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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

This year the First of August was celebrated throughout Switzerland with more than the usual solemnity. The theme of all the patriotic demonstrations was one of national unity which bordered on a sacred union of all the political forces of the country.

As usual, bonfires were lit even in the smallest villages, and the inhabitants listened standing and bareheaded at the lecture of the federal pact of 1291.

The day ended with everyone returning home with the same ideal — that of upholding in any circumstances the integrity and the independence of the motherland.

Dr. Ernst Feiss, Swiss Minister in Hungary has resigned from his post.

Minister Feist was born in 1897 at Riehen (Ct. Basle). He studied at the Federal Technical University in Zurich, where he obtained the degree of doctor of science.

In 1928 he entered the Grand Council of the canton of Aargau in the capacity of Secretary to the "Bauern und Bürgerpartei" in Brugg. Six years later (1934), he entered into the service of the Federal Economic Department in Berne reaching in 1939, the post of Director of the said administration. In 1946, he was appointed Swiss Minister in Budapest.

The newly appointed Minister of the Kingdom of Afganistan, Prince Mohammed Daoud Khan, has presented his credentials to Monsieur Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation. The new Minister is a nephew of the King of Afganistan.

A steady increase in receipts of the Swiss Federal Railways is shown in statistics relating to exploitation in June, 1948, compared with June, 1947. These show that the number of persons transported increased by 145,000 to 17.41 millions, receipts advancing by one million Swiss francs, thus reaching Frs.22.5 millions (about £1.2 millions).

Goods sent by rail went up by 141,000 metric tons

to 1.66 million tons, and receipts, Frs.29.89 millions (£1.72 millions), were Frs.2.95 millions higher.

On the whole, receipts of exploitation amounted in June to Frs.56.42 millions (£3.25 millions), an increase of Frs.4.72 millions. Expenses, meanwhile, only increased by Frs.4.08 millions, thus reaching Frs.41.83 millions (£2.4 millions).

Monthly profit was thus stepped up to Frs.14.59 millions (£.84 millions), against Frs.13 millions. This denotes a figure now exceeding the monthly charges (redemptions, loan services) of the profit and loss account, namely Frs.14.1 millions.

\* \* \*

Switzerland's foreign trade deficit has almost doubled within the first six months of this year. For June the deficit, just announced, was 188 million Swiss francs (about £10.8 millions), imports being Frs.477 millions (£27.5 millions) and exports Frs.289 millions (£16.7 millions).

Swiss imports in the first half-year were Frs.2,811 millions (£162 millions), compared with Frs.2,223 millions (£128 millions) in the like period of 1947, while exports remained practically unchanged around Frs. 1,592 millions (£92 millions). Thus the Swiss deficit so far is Frs.1,219 millions (£70 millions), being almost twice as much as in 1947. In June the rise was Frs. 100 millions (£5.8 millions).

The Swiss National Bank, discussing this situation, states, "Appropriate measures to deal with serious and permanent difficulties" have been contemplated.

But financial circles consider that the situation is not so alarming. They point out that Switzerland has always had to deal with foreign trade deficits in post-war periods and that this traditional excess of liabilities is met to a considerable extent by invisible revenues of tourism, of Swiss investments abroad, and of insurance services.

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Moreover, the gold and currency reserve of the Swiss National Bank amounts to Frs. 5,000 millions (£288 millions) and the bank can easily obtain gold by absorbing on the free market at advantageous prices all dollar bids which are very important at present.

Such a deficit in Swiss foreign trade does not influence the dollar rate since only financial operations are authorised on the free market, whereas all commercial operations must be dealt with through the Swiss National Bank at the official rate of 4.28.

Switzerland has issued a new five-franc coin commemorating the centenary of the Swiss Constitution.

### Cantonal

The "Tellspele" in Altdorf (Ct. Uri) have again started. This year, it is 50 years since the first performance took place. [A.T.S.]

The well-known Hotel Rigi-First, in the community of Arth (Ct. Schwyz) has been completely destroyed by fire.

The Hotel which is insured for altogether two million francs, was unoccupied. A preliminary investigation made by the authorities purports that arson is the cause of the fire. [A.T.S.]

Once again, reckless and careless driving has caused serious injuries and damage. A motor-car driven by a student collided with a mile stone on the road from

Willisau to Huttwil (Ct. Lucerne). The driver and one passenger were seriously hurt, and two other passengers received slight injuries. [A.T.S.]

Professor, Dr. Stettbacher, Professor of pedagogy at the University of Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Ernst Rudin, Manager of the Chemical Works at Rapperswil, has died at the age of 69. Dr. Rudin, who reached the rank of Lieutenant-colonel in the army, was from 1926-1945 "Platzkommandant" of Rapperswil. [A.T.S.]

