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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The National Council approved Switzerland's adherence to the Marshall Plan by 136 votes to seven (all Communists). The States Council accepted it by 32 votes to 1 vote.

Before the vote was taken in the National Council there were noisy scenes during which Communist and non-Communist M.P.s stood up booing and shouting "Liar" at one another. A Communist proposal to put the Marshall Plan to a referendum was rejected by 109 votes to eight.

The Foreign Minister, M. Petitpierre, said: "There is absolutely no possibility of Switzerland's being drawn into a sort of military alliance. The Marshall Plan in no way conflicts with our national sovereignty or neutrality. But the Swiss people cannot allow neutrality to condemn them to a policy of indifference and to a timorous attitude." The bilateral treaty to be signed with the United States would be quite different from those concluded with other States. (Switzerland is receiving no direct aid.) "No American control of our economy would be justified."

The uproar began when M. Nicole, leader of the Workers' Party (Communists), rose to oppose the Marshall Plan. He said the Swiss Government had dissolved the Communist party in Switzerland in 1939 at the request of the German Legation. The uproar which followed lasted ten minutes before order could be restored.

* * *

A group of British M.P.s who were visiting Switzerland, attended a sitting of the National Council of the Swiss Parliament in Berne; the President of the House greeted them in English. After being entertained at lunch by the members of the two Houses of Parliament, they were received by the municipal authorities.

* * *

Customs receipts during the month of September reached 29.9 million francs, or 2.3 million francs less than in September, 1947. During the first nine months

of 1948, the custom receipts reached a total of 315.6 million francs, or 25.3 million francs more than in 1947 during the same period.

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The Federal Council has promoted Wilhelm Schilling, Swiss Consul in Chicago, to the rank of General-Consul. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Monsieur Karl Wildmann, the newly appointed Austrian Minister to the Swiss Confederation, has presented his credentials to Monsieur Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation. He is succeeding Minister Dr. R. Seemann, who has been transferred to Prague.

* * *

Professor Amstutz, of the Federal Technical University in Zurich, has resigned from his post of Delegate for Civil Aviation, which he had held since 1941.

Whilst holding this office, Professor Amstutz had rendered great services to the Confederation, for which he was thanked by Monsieur Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation.

* * *

Dr. Franz Stämpfli, "Bundesanwalt" has, on reaching the age-limit, tendered his resignation to the Federal Council.

He was born in 1881 in Schwarzenburg (Ct. Berne). After having studied law, he established himself in 1906 as an advocate in Berne; ten years later (1916) he was elected "Bundesanwalt" which position he had held for the last thirty-two years with great distinction. In 1941, the University of Berne honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

* * *

Josef Bürgi-Poels, from 1936-1948 a member of the government of the canton of Schwyz, and "Landammann" from 1940-1942, has died in Arth at the age of 57 [A.T.S.]

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Cantonal

Friedrich Gisler, who occupied the post as "Kanzleidirektor" of the "Standeskanzlei" Uri, has resigned owing to health reasons, he is 72 years of age. He is well-known as the author of numerous works on the history of the canton of Uri. [A.T.S.]

Anton Püntener, Manager of the "Urner Kantonal Bank," has died at Altdorf, at the age of 68. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Alois ab Yberg, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Schwyz. He was from 1904-1912, four years successively a member of the rural-district and cantonal councils. Dr. Yberg was during 1916-1924 a member of the government of the canton of Schwyz and "Landammann" from 1920-1922. He sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1928-1935. In the army he reached the rank of Lieutenant-colonel (Infantry). [A.T.S.]

Alfred Cattani, the well-known Hotelier, has died in Engelberg at the age of 72. He took a great interest in Tourism, and was, for many years a member of the "Kantonsrat" of Obwalden. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Schaffhausen of Professor Georg Kulenkampff, at the age of 50. The deceased was well-known as a violinist and teacher at the Conservatory in Lucerne. [A.T.S.]

