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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Monsieur Enrico Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation, officially opened the Winter Olympic Games at St. Moritz.

Bibi Torriani, of ice-hockey fame, was accorded the honour to recite the Olympic oath.

The largest delegation taking part in the Olympic games comes from Switzerland with 94 members, followed by U.S.A. with 92 members; Great Britain 75; France 72; Italy 71; Austria 70; Norway 70, Czechoslovakia 68; etc., etc.

* * *

Federal-Councillor M. Petitpierre, the Swiss Foreign Minister, has received in audience the delegates of the "Union internationale des Télécommunications" at present attending a conference in Geneva.

* * *

M. Robert Pahud, Director of the "Eidgenössische Preiskontrollstelle" relinquished his post at the end of January 1948; he is succeeded by M. F. H. Campiche.

M. Pahud received his schooling in Solothurn, and later on studied jurisprudence at the Universities of Lausanne and Paris. In 1907, he was appointed Assistant States prosecutor of the canton of Vaud, and six years later (1913) examining magistrate of the district of Lausanne.

During the first world war, M. Pahud occupied the post of an examining judge in matters of espionage. In 1936, he was called to the post of President of the "Eidgenössische Preiskontrollkommission" in which capacity, he rendered great services to our country.

* * *

An American delegation consisting of General Max Snyder and Colonels Mann and Pottenger called at the Federal Palais in Berne, where they were received by Army-corps Commander Louis de Montmollin, chief of the General Staff.

The object of this visit was the handing over of a cheque amounting to Frs.4,520,000.— (American

dollars 1,056,052.80) to defray Swiss expenses in supporting American airmen interned during the last war.

General Snyder, on behalf of the American Government expressed his thanks to the Swiss authorities for the care they had bestowed on his comrades during their internment.

Colonel de Montmollin, in replying, said that Switzerland considered it a duty to help when and wherever help was needed and thanked the General, on behalf of the Federal Council for the remittance.

The American delegation was then accorded an official reception.

* * *

Swiss foreign trade figures for December show an increase in imports from the United Kingdom of Frs. 4.7 millions to Frs.34.3 millions over the previous month. Swiss exports to Britain in December rose by Frs.3.5 millions to Frs.14.2 millions.

During the same period imports from India dropped from Frs.4.9 millions to Frs.3.2 millions, while exports rose from Frs.5.2 to Frs.13.5 millions, thus offsetting Britain's favourable trade balance with Switzerland by Frs.10.3 millions.

* * *

During December the Swiss wholesale price index rose by another 0.7 points to 216.3 (August, 1939, equals 100).

* * *

As a direct result of the relaxed Swiss measures governing the transfer, to Switzerland, of private dollar holdings in the United States, the latest weekly return of the Swiss National Bank as on January 23rd shows an increase of the foreign exchange holdings of Frs.28.6 millions to Frs.113.9 millions. For the same reason the gold reserve rose by Frs.3 millions to Frs.5,606 millions.

On January 23rd notes in circulation and other obligations at sight were covered by gold in the extent of 106 per cent.

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At a time when the Swiss Federal authorities strongly advocate a price stop comes the announcement that postal, telegraph and telephone charges are to be raised shortly.

* * *

An emergency congress of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, representing 400,000 workers, accepted a Government anti-inflation proposal to freeze prices and wages at their present level until October 31st, 1948.

* * *

On the occasion of the death of Ghandi, the Federal Council has cabled their deep regrets to M. Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister of India.

Cantonal

Amongst the passengers of the missing Air-liner "Star-Tiger" — which is reported to have crashed near the Bermuda Isles, was Herman Knuchel, a merchant from Zurich and son of Dr. Hermann Knuchel, Professor at the Technical University in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The population of the town of Zurich at the end of December, 1947, numbered 376,575 persons. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. Schmid-Ruedin, General Secretary of the "Schweiz. Kaufmännischen Verein," who is well-known in the London Swiss Colony, through his various visits to the London section (Swiss Mercantile Society) has celebrated his 30th service jubilee in Zurich. Mr. Schmid-Ruedin is a member of Parliament since 1925. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Pastor Adolf Maurer, for 19 years pastor of the parish of Wiedikon (Zurich) and editor of the "Zwingli-Kalender" of which he was the founder, has retired.

