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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Cantonal

Excessive speed in passing a curve at Fellibrücke near Amsteg (Uri) was responsible for the death of two young brothers, Walter and Siegfried Meier, who on their motor cycles missed the road border and disappeared in the Fellibach. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Record figures — the highest since 1925 — in the frequentation of hotels and pensions in Zurich are published for the month of July. 124,088 (107,381 in July 1946) visitors found shelter occupying 91.6% of the available sleeping accommodation (83.9%); of these 71,421 (49,196) were foreign tourists a quarter of whom came from Gt. Britain and Northern Ireland. First class hotels claimed the highest proportion of this patronage. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

For the second time within the life-time of the generation two large adjoining farmsteads were burnt out in Ober-Seglingen near Eglisau. No lives were lost though one of the farmers named Fehr suffered badly from burns and had to be taken to hospital. Most of the cattle were saved but a large stock of cereals, fodder and agricultural implements were reduced to cinders. A short circuit is believed to have been the cause of the conflagration and the damage is stated to exceed 250,000 francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A memorable achievement will be remembered by the death of Henri Daniel Gross, who passed away at Winterthur at the age of 75. He entered as a young man 55 years ago the engineering firm of J. J. Rieter & Co., A.G., was made a director in 1907 and joined the board in 1925 of which he was vice-president.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

By a small majority the voters of Zug decided to impose an entertainment tax (Billetsteuer). The proceeds — Frs. 15,000 all told — are to be assigned to the up-keep and amortisation of gymnastic and sports installations and the furtherance of cultural, musical and sports activities [A.T.S.]

In the district of Langenthal experiments encouraged by subsidies are being made by the local Aeroclub to produce rain by spraying an ice-preparation over the clouds. It is stated that these trials have so far been stimulating and in a few instances even successful but it has not been definitely established that rain supposed to have been produced was not the result of natural impulses. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Senseless form-filling, restrictions in treatment and medicaments and official interference in the relations between doctor and patient are given as the reasons for the resignation of 53 local practitioners from their contract or agreement with the sick-fund.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The mayor (Stadtpräsident) of Berne has left for Moscow with two colleagues following an official invitation to attend the 800th anniversary celebration of that town. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A large farmstead in Mühlendorf near Bümplitz, owned by Ernst Schwab, was set on fire, the cattle alone being saved. Lorries, benzine and the harvest so far gathered were ruined and the loss is estimated to exceed 100,000 francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A row of six houses were destroyed by a fire which broke out in Kaisten in the Laufenburg district. Shortage of water hampered the efforts of the fire brigades from Rheinfelden and Brugg. The fire broke out just before midday and there is no loss of life or cattle but 300,000 francs worth of damage has been caused. About fifty people including twenty children have been rendered homeless. The conflagration is attributed to children playing with matches. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Speeding whether by car or cycle is generally considered by Swiss courts as a pardonable offence. In a

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case before a Basle court a young cyclist raced down a side street and ignoring a pedestrian crossing knocked down a woman without taking the slightest notice; she was not fatally injured but had to be taken to hospital. The magistrate stated that such callous and inconsiderate behaviour deserved severe punishment and sentenced the cyclist to eight days imprisonment. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The sculptor and painter, Eduard Bick from Wil (St. Gall) died in Zurich at the age of 62; he was the designer and sculptor of many picturesque public fountains. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The voters in St. Moritz refused to sanction a bill introducing uniform shop-closing; they also rejected a proposal to construct a ski-lift. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

An exceptionally violent hail-storm was experienced in the canton Aargau on August 21st. Untold damage was caused to fruit cultures, hailstones as large as eggs being piled an inch deep in certain districts, specially the Wiggertal. In Zofingen the fire brigades were called out to clear the inundated streets. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The traditional festivities of the "Ferragosto" attracted an immense crowd to the Ticino. Apart from the many extra trains run by the Federal railways over 10,000 motorcars arrived in one day. Over half of the visitors were foreign tourists, the largest contingent being from Belgium and Great Britain. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Shortage of labour has induced many Italian workers, mostly women, to cross the frontier in the morning for work chiefly in the tobacco and clothing industries and return in the evening; the Ticinese government has now published a decree inflicting these day-workers with the payment of the cantonal and municipal taxes. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Lausanne's population on July 1st last is officially stated to have been 101,895 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Federal Gymnastic festival in 1951 will be held in Lausanne if a resolution passed by the local societies finds general favour. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The imposing sum of 219, 661 francs has been left to the canton Vaud under the will of a local lady whose name is not revealed. The money is to go to a special cancer research fund of the cantonal hospital. [A.T.S.]

