

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1949)

Heft: 1122

Rubrik: News at random

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED BY A. STAUFFER WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE SWISS COLONY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 2321/2.

Published Twice Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 32. NO. 1122.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14th, 1949.

PRICE 6d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES. (Fortnightly issue.)

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has nominated Dr. Raphael Cottier, of the Federal Office for Traffic, to the post of Director of the Central Office for International Railway Traffic in succession to Dr. Hunziker.

Dr. Raphael Cottier was born on the 22nd of January, 1891, in Jaun (Ct. Fribourg). He studied jurisprudence at the University of Fribourg where he obtained the degree of doctor of law. He started his career as Secretary of the Federal Press control commission, and later on became Secretary of the Swiss Traders Association. In 1919, he entered into the services of the Swiss Federal Railways and two years later (1921) was appointed General Secretary, and in 1935 District Manager of the S.F.R. (Zurich).

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The Federal Council has given a Farewell dinner at the "Wattenwyl Haus" in Berne to the departing British Minister Sir Thomas Maitland Snow.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

During the month of August, 1949, the Swiss Federal Railways carried 19.20 million passengers or two million more than in August, 1948, the receipts increased by 3.11 million francs to 29.95 million francs.

Goods traffic, however, decreased by 18,271 tons and amounted to a total of 1.38 million tons the receipts of which amounted to 27.56 million francs, a decrease of 142,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The newly appointed Tschecho-Slovak Minister, Dr. Arnold Tauber, presented his credentials to Monsieur M. Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister, in Berne.

The new Minister was born in 1913, and studied law at the University of Prague. In 1939, he was interned by the Germans and spent six years in various concentration camps. In 1945, he received an important appointment at the Foreign Office in Prague, and since then has represented his country at various international conferences. [A.T.S.]

The Federal Council has decided to close the Swiss Consulates in Nancy and Toulouse (France). [A.T.S.]

* * *

Replying to questions in Parliament M. Nobs, President of the Confederation and head of the Federal Finance Department, made a long statement on the Government's decision not to devalue the franc.

Sterling and other devaluations in fact brought the various currencies to their real level in comparison with the Swiss franc, M. Nobs said. The gold value of the franc would foster imports, and increased imports would, on the one hand, prevent a rise in the Swiss cost of living and, on the other, supply foreign countries with Swiss currency with which they would be able to buy Swiss products and allow their holiday-makers to visit Switzerland. As regards exports, M. Nobs said, only a half went to the sterling area, so that the losses, if there were any, would not be as big as supposed. Anxiety was nevertheless felt in some exporting industries and in the hotel industry, but the Government was ready to examine with these industries measures likely to minimize the disadvantages deriving from foreign devaluation.

Cantonal

On the occasion of the silver wedding day anniversary, Mr. Adolf Dätwyler, a former "Kantonsrat" and Manager of the "Schweiz. Draht- & Gummierwerke", in Altdorf (Ct. Uri), has given an amount of 10,000.—frs. to the cantonal hospital in Altdorf. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Goods valued at 13,000.—frs. were stolen from the Jewellery shop of E. Nicolet, in Arth (Ct. Schwyz), by an unknown intruder. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Mirko Ros, Professor at the Technical University in Zurich (ETH), has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

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During the month of August, 1949, altogether 624 traffic accidents occurred in the canton of Zurich, against 607 in the same period, 1948. Seven people (6) were killed and 291 received injuries. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Board of the "Maschinenfabrik Schweiter, A.G.", of Horgen, has made a donation of 70,000.—frs. towards the enlargement of the hospital in Horgen, and 35,000.—frs. towards the costs of building a church hall. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A motorist from Zurich passing through the "Hohneret" forest near Dietikon, was stopped by a man who told him, that his friend had received a foot injury and could not walk anymore. The motorist agreed to give the two a lift in the car.

Much to his surprise, instead of two, three young men appeared one of whom was limping. Soon after the driver had started the car with his passengers he received several blows with an iron bar. Although seriously injured, he was able to eject one of the attackers from the car whereupon the three men took to their heels. The motorist managed to drive as far as Dietikon, where he received medical attention, and where the police was informed.