The late Mme. Richi-Brandenberger, of Fägswil-Rüti, has left an amount of 15,000.— frs. to the school of Fägswil to be used for school excursions. [A.T.S.]

The District hospital in Rüti (Ct. Zurich), has received a legacy amounting to 20,000.— frs.; the interest of which is to be used to support needy patients. [A.T.S.]

A committee has been formed in Zurich, under the Presidency of Mr. A. Weber, engineer, builder of the Underground Railways in Madrid and Barcelona, to study the problem of an underground railway in the town of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Berne of Dr. Albert Kurz, rector of the commercial section of the municipal Gymnasium, at the age of 62. The deceased reached the rank of a Colonel in the army. [A.T.S.]

The town Den Haag (Holland) has invited a Delegation of the Federal capital to its 700th anniversary. Dr. E. Bärtschi, mayor of Berne, O. Steiger and Dr. Anliker have been delegated to attend.

Two young bears from the bear pit will be sent by air as a present to the Dutch capital. [A.T.S.]

An explosion occurred at the premises of the "Kunstfeuerwerkfabrik" Hamberger in Oberried (Ct. Berne). Nobody was hurt, but the premises were completely destroyed. [A.T.S.]

Hans Rubi, of Grindelwald (Ct. Berne), an Alpine guide well-known to a large circle of climbers, has died, aged 74. Rubi had been for many years keeper of the Concordia hut on the Aletsch glacier. [A.T.S.]

M. H. Bächler, Manager of the "Banque Populaire" in Berne, has retired from his post. He entered the Bank in 1904, and has been Manager since 1933. [A.T.S.]

Pater Georges Hölter from Froideville has been nominated Professor of Philosophy at the University of Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

M. P. Schmidt, Professor of Theology at the University of Fribourg has been honoured with the degree of *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Salzburg (Austria). [A.T.S.]

The watch manufacturing Works Langendorf (Ct. Solothurn) founded by Johann Kottmann in 1873, have celebrated the 75th anniversary of their foundation. [A.T.S.]



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Dr. Otto Hallauer, a well-known eye specialist in Basle has died there at the age of 82. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The "Dornacher Schlachtfest" in remembrance of the battle of Dornach (1499) took place on the 25th of July in Dornach (Ct. Basle). A colourful procession moved through the gaily decorated street of Ober-Dornach towards the "Kloster-Kirche" where Colonel Dr. Gyr (Basle) gave a vivid description of the battle. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. E. Baldinger from Rekingen (Ct. Aargau) has been appointed Professor at the University of Basle. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The "Werdenbergische Erziehungs Anstalt" in Buchs (St. Gall) has been partly destroyed by fire, which was caused by a fourteen years old inmate. The damage caused is estimated to exceed 100,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The community of Klingnau (Ct. Aargau) has received two legacies of 11,500.— frs. and 24,000.— frs. for the support of poor people residing in the community. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Independence of the canton of Thurgau (1798) various celebrations have taken place.

A tablet was inaugurated at the "Gasthaus zur Traube" in Weinfelden, where of old the "Gerichtsherrn" of the canton of Thurgau used to sit.

Two further tablets were unveiled at the "Haus zum Komitee", the domicile of the President of the Liberation committee, Paul Reinhart (1748-1824), and at the castle Bachtobel in remembrance of Kesselring and his son (1765-1822) who took a leading part in the Liberation struggle. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The head of a "Liebespaketen Firma" in Kreuzlingen (Ct. Thurgau) has decamped with a cash amount of 30,000.— frs. It is believed, that he has "gone abroad". Investigations made, show a deficiency in the accounts exceeding 100,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A terrible motor-accident has occurred on the road between Faido and Biasca (Ct. Ticino) when a Belgian motor-coach, carrying 16 passengers crashed through a wall skirting a hairpin bend and fell 140 ft. on to the roadway below.

Three Belgian women, one English woman and an English man were killed outright, several of the other passengers were seriously injured.

