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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The customs receipts for the month of September, 1949, totalled 42 million francs, or 0.6 million francs less than in September, 1948.

During the first nine months of the current year, customs receipts reached the sum of 351.3 million francs, this is 58.5 million francs less than during the same period of the previous year.

Switzerland and Portugal have agreed to abolish entry visas for each other's citizens.

According to the latest return of the Swiss National Bank for the first week of October, there was only a modest decline in the exchange reserves of Frs. 4.8m., compared with the heavy drop during the previous week of Frs. 247m., which was a direct result of the devaluation of sterling and other currencies.

Gold stocks during the period decreased by Frs. 2.8m. to Frs. 6,155m. and foreign exchange holdings fell by Frs. 2m. to Frs. 186m., the corresponding losses during the previous week having amounted to Frs. 132m. and Frs. 115m. respectively.

Notes in circulation show a substantial decline of Frs. 70.7m., bringing the fiduciary issue down to Frs. 4,301m.

The Swiss National Council has accepted a motion asking the Government to expedite changes in the Swiss Customs tariffs drawn up in 1902. Owing to the fact that the Swiss customs system is based on weight, and therefore not affected by rising prices, Swiss customs tariffs are considered much too low and a speedy revision is deemed necessary. It is also intended to increase the items subject to customs duty from about 1,100 to 3,000.

Cantonal

Joseph Fischer, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne, has celebrated his 25th Jubilee, as Editor of the "Willisauer Bote."

[A.T.S.]

An elderly man entered a knitting ware shop in the Heinrichstrasse, Zurich, asking to be shown some handkerchiefs.

Whilst the proprietress, a woman over 60 years old, showed him a selection, he suddenly attacked her with a heavy stick. Profusely bleeding from a head injury, she called for help, whereupon the man ran into the street. Some of the passers by took up the pursuit, and were able to stop the assailant, who was handed over to the police. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death is reported from Glarus, of Edwin Hauser, late States-Councillor and "Landammann."

The deceased studied law at the Universities of Leipzig, Munich and Berne, after which he opened a practice in Glarus as an advocate. Later on, he became a member of the editorial staff of the "Neuen Glarner Zeitung."

From 1890-1905, Hauser was a member of the rural council of Glarus and from 1891-1902, he belonged to the "Landrat," when he was elected a member of the government of the canton of Glarus, of which he was a member during thirty years. From 1917-1921, he occupied the post as "Landesstatthalter" and from 1926-1932 "Landammann." He represented his canton in Parliament (States-Council) from 1921-1938. He was President of the States-Council in 1937. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Werner Tribelhorn, has been appointed "Oberbetriebschef" of the Swiss Federal Railways. He was born on the 1st of June, 1895, in Trogen (Ct. Appenzel A.Rh.), and received his schooling at the "Verkehrsschule" in St. Gall.

He entered the Swiss Federal Railways in 1913, and during 18 years service has occupied posts at several of the stations of the S.F.R. In 1931, he was appointed to an important post on the General Direction. [A.T.S.]

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The Printing Works "K. J. Wyss, Erben A.G." in Berne, have celebrated the 100th anniversary of its foundation. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Federal Council has made the following appointments at the Swiss Federal Railways, as General Manager: Dr. Hugo Gschwind, born in Therwil in 1900, a member of the government of the canton Basle-County, and as Manager of the District I (Lausanne), Dr. John Favre, born in 1911 in Le Locle, formerly at the "General Direktion" in Berne. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the month of September, 1949, 428 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne. 336 persons were injured and eight people killed.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Gonzague de Reynold, Professor of French Literature at the University of Fribourg, has left for South America on a lecture tour. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Abbé Joseph Bovet, music teacher at the Seminaries of Hauterive and Fribourg, and organist at the St. Niklaus cathedral in Fribourg has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Abbé Bovet has composed numerous songs as well as church choir music.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The secondary school of Payerne, has recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of its foundation.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