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Digging for water resulted in the death of four young men on a farmstead near Puidoux. In order to combat the dryness of the soil the three brothers Chappuis excavated a deep ditch where they intended to bore for water. A motor pump had already been lowered but when Paul Chappuis descended to set it going he failed to return. His brother Georges went down to investigate but when he also remained below brother Louis followed with the same futile result. Later on in the evening an attendant on the Lac de Bret, Louis Rossier lowered himself with a rope and disappeared. The fire brigades from Vevey and Lausanne were called in and the four lifeless bodies were recovered; poisonous gases had overpowered the explorers. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The "Comptoir Suisse" opened in Lausanne on the 13th inst. featuring a number of novelties amongst which is a television programme exhibited by the French television service. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A serious accident took place in front of the hotel "Belvédère" in Brigue when a large car drove down the Furka, the driver, a Belgian, suddenly discovered that his brakes refused to act. Realising that he could not negotiate the sharp curve in front of the hotel which would have meant certain death over the rocks into the Rhone glacier the driver looked for an obstacle that would check his progress. He spotted and steered for the wide staircase of the hotel and was fortunate in coming to a halt without injuring any of the occupants. However, a visitor, 89-year old Miss Wampfler, from Sigriswil (Bern), was caught on the staircase and badly jammed against the wall. Another elderly resident, a medical practitioner from Amsterdam, rushed to the scene but collapsed before he could render the lady any assistance. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

After a long illness National-Councillor André Oltramare died in Geneva at the age of 63. For many years professor at the Geneva University, he entered the National Council last year only in place of the late Charles Rosselet as member of the socialist party.

[A.T.S.]

**Traffic**

A remarkable development is shown in the traffic figures of Swissair. During the first six months this year 1.6 million km. were flown against barely a million in the same period last year, the passengers carried rose from 25,000 to 37,000 and the freight from 136,000 to 408,000 kg. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A new passenger plane belonging to the Geneva company "Airbleu" arrived from Montreal safely under adverse flying conditions. The machine fitted with the latest equipment carries seven passengers in addition to the pilot and wireless operator and has two motors of 450 H.P. each (Swissair is generally fitted with four). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

An aviation field has been opened at Ascona in the Maggia delta. It is a private enterprise managed and equipped by the Aero Union A.G. in Grenchen under the superintendance of its director, Willy Farmer.

[A.T.S.]

**Economics**

The British ban on pleasure travel has caused a disagreeable surprise but the Swiss press has been very cautious in its comments. Apart from people directly affected in the tourist and catering industry understanding and even admiration in the drastic efforts enacted to surmount the economic difficulties has been widespread. For our hotel and tourist industry the ban is a serious blow but what appears now as an "iron curtain" is likely to undergo some modification; on the other side of it are the vital exports (motorcars, textiles, etc.) which would suffer as we at home cannot keep up the high standard of living without the revenue from the tourist traffic. A good part of this revenue comes from British sources now; statistics show that 55% of the available beds in the hotels have been occupied by British visitors during this season. Even if the panicky statement printed by our leading daily that "probably no British tourist will be seen in the Alps for a long time" turns out to be an intelligent anticipation we can rest content that our authorities will be able, as on previous more weighty occasions, to adapt themselves to changed conditions before a crisis supervenes. [A.T.S.]

Swiss papers report that twelve tons of gold have left the Northolt aerodrome for Switzerland during the last month. No official statement has appeared but the "Financial Times," August 20th, says this gold was transferred in line with the monetary agreement between the two countries (concluded in March, 1946). [A.T.S.]

It is officially stated that in spite of the increased supply of meat, rationing is likely to be continued till the end of the year [A.T.S.]

Holland seems to have developed a taste for the green cheese from Glaris (Schabzieger) for in July last no less than 31,000 kilo to the value of about 100,000 francs were imported by that country. [A.T.S.]

Record figures are still registered in the import of cars. Last July we received from all sources 2,650 cars and 1,350 motor cycles. [A.T.S.]

Before the war Switzerland imported from 9,500

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to 11,000 motor vehicles a year, of which 40 per cent. came from the United States. Since 1946 motor-car imports have steadily increased, and during the first half of 1947 they reached the highest figure so far recorded, 12,599 cars, of which 4,613 were American. France took second place with 3,607 cars, but was run very close by Britain, which sent 3,508 motor vehicles. Before the war Switzerland imported very few British cars.

("The Times," 26/8/47).

\* \* \*

The persistent dryness which with very few exceptions has been prevalent in all parts of Switzerland threatens to be followed by severe economic consequences. In the eastern part of the country fruit has been so abundant that its sale or disposal is causing a headache to the distributing centres; thousands of wagon-loads of pears at 6 francs per 100 kilo have been sold chiefly for cattle food. In the Emmental and Seeland, newspaper correspondents describe the land as having the appearance of "scorched earth." Farmers are compelled to tap hay-stacks which generally remained undisturbed till the month of November. The potato crop is feared to be about 60% below normal; in some districts it is about 5% of the average return. An excessive number of cattle has to be dealt with by the slaughtering houses as the "green fields" and meadows cannot sustain the usual livestock. [A.T.S.]