For the third time within a month burglars have broken into Jeweller's shops at the Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich. On the 10th of this month, the firm of "Mobec-Watches," 78, Bahnhofstrasse, was "visited" and goods to the value of 75,000.—frs. were stolen.

No sooner had the police been advised of this new crime when another attack on a Jeweller shop, this time at 36, Rämistrasse, occurred in broad daylight.

A man entered the shop and at once knocked the proprietress down onto the floor, and when she shouted for help the gangster again assaulted her. In the meantime, passers by noticed that something was amiss, and entered the shop. The aggressor then took to his heels pursued by a number of people, whom he threatened with a revolver. He entered a house at the Neumarkt, which at once was surrounded by the police who arrived in great numbers. The man was found in an empty cupboard in one of the rooms and arrested. The burglar is an American citizen, by the name of Stephan Bor (30 years old) and supposed to be a student. [A.T.S.]

A former Income Tax collector of the community Dürnten (Ct. Zurich) has been sentenced to three years penal servitude for having, during the last fifteen years, embezzled amounts reaching the sum of 100,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

On the 7th of this month, Traugott Vogel, the well-known Zurich author, was presented with the Literary Price of the town of Zurich by the mayor of the town. [A.T.S.]

The following deaths are reported from Zurich: Emil Grolimund, well-known as a composer of folk and yodling songs, at the age of 76. Hugo Frey, partner in the "Schrauben & Mutternfabrik" R. Frey & Co., at the age of 66. He was an ardent supporter of the "Ritterhaus" in Bubikon. Dr. Rudolf

Bernoulli, late Professor of Art History at the Federal Technical University in Zurich, at the age of 68. [A.T.S.]

The death occurred in Menzingen (Ct. Zug) of Joh. Hegglin-Nussbaumer, formerly President of the Superior Court of the canton of Zug, at the age of 81. He was, for many years, a member of the "Kantonsrat." [A.T.S.]

The "Ersparniskasse" of the "Amt Aarwangen" has celebrated the 125th anniversary of its foundation. [A.T.S.]

Three railway workers who were occupied on repairs to the line between Burgdorf and Wynigen were killed, when a goods train ran into them. [A.T.S.]

The road leading to the Lorraine bridge in Berne, near the Botanical Gardens, collapsed and had to be closed to traffic. The damage caused is estimated to exceed 100,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

The yearly accounts of the Municipal Theatre in Berne show a deficit of 59,056.28 frs. [A.T.S.]

The death is announced from Biel, of Armand Aufranc, who, for a great number of years, was rector of the French "Progymnasium" in Biel. He was 84 years of age. [A.T.S.]

Rudolf Wittmer, Manager of the "Kantonal Bank" in Basle, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

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The 3½ per cent. loan of 10 million francs, issued by the "Kantonal Bank" Basle, has been heavily over-subscribed. [A.T.S.]

All the members of the government of the canton of Schaffhausen have been confirmed in their office, on the occasion of the recent elections. They received the following numbers of votes: E. Lieb (Peasant Party) 10,127; Theo Wanner (Soc.) 7266; Dr. W. Brühlmann (Lib.) 6,971; G. Leu (Soc.) 6,492; K. Waldvogel (Peas. Party) 9,667. [A.T.S.]

Pastor Gottfried Keller, who preached for 22 years at the Minster in Schaffhausen, has died in Schaffhausen at the age of 74. [A.T.S.]

Ed. Walser, a former National-Councillor and member of the government of the canton of Grison, has celebrated his 85th birthday anniversary in Chur. [A.T.S.]

The "Fiera Svizzera" in Lugano, which has since closed its doors, was visited by altogether 135,000 persons, or 12,500 more than last year.

On the "Official Day" Monsieur Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation, visited the exhibition, amongst other distinguished visitors were the President of the National Council, Albert Picot; the Vice-President of the State Council, Wenk, General Guisan, the Italian Minister in Berne, etc., etc. [A.T.S.]