During the month of September 1949, 58 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Fribourg. Five people were killed and sixteen received injuries.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Hans Haeffiger, since 1941 a teacher at the "Kantonsschule" Solothurn, has been elected rector of this institution. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Basler Kantonalbank" celebrated on the 1st of this month the 50th anniversary of its foundation. On this occasion, an illustrated "Festschrift" written by Professor Werner Scherrer, son of the former President of the Board, and States-Councillor, Dr. Paull Scherrer, was issued. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Robert Thomas Stoll, a former lecturer at the University of Cambridge, has been elected "Konserva-

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tor" of the "Kunsthalle" in Basle, in succession to Dr. Lucas Liechtenhan, who recently retired from his post, which he had held with great distinction.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Henry Lüdeke, Professor of English Literature and Philology at the University of Basle, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Professor Lüdeke, who is an American, has rendered great services in fostering good relations between the two countries.

Dr. E. Stahelin, Professor of Church History at the University of Basle, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Rembrandt exhibition, at the museum "Zum Allerheiligen" in Schaffhausen, closed its doors on the 3rd of this month. The exhibition was visited by 145,000 persons. [A.T.S.]

* * *

An exhibition OLMA (Schweiz. Messe für Land- und Milchwirtschaft) was opened in St. Gall in the presence of Federal-Councillor Ed. v. Steiger.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. F. Häberlin, for many years surgeon-in-chief of the clinic "Clavadel" in Davos, has retired from his post, he is succeeded by Dr. H. Wehrin, formerly surgeon-in-chief of the clinic "National" in Davos.

[A.T.S.]

The exhibition "Napoleon III" at the castle Arenenberg (Ct. Thurgau), has closed its doors on the 16th of this month, 25,000 persons have visited the exhibition. [A.T.S.]

The community of Brisago (Ct. Ticino) has decided to buy the two little islands, San Pancrazio and Isola dei Conigli, which hitherto have been privately owned. The price has been fixed at 600,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

The "Fiera Svizzera" in Lugano came to a close on the 16th of this month. The fair, which was a great success was visited by 142,208 persons. [A.T.S.]

The Government of the canton of Valais has decided to start building a road from Saas-Grund to Saas-Fee, the cost of which will be approximately 900,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

Army

First-Lieutenant Victor Schmid, aged 29, an assistant at the Forestry Department of the Technical University of Zurich, was seriously injured, and has since died, during hand grenade practice of the infantry school of recruits held in Frutt (Ct. Obwalden). Recruit Oscar Ruef, aged 20 received slight injuries. [A.T.S.]

The autumn manoeuvres of the 2nd Army-Corps have recently started under the command of Army-Corps Commander Gübeli and Division and Brigade Commanders Nager and Lustenberger. [A.T.S.]

Traffic

During the month of August, 1949, altogether 1,245 flights were effected from the Air Port Kloten. 20,439 passengers, 67 tons of post, 140 tons of freight and 430 tons of luggage were carried. [A.T.S.]

Economics

Hungary and Switzerland have suspended the month-old talks on next year's trade programme because of failure to agree on goods to be supplied by Switzerland. It is understood that difficulties arose over the amount of "non-essentials" to be included in Switzerland's exports.

The trade talks may be resumed next month when the two countries are scheduled to hold negotiations on their overall economic relations.