On the occasion of the Zwingli jubilee the University of Zurich honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

The Rutli Ladies' Club

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A serious motor accident occurred on the road between Zurich and Winterthur near Töss, when one car tried to overtake another travelling in the same direction. Two women, Mrs. E. Fenner (26) living in Zurich, and Miss M. Merkt (27) also from Zurich, were killed outright. Another woman and two men received serious injuries and had to be taken to hospital.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Adolf Loelsch, author of a number of well-known novels, amongst them "Es ist sehr weit zum Paradies," "Geliebtes Leben," "Narkose," etc., etc., has died in Rüschlikon (Zurich) at the age of 69.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Michael Stettler, (Ittigen nr, Berne) has been elected Director of the Historical Museum in Berne, in succession to Dr. R. Wegeli, who has recently vacated his post. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. A. Alföldi, at present Professor at the University of Budapest, has been nominated Professor of ancient history at the University of Berne. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death has occurred in Boltigen (Ct. Berne) of Johann Ueltschi, senior-partner of the well-known firm Gebr. Ueltschi, exporters of breeding stock.

The deceased was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne from 1926-1942, and at one time sat in Parliament (National Council). [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the year 1947, altogether 629 (1946: 427) traffic accidents have been reported, in the canton of Solothurn, with a loss of 19 (1946: 11) lives. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Erwin Schlosser, piloting a sports machine lost his bearings due to fog, when returning from a flight; his machine crashed near Bottmingen (Basle). Schlosser, who suffered serious injuries was taken to hospital.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss women's Association for obtaining "votes for women" has decided to start an intense propaganda throughout Switzerland to enlighten the women of our country to fight for their rights.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. E. Vischer, senior-partner of the firm Gebrüder Vischer, architects, has died in Basle at the age of 70.

The deceased, who was one of the leading architects in Basle, made the plans for the "Basler Bürgerhaus" for which he received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* from the University of Basle. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Louis Zehntner, the well-known composer and conductor, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Basle. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Oskar Disler (Musikdirektor) has died in Schaffhausen at the age of 55. The deceased was for the last thirty years teacher of pianoforte and Director of the "Musikschule" in Schaffhausen.

Disler was for many years conductor of the Male Choir and Mixed Choir of Schaffhausen, and President of the International Bach Society. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Three children, aged 13, 8 and 6 lost their lives in a fire which completely destroyed a farm house in Bütschwil (St. Gall). [A.T.S.]

The Tribunal of the 7th division, sitting at St. Gall, has passed a sentence of imprisonment for life, on A. J. Heule, a frontier guard, who was found guilty of espionage. [A.T.S.] *

The late Walter Grob, a business-man in St. Gall, has left an amount of 165,000.— for charitable purposes. [A.T.S.] *

The death is reported from Poschiavo (Grisons) of Dr. Luzzi, formerly Professor of Theology at the University of Florence, and later on vicar in Poschiavo, at the age of 92. He was well-known through his translations of the Bible into Italian. [A.T.S.] *

Peter Messerli, pilot of a sports machine, crashed on the Scaletta Pass, and was killed instantaneously. He leaves a widow and three children. His passenger, Karl Schori, a flight pupil escaped injuries. [A.T.S.] *

When celebrating the 50th jubilee of the firm "Lonza" in Sins, a donation of 20,000.—frs. has been made to the community of Sins (Aargau). [A.T.S.] *

From Lenzburg comes the news of the death of the painter, Hans Walty, at the age of 80. He was, for many years, drawing master at the "Bezirksschule" in Lenzburg.

He made a name for himself due to his large collection of mushroom paintings which he left to the "Schweiz. Landesbibliothek" in Berne. [A.T.S.] *

On the occasion of a Meeting of the Grand Council of the canton of Thurgau, Dr. E. Bühler, President of the Council, tendered to Dr. Paul Altwegg, the thanks of the cantonal authorities for his work during nearly thirty years, as a member of the cantonal government.

Dr. Altwegg, who is relinquishing his post, entered the government of the canton of Thurgau in 1919.

On March the 3rd, the 150th anniversary of the liberation of the canton of Thurgau will be celebrated. [A.T.S.] *

The "Fiera Svizzera di Lugano" will take place from October 2nd—17th, 1948. [A.T.S.]