Two of the assailants, both Austrians, were later on arrested in Wattwil (Ct. St. Gall), the third one, also an Austrian has not yet been found. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The late Theodor Strehler, Silk Manufacturer in Uster (Ct. Zurich), has left various amounts totalling 85,000.—frs. to charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The heirs of the late Mme. Lina Becker-Becker of Ennenda (Ct. Glarus), have made donations to various charitable institutions amounting to 20,000.—frs.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Maurice Baumgartner, President of the "Vaudois" section of the Swiss Automobile Club, has been elected Central President of this organisation in succession to the late Dr. Mende, who occupied this post for the last twenty years. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The KABA exhibition in Thun, which kept its doors open for three months, was officially closed on the 19th of last month. On this occasion, a closing ceremony took place at which Federal Councillor von Steiger, Honorary President of the exhibition, was present. Altogether 1,476,000 persons visited the

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KABA which proved to be a great success, due in no small part to the exceedingly fine weather of the last few months. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Charles Gassmann-Laubscher, Publisher of the "Seeländer Boten" and "Journal du Jura," has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Biel.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

During the night of the 27th of September an unknown individual entered the house of Mr. and Mrs. Borer, at Hofstetten (Ct. Solothurn), with the intent to commit a burglary. The intruder fired altogether six shots at the couple seriously injuring them, necessitating their removal to hospital. Mr. Borer is a teacher and administrator of the "Raffeisenkasse" in Hofstetten. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor Wilhelm Merian, lecturer of musical science at the University of Basle, and a member of the editorial staff of the "Basler Nachrichten," has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. The "Jubilar" has rendered great services in the sphere of music both in Switzerland and abroad. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor Tschudi, for 27 years Professor of Oriental Philology at the University of Basle, has retired from his post which he has held with much distinction. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The community of Heiden (Ct. Appenzell I.Rh.) has received a legacy of 10,000.—frs. from the late Mlle. Maria Keck. [A.T.S.]

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Mme. Margaretha Lutz-Allemann, of Rheineck (Ct. St. Gall), has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.] * * *

During an ascent of the Piz Vadrett, near Davos, Hansruedi Nägeli (27), from Gais (Ct. Appenzell I.Rh.) was killed due to a fall. [A.T.S.] * * *

Dr. Ernst Steiner, Professor of law at the University of Fribourg, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Professor Steiner, was for twenty years a judge at the "Obergericht" of the canton of Aargau. [A.T.S.] * * *

The 30th Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne closed its doors on Sunday, September 25th, altogether 600,000 visitors passed through the turnstiles. [A.T.S.] * * *

The University of Lausanne has nominated the following to be Honorary Professors: Henri Miéville and A. Paris, former Professors at the Polytechnic School in Lausanne, and J. Strelbel, Federal Judge in Lausanne. [A.T.S.] * * *

A fire which broke out at the village of Muraz, near Siders (Ct. Valais) destroyed a large number of barns and stables. The damage caused is estimated to exceed the sum of 150,000.—frs. [A.T.S.] * * *

To commemorate the visits to Geneva in 1891, 1895 and 1907 of the writer Joseph Conrad, a tablet was inaugurated at the house in the "Quartier" Roseraie in which he lived. [A.T.S.]

Army

The Chief of Staff of the Army of Thailand (Siam), Major-General D. Dejpradiyudh, in company with a number of high grade officers has paid an official visit to the Swiss army, studying its organisation and equipment. The party was received by Federal Councillor, Dr. Kobelt, Head of the Federal Military Department. [A.T.S.] * * *

A special appeal by Dr. K. Kobelt, Federal Councillor and Chief of the Military Department, has recently been addressed to Swiss women to enlist in the newly legalized women's military service branch, known as Women's Complementary Service.

"The conduct of modern war imposes new and important tasks on our army, the execution of which the entire population should participate in," explained Mr. Kobelt in his appeal to Swiss women. During the course of the last war, already, Swiss women did serve the army in several jobs, but it was not until January 1st of this year that the Women's Complementary Service received its new legal status allowing its members full rights granted to all soldiers such as insurance, subsistence, loss of salary compensation, as well as the right to a uniform and equipment.

"In times of peace, the Women's Complementary Service is only constituted by an embryonic organization, which in case of mobilization would be rapidly complemented by recruiting other women," declared the Chief of the Military Department in giving a strong hint as to what might come in a future mobilization of Swiss armed forces. He further declared the WCS could not fulfill its purpose without the regular enlist-

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ment of about 500 women per year, in appealing to the patriotism of Swiss women for the realization of this important section of the Swiss army.