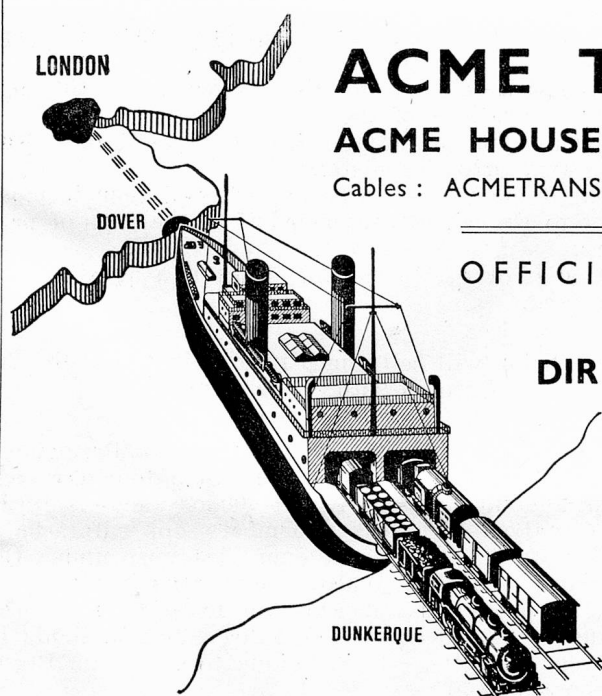
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The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Josef Anton Dörig, for 35 years proprietor of the inn "Zum hohen Kasten" near Brülisau (Ct. Appenzell). The deceased was for many years, President of the cantonal tribunal.

Capuchin Pater Ferdinand Wehrli, at the Cloister Wil (Ct. St. Gall), aged 85. The deceased had been a priest for 63 years.

Jakob Ott, oldest male inhabitant of the town of Zurich, in Zurich, at the age of 95. The deceased was at one time a member of the "Grossen Stadtrat" of Zurich.



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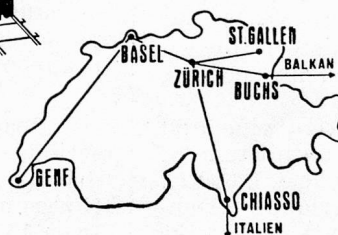
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Dr. Oscar Ragazzi, for thirty years an examining judge, in Locarno, he was "Grossrichter" of the court of the 9th division, with the rank of Colonel.

Charles Pieta, civil engineer, in Monthey, the result of an accident, at the age of 60.

Bertha Züricher, painter, in Berne, aged 80.

Hans Müller-Merz, from 1928-1946, President of the Teachers Association, of the canton of Aargau, in Brugg, at the age of 65.

Mme. Rita Missol Rivo, in Geneva, at the age of 55. The deceased was for many years *maîtresse de Ballet* at the Grand Theatre in Geneva. In 1903, she produced the Festival Vaudois and was, on several occasions responsible for the *ballets* at the *Fête des Narcisses* Montreux.

Colonel Jacques Jenny-Weber in Glarus, at the age of 87. He was for 35 years a member of the "Landrat". During the first world war 1914/18, he was in command of the Gotthard South Front.

Georges Béguin, a former teacher at the Commercial School in Neuchâtel.

Oliv Jeker, teacher in Büsserach, aged 89. The deceased was a member of the "Kantonsrat" of the canton of Solothurn from 1921-1933, and of the National Council from 1925-1931.

Professor, Dr. Ernst Hockenjos, a well-known medical practitioner and dentist, in Basle, aged 77.

Ferdinand Rubin, Manufacturer in St. Imier, aged 63.

Victor Lüthiger, a former chemist, and oldest inhabitant of the town of Zug, at the age of 97.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland:— Mr. and Mrs. Jakob Hess-Richard of Wynau (Ct. Berne); Mr. and Mrs. Etter-Solenthaler of Schönengrund (Ct. Appenzell A. Rh.); Mr. and Mrs. H. Rathgeb of Rottwil; Mr. and Mrs. K. Surber-Baumann of Zurich; Mr. and Mrs. Frédéric Kammer of Bevaix.

Mr. and Mrs. K. Neumann-Haslinger of Ober Wolfhausen (Ct. Zurich), have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65 years). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Government granted £8,500 to the observatory which stands at 11,000ft. on Jungfraujoch, above Grindelwald, because the observatory is important to atomic research.

* * *

Dr. Emil Hess, federal inspector of Swiss forests, has published a valuable study on the variations of the limit up to which trees are to be found in the Alps.