The home of General Guisan, at Pully (Ct. Vaud), was entered by burglars who got away with three gold watches and other valuables [A.T.S.]

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The firm Palézieux & Cie, private bankers in Vevey, founded in 1863, has been taken over by the "Schweiz. Bankgesellschaft." [A.T.S.]

Maurice Couvreu, a former Banker, and President of the Board of the firm of "Gebr. Gondrand, A.G." in Basle (International Transports), has died in Vevey at the age of 84. [A.T.S.]

National-Councillor, Dr. Schnyder (Cath. Cons.), has been elected a member of the cantonal government (Valais) with 15,328 votes, his opponent, Dellsberg (soc.) received 11,070 votes. [A.T.S.]

Peter von Roten, President of the Grand Council of the canton of Valais, has entered Parliament (Nat. Council) in succession to Dr. Schnyder. [A.T.S.]

The 10 million francs loan at 3½ per cent., issued by the town of Geneva, has been over-subscribed. [A.T.S.]

From Geneva comes the news of the death of Emile Darier, Director of the Banking firm Darier & Cie, at the age of 66. The deceased was, from 1923-1927, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva. [A.T.S.]

Army

A military lorry belonging to the "Minenwerfer-Abteilung 52" of the artillery regiment 25, fell near Sangernboden into the river Sense. Private Uldry, from Fribourg (26), was killed, and five of his comrades injured. Their names are: Joseph Genoud (26), Châtel-St. Denis, Henri Mauron (27), Fribourg, René Prêtre (26), Le Locle, Jean Reveney (24), Sèvres, and Gaston Sunier (25), Geneva. [A.T.S.]

Another serious accident has happened when a lorry to which a gun was attached came to grief on the road from Sitten to Evolène. Two recruits were killed, namely Gunner Heinz Obrist, Wallbach, and Gunner Jos. Rappo, Murten, both aged 20. Four more soldiers were injured, amongst them J. Scherrer, aged 20, and Hans Hostettler, aged 20, seriously. [A.T.S.]

During recent military exercises by Alpine troops successful experiments were made in supplying by air an infantry battalion which occupied positions on either side of the Sanetsch Pass (7,330ft.), in the Bernese Alps. Aircraft dropped containers from a height of 300ft. It was the first time that aircraft had been used for supplying troops in the Swiss Alps. The

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authorities now state that military aircraft will be used in the same way for dropping supplies to marooned climbers.

Economics

The Swiss wholesale price index was 1.1 points down at 214.1 at end-September, compared with the figure a month previously (August, 1939, equals 100).

All three main groups (foodstuffs, raw and auxiliary materials, fodder and fertilisers) participated in this decline.

* * *

Britain's exports to Switzerland during September were valued at Frs.21.8 millions (£1.25 millions), the same as in August, a figure low as compared with Frs. 38.5 millions (£2.22 millions) in May, the following three months having been characterised by a marked decline in the U.K. export volume. Swiss exports to Britain in September, Frs.12.9 millions (£.7 millions), compared with Frs.9.1 millions in August.

Total Swiss exports in September amounted to Frs.289.5 millions (£16.8 millions), against imports Frs.323.7 millions (£18.7 millions), yielding the lowest monthly adverse balance for two years.

* * *

For the first time in two months gold stocks and the foreign exchange holdings of the Swiss National Bank show a decline. For the week to October 7th there was a fall of Frs.25.3 millions in these two items.

The drop in the gold stocks, by Frs.20.8 millions to Frs.5,753 millions, is ascribed to the conversion by a foreign central bank of franc assets into gold.

Foreign exchange holdings were reduced by Frs.4.5 millions to Frs.170 millions, which may be explained by momentary requirements for somewhat substantial payments in connection with imports.

During the period under review notes in circulation were Frs.65.9 millions lower at Frs.4,256 millions.