Economics

The Swiss engineering industry had full employment last year, but for the first time in several years the output of finished products was above the quantity of orders received. The unemployment figures for June this year showed an increase.

* * * * *

The 15th Swiss export week will be held in Zurich from November 21st to 26th. Collections will be shown in the individual showrooms of manufacturers of dresses, coats, suits, jersey styles, blouses, sportswear, children's wear and hats.

* * * * *

The Swiss Federal Council has replied to a question submitted during the summer session of Parliament regarding the activities of an international trust (Standard Oil [Esso]) in Switzerland.

The reply states that it has not escaped the attention of the Federal Council that a subsidiary of a foreign enterprise has attempted to gain a decisive influence over the Swiss fuel market and that it has particularly aimed at bringing holders of petrol stations under its dependency.

The reply adds that the Federal Council is also of the opinion that the control of the market by a single company, as well as the transformation of hitherto independent businesses of the automobile trade into depots of a large enterprise, would not be desirable.

The Council asserts that the Swiss automobile trade has found its own means of defence, but that as the success of such measures would first have to be awaited, there is no occasion at the moment for the authorities to intervene, apart from the fact that from a legal point of view there are only limited possibilities for State intervention.

Whether or not, however, general decrees regarding cartels and trusts should be prepared is a question which will have to be considered in connection with other questions put before the Federal Council, adds the reply. Apart from this, the Council will continue to pay full attention to the matter.

* * * * *

The return of the Swiss National Bank for the week ended September 30th was awaited with special interest, the previous week's statement not yet having shown any changes of importance as a result of the devaluation of sterling and other currencies.

Gold stocks during the period dropped by as much as Frs.132m. to Frs.6,158m. Foreign exchange holdings declined by Frs.115.2m. to Frs.188m. The total loss in the exchange reserves thus amounted to Frs.247.2m.

This latter figure merely reflects the equivalent sum required to meet demands for U.S. dollars. A like loss not specified in the bank's return had to be parted with additionally in respect of sterling and other currencies, but such dealings were effected for the account of the Confederation under existing payments agreements.

* * * * *

For the second month in succession British exports to Switzerland show a decline. While in July the decrease amounted to Frs.400,000 compared with the

previous month, the drop in August was Frs. 4.2m., bringing British exports to this country down to Frs. 20.7m. Against the peak of May of 1948, this latter figure is almost halved. Swiss exports to the U.K. amounted to Frs.13m. during August, compared with Frs.16.4m. during the previous month.

* * * * *

It is announced that the ending of the Belgo-Swiss payments agreements, which should have been on October 13th as the result of the three months' notice given by Belgium in July, has been postponed for a month.

It has also been arranged that the Belgo-Swiss tourist agreement which expired at the end of September shall be prolonged to November 13th pending further discussions.

The original termination of the payments agreement was intended to secure a de facto devaluation of the Belgian franc against the Swiss. At the same time, it was proposed not to renew the tourist agreement, so that Belgian visitors to Switzerland would have no recourse except to the black or "free" market for their Swiss francs.

The position has now changed since the Belgian franc has been formally devalued by 14 per cent. against the Swiss. Moreover, under the influence of fears of ultimate devaluation in Switzerland the free market quotation of B.Frs.11.525 for the Swiss franc is a slight discount on the new official parity of B.Frs.11.5536.

—oOo—

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:—

Dr. Albert Sidler, Head of the Orthopaedic-Clinic in Basle, and of the clinic "St. Anna" in Lucerne, in Basle, at the age of 56.

Abbé Adrien Bonvin, priest in St. Luc, during an ascent of the Aiguilles de la Loex, aged 30.

Franz Betschart, a former "Schwingerkönig" known as the "Grosse Franz" at Jngenbohl, aged 78.

Walter Kopp, secretary of the "Gewerkschaftskartells" Zurich, a former member of the "Gemeinderates" and "Kantonsrates," in Zurich.

Professor Felix Speiser, son of the former States Councillor and "Regierungsrates", Professor Paul Speiser, in Basle, at the age of 69. The deceased was an eminent student of natural science and an ethnologist.