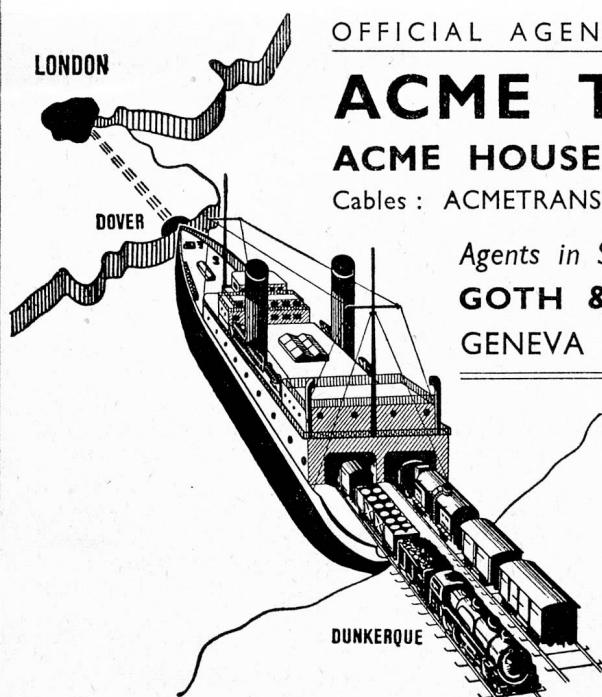
Traffic officers said that apparently defective brakes caused the coach to leave the highway at a sharp bend. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The death is reported from Lausanne of Mr. Auguste Duvoisin, at the age of 92. The deceased was from 1914-1926 head of the Publishing firm "Semailles" in Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Jean Coquoz, a member of the government of the canton of Valais died at St. Maurice at the age of 58. Previous to his entering the cantonal government, the



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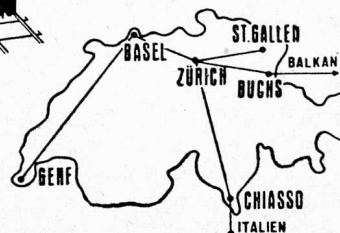
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deceased was Manager of the St. Maurice branch of the Cantonal Bank. In the army, he reached the rank of an Infantry colonel. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A tragedy costing the lives of three people occurred outside the premises of a café in the Servette district.

A certain André Baumeister (28), by profession a handyman, fired, after a heated discussion, several shots at Henri Bourquin (30) and his sister Georgette (26) killing them outright. The murderer then shot himself.

It is stated that the cause of this shooting tragedy was, that Georgette Bourquin intended to break off her engagement to Baumeister. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the occasion of a visit to Geneva of Mr. Tryve Lie, General Secretary of the United Nations Council, a dinner was offered to the distinguished visitor by the Geneva authorities. Amongst those present were Federal Councillor, Dr. Etter and high functionaries of the United Nations Council. [A.T.S.]

### Army

Army-corps commander Henri Jselin (Riehen) has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. He started his military career with the cavalry. Colonel Jselin was at one time chief of staff of the 3rd and 4th division and of the 3rd army-corps, at present he is commander of the 4th army-corps. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

During air manoeuvres of the Swiss Air Force, a machine piloted by 1st Lieutenant J. Stocker, advocat in Geneva (25), collided with a rock on the "Bettlihorn". The machine caught fire, and the pilot was burned to death. [A.T.S.]

### Humanitarian

Sixty disabled British ex-service-men have arrived in Switzerland by air to spend five weeks at a lake-side resort at the expense of the Swiss Red Cross. [A.T.S.]

—oOo—

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60 years): Mr. & Mrs. Jenny-Egloff in Thun (Ct. Berne), and Mr. & Mrs. Neeser-Steiner in Schlossrued (Ct. Aargau).

\* \* \*

After unforeseen difficulties in completing the Lötschberg Tunnel (9 miles 140 yds.), the section of the Berne-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway between Frutigen and Brigue was opened just over 35 years ago, on July 15th, 1913. The railway placed Berne on a new international route from Paris to Italy *via* Brigue and the Simplon Tunnel, as well as providing a through connection with Interlaken by the Branch from the main line at Spiez. In the current summer time-table, through carriages are operated from Paris to Milan and from Calais to Interlaken by this route, while through services originating on the Berne-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway itself run from Berne to Rome, Milan, and Genoa. The through trains use the Swiss Federal Railways main line between Berne and Thun, although the company has its own route between these two points by virtue of the fact that it operates the associated Gürbetal Railway *via* Belp. The latter line, however, is used mainly for local traffic, being single-track.

From Thun to Frutigen the B.L.S. incorporated an existing railway into its main route. The distance from Thun to Brigue is 52.3 miles, and in the 37.8 miles between Frutigen and Brigue there are 35 tunnels and 22 bridges and viaducts. The B.L.S. was the first of the standard-gauge trans-Alpine railways to be worked electrically from the outset, and has been prominent in the adoption of electric locomotives representative of the latest developments, such as the 4,000-h.p. Bo-Bo machines.