* * *

The Belgian Government approved the terms of a commercial exchange agreement between the Belgo-Luxemburg economic union and Switzerland. The agreement, which is operative for one year from October 1st this year, provides for trade to the total value of £45,600,000. Exports from Switzerland to the other partners of the agreement will amount to £17,670,000, while trade in the opposite direction is to total £27,930,000.

* * *

For repaying the City of Zurich 1943 Four per Cent. Loan of Frs.30 millions a conversion issue of the same amount is being made at par, including Federal

tax, bearing interest at 3½ per cent. and running for 15 years.

* * *

At end-September, the Swiss cost-of-living index, compared with a month earlier, was 0.3 points higher at 162.6. (August, 1939, equals 100.) The increase was mainly due to rising meat prices.

* * *

As a result of a recent meeting of an Italo-Swiss mixed commission in Berne, the commercial agreement between the two nations which expires on October 31st has been extended for another year.

It has been agreed that the balance in favour of Italy which is expected to result from the trading will be used to liquidate arrears owed by the Italian State to Switzerland and by private traders to Swiss firms.

Part of the arrears may also be liquidated by the undertaking in Italy of enterprises of common interest to both nations, financed partly by Italy and partly by new Swiss capital.

* * *

One thousand million dollars of de-blocked Swiss assets in the United States has so far been certified, it was officially announced. Since the term for certification has, with the consent of the U.S. authorities, been extended by a further three months till end-December, 1938, the actual amount is expected to be much higher, representing a considerable hard-currency reserve.

The transfer of these dollar assets to Switzerland will proceed step by step only, to avoid inflationary tendencies in this country.

—oOo—

Figures published recently by the Statistical Office of the town of Zurich, have shown that the number of divorces in Switzerland are on the increase. Switzerland is amongst the countries which register a high number of divorces.

Amongst the towns in Switzerland, Geneva is leading with 219 divorces per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Zurich with 188, whilst Berne and Basle register 111 each. [A.T.S.]

* * *

National Councillor G. Duttweiler of "Migros" fame, threw two bricks through a window at the Federal Palais because, he says, his motion, that Switzerland should buy raw materials and foodstuffs to last two years, in case she is cut off by war, was scotched by closing the session an hour earlier. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor H. Straumann, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Zurich University, has given a lecture entitled "Byron and Switzerland" at the Nottingham University.

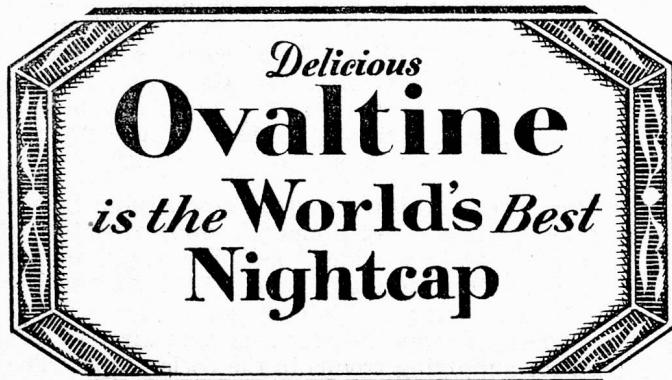
* * *

A "Swiss-Holland" Society has been founded in Berne; the purpose of which is to promulgate friendly relations between the two countries. A member of the Dutch Government attended the inaugural meeting.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary: Mr. and Mrs. M. Bäbler-Schweizer, Siggetschwil; Mr. and Mrs. J. Schweizer-Knöpfel, Wil. Diamond Wedding anniversary (60 years): Dr. E. Moser-Bäschlin, Schaffhausen; Mr. and Mrs. E. Denzler-Michel, Wädenswil; Mr. and Mrs. F.



Comte, Yverdon; Mr. and Mrs. R. Wichtermann-Salzmann, Berne; Mr. and Mrs. Naf-Schiess, Schmidberg-Wattwil. Iron Wedding anniversary (65 years): Mr. and Mrs. S. Ruf-Steiner, Basel. [A.T.S.]