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The farmers of the inner cantons have started a relief action to assist those in the lowlands to avoid an untimely slaughtering of cattle; thus Uri is "boarding" temporarily 400 dairy cattle from the cantons of Lucerne, Aargau and Solothurn. [A.T.S.]

### Humanitarian

A hundred beds for consumptive English ex-service men were reserved at the Leysin sanatorium at the beginning of this year through the good offices of the "Don Suisse"; most of the patients have now been cured and returned and the British minister of pensions has been invited to replace them by a similar number. [A.T.S.]

—oo—

The Swiss Correspondent of "The Times" reports "The Study of Swiss glaciers made during the glaciological year 1945-46 by Dr. P. L. Mercanton and his group of scientists lead to the conclusion that snowfalls were insufficient during the period, but that the deficiency was not felt as much as was expected.

Out of 100 glaciers observed 13 per cent were advancing (6 per cent. in 1944-45), 7 per cent. were at a standstill (5 per cent. in 1944-45) and 80 per cent. were retreating (89 per cent. in 1944-45). The highest advances were recorded on the Wildhorn and Bella Tola glaciers (30ft.), the Rossboden Glacier (45ft.), and the Verstankla glacier (72ft.). The Prapioz and Scex Rouge glaciers, which had not been measured since 1943, moved forward respectively 132ft. and 261ft. in three years. Measurements showed that the Allalin glacier had retreated by 570ft., the Lower Grindelwald glacier by 75ft., the Oberaar glacier by 60ft., the Morteratsch glacier by 57ft., the Trien glacier by 48ft., and the Aletsch glacier by 42ft.

The general retreating movement is likely to be hastened because of the present warm and dry year. It has already been remarked that the glacier extending between the Hübschhorn and Monte Leone is cut in two by rock ridge, and one can go from the Simplon Pass to the Hohmattpass without setting foot on the glacier. The ice wall on the north side of Monte Leone has collapsed in many places. Near the Nesthorn, the small Unterbäch glacier has shrunk by one third, and the Rhône glacier continues its retreating movement, with bare rock now showing in many places on its western part."

### Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

#### OPEN MEETING

Tuesday, 23rd Sept., 1947, at 7 p.m. sharp,  
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### A U F R U F

**zugunsten eines Altersheims für zurückgekehrte Auslandschweizer und Schweizerinnen.**

Wie die Schweizerpresse bereits mitgeteilt hat, wurde anfangs Juni 1947 in Luzern (Postfach 1242) eine Genossenschaft zugunsten eines Altersheimes für zurückgekehrte Auslandschweizer- und Schweizerinnen gegründet und zwar unter dem Gesichtspunkte, eine gemeinnützige, heimelige Stätte zu schaffen, welche Heimkehrern aus allen Kantonen in ihrer Bedrängnis eine wünschenswerte Zuflucht bietet.

Viele von Ihnen haben ihren Beitrag geleistet für die Konkurrenzfähigkeit der Schweiz auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet und die Kulturverbundenheit der zivilisierten Völker durch ihren persönlichen Einsatz bewiesen. Ihr Dienst am Vaterland und im Gesamtinteresse der Völkerfamilie war kulturell und wirtschaftlich-sozial notwendig.

In Anbetracht der Bedeutung unseres Projektes hat man Bedacht darauf zu legen, dass die Ausführung in allen Teilen gesichert wird und dass vor allem auch die Finanzierung auf breiter Basis gewährleistet wird. Aus dieser Erwägung heraus möchten wir um die Unterstützung des Werkes durch alle Gutgesinnten appellieren. Wir sind der Ansicht, dass die Mittelbeschaffung durch das *ganze Volk* erfolgen sollte und bitten darum, dass jeder Eidgenosse einen kleinen Beitrag dazu beisteuere in Form eines

"Gründungsfranken,"  
der den alten und invaliden Heimkehrern zugute kommen soll.

Wir sehen in dieser wohltätigen Aktion auch eine wertvolle Propaganda zum Schutze der Menschenwürde, die durch den Gründungsplan bekräftigt wird.

Wir hoffen, dass dieser Aufruf im Schweizerland überall ein günstiges Echo finde und zu einem Erfolge führt, der die schon oft angerufene Gebefreudigkeit im Geiste nationaler Solidarität zugunsten alter und gebrechlicher Auslandschweizer- und Schweizerinnen zum Ausdruck bringt.

Die Genossenschaft "Altersheim für zurückgekehrte Auslandschweizer- und Schweizerinnen": Dr. jur. I. Müller, a. Konsul, Präsident der Genossenschaft, Basel.

Hans Vonlaufen-Roessiger, Zentral-sekretär, Luzern.  
*Diesen Aufruf unterstützen:*

Jules-Henry Addor, Nationalrat, Lausanne,  
Albert Helbling, Nationalrat, Grenchen,  
Daniele Moroni-Stampa, Architekt, Lugano,  
Mario Musso, Vizepräsident des Schweiz. Bundesfeier-Comité, Zürich,  
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