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A military Tribunal sitting at Lausanne, has passed the following sentences in the "Internierungs Prozess": Colonel Blanc (Lausanne): 20 days rigorous arrest; Major J. Matthey (Geneva): 8 days arrest; Lieutenant-Colonel Paschoud (Basle); Captain Gasser (Zurich); Captain Légeret, (Vevey) and Quarter Master Sergeant Bourquin (Berne) were acquitted.

[A.T.S.] *

The 150th Anniversary of the independence of the canton of Vaud was celebrated throughout the canton.

On Saturday, January 24th, a solemn meeting was held at the University of Lausanne, presided over by the rector, Professor Meylan, during which two historical papers were read.

This was followed by a military demonstration at the Place Montbenon which was attended by all the members of the cantonal government, and homage to the colours of the 16 military units of the canton of Vaud was paid. Lucien Rubattel, head of the military department, in an address honoured the soldiers who died during the last two world wars.

The official commemoration service was held at the cathedral in the presence of the members of the government of the canton of Vaud, members of Parliament representing the canton in the federal chambers, Federal-Councillor Rodolphe Rubattel, former Federal-Councillor Pilet-Golaz, General Guisan, members of

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Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

The Council has the pleasure in inviting members and Friends to an

OPEN MEETING
on Tuesday, February 17th, 1948,

at the Vienna Café,

Berkeley Arcade, Opposite Baker St. Station, when Mr. H. MARFURT will give a talk on: " Swiss Literature, its Character and Associations."

the Federal Supreme Court and Prefects of the 388 communities of the canton of Vaud.

Pasteur Savary, G. Bridel, President of the Grand Council and Edmond Jaquet, Vice-President of the government of the canton of Vaud, gave addresses referring to the historical events of the year 1798.

The Grand Council, during a solemn sitting voted an amount of 80,000.—frs. for the purchase of an X-ray ambulance in commemoration of the historical event.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The oldest inhabitant of the town of Lausanne, Jos. Chielero, hair-dresser, has died at the age of 99.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The Gazette de Lausanne, the first number of which appeared on February 1st, 1798, celebrates its 150th anniversary by the publication of a 32 page supplement. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A large number of business people in Orsières (Valais) have received over a number of years anonymous letters in which attacks on their honour and business honesty were made.

After long investigations made by the police, two women (mother and daughter) were arrested and charged with defamation of character. The mother received a sentence of six months imprisonment (on probation) whilst the daughter was sent to prison for three months. [A.T.S.]

* * *

For the second time within a year the village of Colombier (Neuchâtel) has celebrated the 100th anniversary of one of its inhabitants, in the person of Mme Veuve Annemarie Stotzer, born on January 26th, 1849, in Rüti, and living at Colombier since 1898. The sister of the centenarian is 96 years old.

A few months ago, Madame Veuve Morin celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary, but she has since died. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Government of the canton of Neuchâtel has announced the following programme in connection with the 100th anniversary of the republic of Neuchâtel. March 1st: Solemn sitting of the Grand Council; July 3rd: Celebrations in all the schools; July 4th: Commemoration services in the communities.

On March 1st and July 4th all the bells throughout the canton will be rung for a quarter of an hour and bonfires will be lit. [A.T.S.]

M. Edgar Junod, General-Manager of the " Tribune de Genève " has celebrated his 30th Service Jubilee. [A.T.S.]

Traffic

After a break of nearly eleven years, the Swiss Federal Railways resumed their ferry service across Lake Constance, between Romanshorn and Friedrichshafen, on January 5th. The service is for conveyance of goods and livestock only until further notice. The purpose of the resumption was in the main, to shorten communications between Switzerland and the Russian-occupied zone in Germany. This will save time in the turn-round of wagons, a factor of major importance to the Swiss, since contrary to the provisions of a Swiss-Russian agreement, and Russian authorities are not now supplying their half-share of the rolling stock of goods trains.

* * *

The traffic at the Airport of Cointrin for the year 1947 reached 29,308 flights, of which 6,981 were regular service flights, 3,200 special flights, 2,224 private and military flights and 16,903 school and instruction flights.

A total of 166,338 passengers were carried, and 787,929 kg. post parcels and 2,294,568 kg. freight were carried.