Fr. Schwarz-von Spreckelsen, Founder and President of the "Leder-Import, A.G." in Basle, in Basle at the age of 69. The deceased was an Honorary

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Consul of Sweden and Denmark, President of the Association of Swiss Leather Merchants and a member of the Board of the "Freilager, A.G." and the Chamber of Commerce in Basle.

Dr. Joachim Hefti, since 1918, a member of the "Grossen Stadtrates (now "Gemeinderates") in Zurich, aged 73. The deceased was since 1923 a member of the "Kantonsrat" Zurich.

Alphons Schorp, architect, for 30 years a member of the Communal Council of Châtelard, in Montreux, at the age of 68.

Pastor K. von Greyerz, from 1918-1935 Pastor at the "Johannes" Church in Berne, and formerly in Bürglen, Biel, Winterthur and Kandergrund, in Berne at the age of 80.

Carl Weigl, book-expert and a member of the Central Committee of the "Schweizerischen Kaufmännischen Verein," in Zurich, aged 57.

Jules, César Türl, former Director of Finance of the town of Bienne, in Bienne at the age of 87.

Dr. Hermann Christ, surgeon-in-chief at the asylum "Sonnenhalde" in Riehen (Ct. Basle), aged 82.

Dr. Virginia Abeljanz, medical practitioner in Zurich at the age of 97.

Felix Stockmann, founder of the "Spar & Leihkasse" in Sarnen, aged 85.

Adolf Dupuis, Vice-President of the Swiss Automobile Club, in Geneva, at the age of 56.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in Switzerland:— Mr. and Mrs. Ulrich Baumann-Ackermann of Zurich, Mr. and Mrs. Margot Lacombe of Grandson, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Terzaghi of Geneva, Mr. and Mrs. Pietro Pisciani of Minusio, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosselet of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Mr. and Mrs. Felix Ansermet of Arveyes. [A.T.S.]

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

L'Etat de Victoria (Australie) a commandé en Suisse un groupe électrogène à huile lourde, pour le prix de 900'000 livres sterling.

* * *

La station téléphonique de la Cabane Monte-Rosa (3,480m. au-dessus de la mer) avec liaison sans fil par-dessus le glacier du Gorner, est dans son genre la plus moderne et la plus élevée en Europe.

* * *

A partir du 1er septembre, le gouvernement du Canada attribue 500 dollars pour le premier mois de séjour en Suisse et 400 dollars pour chacun des mois suivants. En cas de nécessité, le montant peut être élevé à 800 dollars canadiens par mois.

* * *

En signe de reconnaissance pour l'action "Bâle aide Vienne-Liesing", l'école du quartier de Liesing, à Vienne, vient de recevoir le nom d' "Ecole de Bâle."

* * *

A la Biennale du film de Venise, les films suisses documentaires et de propagande: "Frères humains", "Appel de la musique", "Les secrets de la montagne suisse" de la Condor Film S.A., Zurich, ont reçu des mentions spéciales. Le film suisse "Houles célestes" de Martin Rickli a reçu le prix du meilleur film de court métrage. "Gaz", de Paul Ruffy et Umberto Bolzi, s'est classé premier de la catégorie des films industriels.

* * *

En collaboration avec Arthur Klinger et Erwin Stoecqlin, le metteur en scène suisse André Perrotet a établi le projet d'un théâtre d'une conception toute nouvelle. La salle est installée sur une plateforme tournante et la scène se trouve tout autour. Cette disposition permettra de jouer les pièces sans aucune interruption et d'obtenir de nouveaux effets artistiques.

PRESENTATION TO MR. E. P. DICK.

We again wish to direct the attention of our readers to the "Presentation Dinner" which will take place on Friday, October 28th, 1949, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. Ladies are also invited. (Town Dress.)

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, has been invited to take the Chair, and it is hoped that he will be able to do so.

We sincerely hope, that a large number of our compatriots will be present to show Mr. E. P. Dick how much his work in the Colony for over thirty years has been appreciated.

Let it not be said, that so much devotion and hard work fails to meet with due recognition.

To assure that efficient arrangements can be made, applicants should send in their names and addresses as early as possible, and not later than Tuesday, October 20th, 1949, to Mr. F. G. Sommer, "Hepple Lodge," Holly Park, London, N.4. (See leaflet enclosed.)

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