The great St. Bernard pass was the scene of a highway robbery. A blacksmith of Martigny, in Canton Valais, was driving to the hospice when, above Cantina de Proz, at an altitude of 6,100ft., three armed men wearing green uniforms stopped the car. They made the seven occupants hand over all their money, watches, and other valuables and ordered them to drive back. It is supposed that the highwaymen were Italian smugglers.

* * * * *
At the annual meeting of the International Union of Alpine Associations held in Geneva under the chairmanship of M. C. Egmond d'Arcis, of the Swiss Alpine Club, the question of the recovery of the cost of search parties was discussed. It is found every year that rescued alpinists or the families of climbers who have been killed are often not in a position to pay for the cost of the search for them, which has to be borne by the alpine club of the country concerned.

The union, which has been occupied with the question for some years, has not been able to suggest an effective and practical solution, but an experiment made by the Club Alpin Français seems to open the way towards solving the difficulty. This club has decided to levy a special tax on all visitors to its alpine huts and the yield from this tax is to be used for improving the rescue equipment and for paying the costs of search parties when those rescued or the relatives of those killed are unable to do so.

* * * * *
The World Health Organization has convened a conference of Government representatives from all war-devastated countries in Europe to meet in Geneva on November 15th and 16th.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the establishment of a special temporary administrative office to assist in the health rehabilitation of European countries devastated during the war. Delegates will consider the nature and extent of the services desired

by individual countries, and will decide on the size and location of the administrative office required for the work in question.

* * * * *
A new Swiss lake, called Gruyère Lake, has been created by the construction of the Rossens dam. It is situated near Broc in the Gruyère district and is nine miles long, 2,470 acres in extent, and contains about 7,063m. cubic feet of water. A motor road has been built along the top of the dam.

—oo—

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.
(“*Semaine Suisse*”) *Service de Presse.*

A l'occasion de l'exposition de machines-outils françaises à Bâle, des personnalités françaises compétentes ont déclaré que l'industrie suisse des machines-outils était considérée comme la plus représentative du monde, si bien que le jugement que la Suisse portera sur cette exposition est attendue avec impatience.

* * * * *
Un nouvel appareil d'enregistrement et de restitution du son, inventé en Suisse, supérieur aux systèmes connus jusqu'à maintenant, vient d'être mis sur le marché par une maison de Küschnacht-Zurich.

* * * * *
Les directeurs d'agences à l'étranger de l'office central suisse du tourisme constatent que la Suisse est aujourd'hui le pays dont les hôtels sont le meilleur marché. Ce fait a été confirmé lors d'une conférence de presse par les journalistes accrédités auprès de l'ONU.

* * * * *
La “Maison Suisse” de Berlin, qui abritait le bureau suisse de voyage, va être reconstruite.

* * * * *
Le financement des travaux d'études d'aménagement des eaux entre le Léman et le Rhin étant assuré, on a pu commencer les plans concernant la partie suisse de la voie fluviale Méditerranée—Rhône—Rhin.

* * * * *
Deux compagnies théâtrales suisses donnent des représentations à Paris. En particulier, la troupe du théâtre municipal de Lausanne joue “Othello” avec Biberti.

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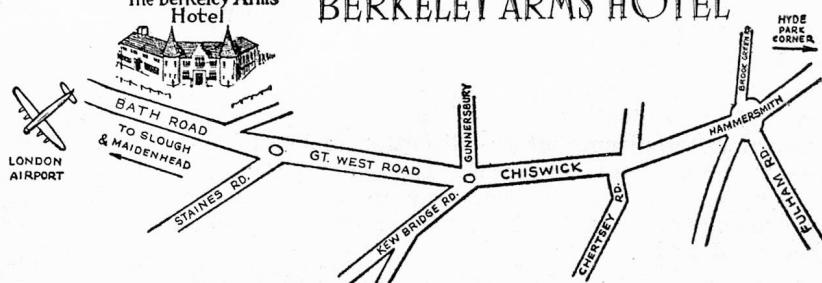


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