During prehistoric times, between 6500 and 2500 B.C., after a long period of heat the tree-line in the Zermatt valley reached a height of 8,400ft. From that time date the remains of larches and stone pines found in the glacier above Findelen. They should, therefore, be about 4,500 years old. The well-known Riffelalp stone pine forest is a relic of that prehistoric forest, and its upper part contains trees which are now at least 2,000 years old.

It is known that many centuries ago vine and fruit trees were growing at Findelen at an altitude of 6,000ft., and above that hamlet, at a height of 6,600ft., are now the highest cornfields in Switzerland. Documents show that at the end of the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, when the level

of glaciers was the lowest in the Swiss Alps, a procession went every year from Zermatt to Sion over the Col d'Hérens (11,418ft.) which was almost free of eternal snows. To-day trees reach their highest level in Switzerland — and perhaps in Europe — in the Zermatt region where they grow up to the 7,200ft limit.

The Riffelalp stone pine forest has been declared a natural reserve and has thus been preserved from destruction.

* * *

The South African Government is acquiring as a memorial the house in Switzerland where Paul Kruger, Boer president died in 1904.

* * *

Switzerland will spend about £350,000 a year to stamp out tuberculosis among cattle under a Bill to be submitted to Parliament.

* * *

Fleas have caused an "international incident" on the Franco-Swiss frontier. In the Swiss village of Locle French railwaymen have recently been put up for the night before returning the next day on the Besancon run.

Since they shared their station with the French the Swiss have been increasingly plagued by fleas — a pest, it is pointed out, not heard of in Locle since 1929.

"French fleas," said the Swiss railwaymen, "off French railway-men."

"How," replied the spokesman of the French nationalised railway, "is it possible for people regretfully troubled by fleas to know where they come from? It is likely they are local."

The dispute moved on to a high level, as did the Swiss railwaymen, who refused to stay any longer in Locle.

French and Swiss railway chiefs exchanged letters described as "savoury."

Eventually French morale cracked before the convincing accusations of the Swiss.

Perhaps, it was admitted, a few live French fleas had been exported by mistake.

But if blame had to be apportioned then it must go, not to French railwaymen but to the dogs of passengers.

Poodles or St. Bernards? That is a question not yet decided.

* * *

Television will be beamed into Switzerland for the first time on October 29th, from France.

* * *

A new International Association for Psychology has come into being as the result of a four-day conference held in Zurich. About 200 psychologists and psycho-analysts, mostly members of Rorschach societies, from 19 different countries, met under the chairmanship of Dr. Walter Morgenthaler, of Bern. The aims of the new association is to facilitate the exchange of experience in psychology, and particularly in psycho-analysis. Its headquarters are in Berne (Laupenstrasse 5).

* * *

Road casualties in Switzerland have shown such a serious rise during the past two years and careless driving has made so many victims that the Federal Government has allowed insurance companies to raise from 15 to 20 per cent. the rate of premiums of third-party insurance for motorists.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

“ *Semaine Suisse* ” (Service de Presse).

Les deux îles de Brissago (Lac Majeur) ont été rachetées pour Fr.600,000.— par le canton du Tessin, les communes de Brissago, Ascona, Ronco et Bellinzona et par la Ligue pour la protection de la Nature.

Un veveysan fixé en Allemagne, M. Henri Dumur, a reçu de l'Université de Griessen le titre de Docteur honoris causa en reconnaissance des services rendus à l'industrie optique allemande.

En mémoire du dramaturge et poète patoisant Rodolphe Tavel, quelques familles suisses de New Berne (U.S.A.) ont fait une donation en faveur du théâtre suisse de chambre.

M. Ed. A. Hegi de Villmergen et Lausanne vient de fêter le 45^{ème} anniversaire de sa collaboration avec le “New York Times.” Depuis 1943, il est caissier principal de cette puissante société journalistique.

