them were Madame Gordon Morier and Mlle Suzanne Ferrière, a name certainly not unknown in the London Colony. In reporting these facts, the "*Evening Standard*," June 15th, 1945, adds that "before the war Mr. Morier was one of the leaders of the Swiss Colony." We have heard of Mr. Morier but all the same we should like our contemporary to disclose to us where the followers of Mr. Morier have been led to.

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Mrs. C. Bolla, 74, Carleton Road, N.7 — Tel. North 4932,
or to Miss Gosi, 22, Ducie St., S.W.4 — Tel. Brixton 3308.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Our member, Mr. C. WÜTHRICH, M.I.E.E., at the invitation of the President of the Royal Numismatic Society, read at a recent meeting a paper entitled "Celtic Numismatics in Switzerland," dealing with some aspects of pre-historic and pre-Roman evolution in our country and the coins which were then minted and/or in use by the tribes. Mr. Wüthrich agreed to read the same paper at the meeting on TUESDAY, JULY 3rd (Dinner at 6.30 p.m.) at BROWN'S HOTEL. Lantern slides and a few of the actual coins will be shown.

THE COMMITTEE.

Hardly any important event is missed by our Postal authorities to issue special commemoration stamps with an admirable promptitude. On May 8th, a series of 14 stamps ranging from 5 cts. to 10 frs. was already on sale at all post offices. The original designs were devised by N. Stöcklin, Basle (5 to 40 cts.): A. Patocchi, Ticinese (50 cts. to 2 frs.) and Karl Bickel, Wallenstadt (3 to 10 frs.).

OUR RADIO ANNOUNCERS.

Those of our readers who are able to listen in with some satisfaction to one of our three official transmitters (Beromünster, Sottens and Mte Ceneri) may be interested to know the names of the respective announcers who contrary to directions observed by the B.B.C. do not introduce themselves before talking to us. The information is taken from a most instructive article in the January issue of the "*Echo Suisse*" eulogizing the fiftieth anniversary of the Swiss Telegraph Agency . . . Though all our stations have their own studios, the actual news service is broadcast from the offices of the STA at 1, Gutenbergstrasse, Berne. The names of the announcers are: in German, Dr. Werner Kämpfen from Brigue (Valais), whose deputies are Messrs. Karrer and Holzer; in French M. Henri Rossier from Lausanne, with his two assistants M. Bühlmann from Biel and Max Virchaux from Geneva; in Italian Mario Casanova (whose name alone should prove rather fascinating) and Dario Bertoni, both Ticinesi.

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES.

Through the courtesy of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation we are enabled to publish the quotations of some of the leading stocks in Switzerland.

| | | | | 9/5/45. | 20/6/45. |
|---------------------|-----|------|-----|---------|----------|
| Confederation | 3% | 1936 | ... | 101.75 | 101.65 |
| Confederation | 3½% | 1932 | ... | 101.75 | 101.75 |
| Confederation | 4% | 1931 | ... | 102.60 | 102.50 |
| Swiss Bank | ... | ... | ... | 523 | 516 |
| Crédit Suisse | ... | ... | ... | 555 | 553 |
| Industrie Aluminium | ... | ... | ... | 1740 | 1745 |
| Brown Boveri | ... | ... | ... | 700 | 708 |
| Chade ABC | ... | ... | ... | 920 | 895 |
| Chade D | ... | ... | ... | 172 | 166 |
| Industrie Chimique | ... | ... | ... | 4850 | 4900 |
| Fischer | ... | ... | ... | 910 | 900ex. |
| Nestlé | ... | ... | ... | 905ex. | 901 |
| Oerlikon | ... | ... | ... | 492 | 488 |
| Suisse Réassurance | ... | ... | ... | 3725 | 3775 |
| Sandoz | ... | ... | ... | 8960 | 8895 |
| Saurer | ... | ... | ... | 780 | 760 |
| Sulzer | ... | ... | ... | 1350 | 1345 |