\* \* \*

Forty-five Governments collaborated in the eleventh International Conference on Public Education, held under the joint auspices of Unesco and the International Bureau of Education in Geneva. Recommendations were adopted for presentation to national Ministries of Education on the teaching of handwriting, development of international understanding, and the development of psychological services.

M. Marcel Abraham (France) presided.

\* \* \*

The Czech authorities have prohibited transmission and delivery in Czechoslovakia until the end of 1949, of the following Swiss papers:—

"Neue Zürcher Nachrichten," "Basler Nachrichten," "Die Tat," "Der Bund," "Luzerner Tagblatt," "Luzerner Neueste Nachrichten," "St. Galler Tagblatt," "St. Galler Zeitung," "Emmenthaler Zeitung," "Die Wochenzeitung," "Thurgauer Tagblatt," "Freies Volk," "Volksrecht," "Tribune de Genève," "Journal de Genève," "Luzerner Neueste Zeitung Nachrichten," "Schweizerische Illustrierte Zeitung," "Nationalzeitung," "Die Weltwoche,"

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We are glad to say that the "Swiss Observer," can still be sent.—(Eb.)

The 100 kilometres triangular flight in the international gliding contest at Samaden, was won by Sigbert Maurer, of Switzerland, in 1hr. 26min. 11sec.

The British Social Hygiene Council will hold a summer school on "The International and Cultural Relations of Social Biology" at the University, Lausanne, Switzerland, from August 18th, to September 1st. The first week will be spent in serious study, with two morning and one evening lecture sessions each day, except Sunday, while the second week will be free for visits, excursions, and personal recreation. The course is intended for students of biology, teachers, social workers, men and women in administrative positions, and all who are interested in problems of human welfare and culture. The estimated cost, including travel, hotel accommodation, and tuition, will be about £35. Those interested should apply early to the Secretary, British Social Hygiene Council (Dept. M.1), Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

After running successful trials off the North-East Coast during which she exceeded her service speed of 13 knots, the motorship Anunciada (9,290 tons dead-weight), built and engined by Messrs. William Doxford

and Sons, Ltd., of Sunderland, for Pictet and Company and Ferrier Lullin and Company, of Geneva, sailed from the Wear for Antwerp. The Anunciada is the first vessel built at Sunderland for the Swiss Merchant Navy. She is to load a general cargo at Antwerp for her maiden voyage to Montreal and will return to Belgium with grain.

The vessel is intended for trade on the trans-Atlantic route from Antwerp and Rotterdam, connecting with a fleet of 182 river craft using the Rhine to Switzerland.

#### PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semain Suisse" (Service de Presse).

Le Brésil est devenu l'un des gros clients et fournisseurs de la Suisse. 1947 a été une année record en ce qui concerne l'échange des marchandises.

Le Gouvernement danois a invité 6 géologues suisses à participer à une expédition au Groenland. Cette expédition recherchera des gisements de minerais métallifères.

L'expédition Cordillera Blanca du club alpin académique de Zurich annonce du Pérou les "premières" suivantes : Carhusac 5,110m., Nevado Cashan 5,723m., et Nevado Pucaranra 6,147.

Lors du premier vol officiel de la Swissair de New-York à Zurich, le parcours Gander (Terre Neuve) — Kloten a été couvert en 12 heures et demie, sans escale.

W. Diggelmann, de Zurich, a obtenu une mention honorable avec diplôme pour la médaille qu'il a présentée au concours artistique des Jeux Olympiques de Londres. Dans le groupe "architecture," l'école fédérale de gymnastique et de sport de Marcolin (architectes Schindler et Knupfer) a remporté une médaille d'argent.

La princesse Rajkumari, ministre du Gouvernement indien central, qui avait déjà passé une année en Suisse romande, y est revenue à la tête de la délégation indienne à l'organisation mondiale de la santé.

Madame Roosevelt, dans son "Journal," qui paraît tous les jours dans la presse américaine et qui est lu par plus de 5 millions de personnes, a montré beaucoup de sympathie pour la Suisse. Il semble que la conspiration du silence, pratiquée par les journaux des U.S.A. à l'égard de notre pays, a enfin cessé.

Pendant la "Semaine de musique nouvelle" à Francfort-sur-le-Main, plusieurs compositeurs et solistes suisses ont conquis des places d'honneur (Arthur Honegger, Frank Martin, Elsa Gavelti, Henri Honegger). La "Symphonie sylvestre" de Richard Flury, de Soleure, a été jouée pour la première fois en Allemagne par l'orchestre Mozart de Dresde.

#### 1st OF AUGUST CELEBRATION REPORTS.

Owing to the lack of space, reports concerning some of the 1st of August celebrations will appear in our next issue (August 27th, 1948).

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