L'Union internationale de tir a adopté le règlement suisse de tir au petit calibre, conçu dans un esprit strictement sportif. A cette occasion, l'association fédérale des tireurs au petit calibre a fait don d'un challenge pour les concours internationaux par équipes. Cette splendide “coupe helvétique” d'une valeur de Fr.15,000.— a été dessinée par le zuricois A. W. Diggelmann; elle exprime allégoriquement l'idée: notre arme ne sert pas à la destruction et à la séparation en deux camps; elle est consacrée à la lutte paisible et amicale.

Le ministre suisse au Canada, M. Victor Nef, a obtenu la levée des restrictions d'importation qui frappaient les montres suisses depuis 1947. Dès le 1^{er} octobre 1949, l'importation au Canada des montres, mouvements d'horlogerie, boîtes, horloges et pendulettes sera libre.

La Confédération européenne de l'agriculture tient ses assises à Innsbruck. Elle a appelé le professeur Howald au poste de président suppléant et lui a confié la direction des travaux de l'assemblée générale. M. André Borel a été désigné comme secrétaire général et chef du secrétariat permanent.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members kindly note that the next

MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on **Thursday, 10th November, 1949, at 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m., at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.**

Our guest of honour, The Hon. Josiah Wedgwood, will speak on “Britain's Economic Problems.”

Members wishing to attend should send their cards to the Manager, Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London, W.1, to reach him not later than the 7th November, 1949.

C. E. SEINET,

Hon. Secretary.

OLD CLOWNS NEVER DIE.

By BILL STRUTTON.

Why did Grock, acclaimed as the world's greatest clown, refuse to perform in Britain? Behind his quarrel with impresario Sir Oswald Stoll there is the story of a strange and unforgiving artist. Now aged 69, the man who made millions laugh is starting a new life on the screen.

(We reproduce the following article from the October issue of the LEADER MAGAZINE by courtesy of the Editor)

The door opens, letting in a blast of applause, and shuts again. The old clown patters into his dressing room, a technicolor grin painted on from ear to ear. Wearily he hangs up his oversize bowler, eases off his huge flabber-dabber boots, stretches in a chair, twiddles his stocking toes.

The grin subsides into a few heavy wrinkles. Grock, the great Grock, is himself again, a solid, sober Swiss, an old man.

This is the Pigalle Theatre, Paris, a plush-and-mahogany luxury playhouse built by the Rothschilds in a Montmartre side street. Out on the stage a movie camera attended by all the paraphernalia of film-making is set up. On a sign from the director it pans into the semi-gloom of the auditorium. The audience bursts into handclaps and wild cheering. The French are making a film of the life of Grock.

In his room Grock stares through me into the distance of his clown-painted face translates what might be a mere thoughtfulness into a gigantic squint. “Ah, yes,” he says. His voice is a reminiscent, trembly bass, like a cello in unsteady hands. “I said I would never go back to England. And I didn't.”

He puts a cigarette into a long holder. “They said it was because I had separated from my partner. They said I was in trouble with the income tax. Those weren't the reasons.”

The Tiff With England.

His clown's mask contorts into another caricature — all wistfulness and regret. He leans forward. “But — the English!” he says. “They are wonderful to play to. They are quick. They are subtle. They catch the slightest point. Ah, I've never had such a public since!”

He sighed, The truth is that Grock, the world's greatest clown, was separated from his greatest public by a tiff.

It all happened so long ago that for anyone less sentimentally able than us to hark back to the good things, the fact that Grock is now filming his own life story would be deeply and sadly insignificant.

The tiff existed almost wordlessly between Grock and the late Sir Oswald Stoll, the impresario. But memories of it, then the war, and finally a somewhat tetchy old age have kept Grock out of England for the past twenty-five years and robbed us of some of his most exquisite drolleries.

In the twelve years during which his baggy-trousered buffoonery shone like a great light in British music-hall, Grock came to nurse such a passionate dislike of Sir Oswald that in the end, after brooding the matter carefully, he played on him one of the most humourless jokes of his career.