Humanitarian

A party of 500 children from the provinces of Pisa and Livorno (Italy) has arrived at Chiasso for an extended holiday in Switzerland. They will be distributed amongst Swiss families. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Through the intervention of the Swiss Red Cross 445 children from the Russian Zone in Germany have arrived in Basle for a stay in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

—oo—

The following Swiss Banks have declared their dividends for the year 1947: Schweizerische Hypothekenbank, Solothurn: 5 per cent. (1946: 5%); Solothurner Handelsbank, Solothurn: 5 per cent.; Schweizerische Spar & Kreditbank, St. Gallen: 4 per cent. (1946: 3.6%); Hipothekarkasse, Fribourg: 5 per cent. (1946: 5%); Freiburger Staatsbank, Freiburg: 4 per cent.; Leu & Co., Zurich: 5 per cent. (1946: 4%); Schweizerische Bodenkredit Anstalt, Zurich: 5 per

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cent. (1946: 5%); Gewerbe Kasse in Bern: 6.75 per cent. (1946: 6.75%); Bündner Privatbank, Chur: 4 per cent. [A.T.S.]

* * *
The "Eidg. Schwing und Aelplerfest" will take place in Lucerne on the 14th of August, 1948. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Government announced that the mild winter and increased imports of fodder had raised the output of milk products to such an extent that milk, cheese, butter, and other milk products would be taken off the ration. At the same time imports will enable sugar to be taken off the ration. Bread is now the only rationed product in Switzerland.

* * *

Students of Lausanne University are to make a collection of clothing, shoes and books to send to the 10,000 students of Helsinki University, Finland, who have been hard hit by the war.

* * *

Nearly 3,600 people left Switzerland last year to emigrate overseas. In 1946 the figure was only 1,839.

* * *

International Gliding competitions for 1948 are to be held at Samaden, Switzerland, from July 19th to 31st, and means are being sought to overcome financial difficulties due to currency restrictions.

* * *

A £100,000 film of the life of Henri Dunant, founder of the Red Cross and first Nobel Peace Prize-winner, is being made by a Swiss company in time for a first showing at the August Red Cross conference in Stockholm.

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Va a vedere il tuo Paese!
Va a vera teis Pajais!.....

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THE SWISS MINISTER'S NEW APPOINTMENT.

Monsieur Paul Ruegger, Swiss Minister in London since 1944, has been appointed President of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, in succession to Monsieur Burckhardt, Swiss Minister in Paris, who had relinquished the office some time ago but was carrying on *ad interim*.

Monsieur Ruegger is a citizen of Lucerne, he was born on August 14th, 1897, and after obtaining his legal degree at the University of Zurich entered our diplomatic service in July 1918. He became closely associated with the late Federal Councillor G. Motta whom he accompanied to Geneva as Secretary of the Swiss Delegation to the first meeting of the League of Nations.

For three years to the end of 1928 he was assistant registrar at the Permanent Court of International Justice in the Hague. After spending a short time in Rome as Counsellor to our Legation, he returned to Berne as Chief of the Political Section, Division of Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur Ruegger was our Minister at Rome for over six years till January 31st, 1942, and until his appointment as Swiss Minister in London, in May 1944, he had been collaborating with the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva.

We extend to Monsieur Ruegger our sincere congratulations on his new appointment, voicing at the same time our deep regrets on his approaching departure from London.

We shall publish in one of our subsequent numbers an appreciation for the great services the Minister had rendered to our country and the Swiss Colony in London, during his *séjour* in the Metropolis.

GESCHICHTE SCHWACH.

Experte: "Domini, jetz heimir Schwyzergschicht, was weisch du vom Wilhelm Täu?"

Domini: "Der Wilhelm Täu isch wytus s'gröscht Dampfschiff uf em Vierwaldstättersee."

Experte: "Das cha schiö si, aber du muesch mer jetz säge, was das für ne Ma gsi isch, der Wilhelm Täu."

Domini: "Der Wilhelm Täu isch dä Ma gsi, wo im Dütschfranzösische Chrieg, i der Schlacht bi Grauholz, i der hohle Gass, en Schultheiss Wängi vo Solothurn mit eme Vetterligwehr e Orange abem Grind abe g'schosse het."

Experte: "Hoh'o!, Domini!, Du hesch meinie nie ke Gschicht g'ha!"

Domini: "J ned, Herr Lehrer, aber mi Schwöster het noime eini gha miteme Ysebähnler."