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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Monsieur Daniel Secrétan, Swiss Minister in Egypt, has resigned from his post for reasons of health.

Minister Secrétan was born in 1895, in Lausanne, and studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Basle and Stuttgart. In 1919, he entered the services of the Confederation as Attaché of Legation and was in turn promoted to 2nd and first Secretary of Legation.

He left the Political Department in 1928, on his appointment as General Secretary of the Institute for Intellectual Co-operation. In 1939, he re-entered the Department, and in 1941, was promoted to Counsellor of Legation, since 1946 he has been head of the section for International Organisations at the Swiss Foreign Office. He was promoted to the rank of Minister in 1946 when a member of the Swiss Delegation to UNO in New York. Two years later (1948) he was appointed Minister to Egypt.

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Heinrich-Beat von Fischer to the post of Swiss Minister in Egypt in succession to Minister Secrétan.

Minister von Fischer was born in Bern in 1901, and studied law at the Universities of Berne, Fribourg, Munich and Paris. In 1926, he received the title of doctor of law from the University of Berne.

He entered the services of the Confederation (Political Department) on the 1st of April, 1929, and was sent to the Swiss Legation at The Hague as Attaché. On his transfer to the Legation in Buenos-Aires in 1935, he was promoted to 2nd Secretary and four years later, to 1st Secretary of Legation.

At the end of 1939, he left the Argentine and was in succession en poste at the Legations in Warsaw, Bucarest and Riga. In 1941, Monsieur von Fischer was promoted to Counsellor of Legation, and in 1947 was appointed 1st Counsellor at the Legation in Egypt.

Mr. Francois Kuntschen, has been elected Director of the Federal Office for "Wasserwirtschaft". Mr. Kuntschen was born in Sitten (Ct. Valais) in 1888, he has been since 1946 Vice-Director of this Office.

M. Federico Piantini, Director of the Customs District IV (Lugano) and M. Ernest Campiche, Director of the Customs District V (Lausanne), have resigned from their posts on reaching the age limit (65). The Federal Council has expressed to them their thanks for the services they have rendered.

The Customs receipts during the month of October 1949, amounted to 47.4 million francs or 3.8 million francs more than during the same period in 1948.

The receipts during the first ten months of the current year total 398.8 million francs or 54.7 million francs less than during the same period in 1948.

### Cantonal

At the beginning of this year, it was fifty years, since the "Tellspleie" in Altdorf were started. It was decided that no performances will be given in 1950. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Eduard Zraggen was elected President of the community of Altdorf. [A.T.S.]

The late Konstantin Gyr (Molkereibesitzer), of Einsiedeln has left an amount of 150,000.—frs. to his employees. [A.T.S.]

Eduard Cattani, a former member of the government of the canton Obwalden, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary. He has been for 40 years President of the Board of the Stansstad-Engelberg railway. [A.T.S.]

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Mme. Adelheid von Segesser-Peyer has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary in Lucerne. The town-council has presented her with a valuable antique easy chair. [A.T.S.]

A motorist collided between Wollhusen and Ruswil (Ct. Lucerne) with two cyclists who both received serious injuries, and had to be taken to hospital. The driver of the car, who was under the influence of alcohol was arrested. [A.T.S.]

The 1949 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine was awarded to Professor, Dr. h.c. Walter, Rudolf Hess of Zurich. The "Swiss Reporter" gives the following particulars of the Nobel Prize winner:

Dr. Hess was born in Frauenfeld in the canton of Thurgau in 1881. He realized from the beginning his unswerving predilection for science and began early the series of consistent and thorough studies that led him through courses at the Universities of Lausanne, Bern, Berlin, Kiel and Zurich. Following these years of intensive preparation, he became medical assistant at the Cantonal Hospital of Thurgau and at the Cantonal Ophthalmological Clinic of Zurich. He specialized in eye work and research and took up posts in the Physiological Institutes of Bonn and Zurich. In 1913 he was appointed to the staff of the University of Zurich, to be named dean of the university's Physiological Institute in 1917. Thereafter Dr. Hess' most distinguished work has been concerned with the respiratory system, blood circulation, the nervous system, and developments in optics.

For a period of ten years — 1927 to 1937 — Dr. Hess had charge of the Alpine Research Station on the Jungfrauoch: this is an example of the diversity of his interest and ability. At the present time he continues his teaching and research at the University of Zurich, and makes his home in Zug.

Dr. Hans Wyss has been appointed Manager of the "Schweizerische Lebensversicherungs-und Renten-Anstalt" Zurich, and Mr. Josef Meyer as Sub-Manager. [A.T.S.]

Damages amounting to about 750,000.—frs. were caused through a fire which broke out at the Anglo-Swiss Biscuit factory in Winterthur. [A.T.S.]

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Dr. Georg Werner Kümmel, Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich, has been honoured with the degree of *doctor theologiae honoris causa* by the University of Heidelberg. [A.T.S.]

Professor Otto Schlaginhaufen, Professor of anthropology at the University of Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The Marcel Benoist Prize for 1948, has been awarded to Dr. Hans E. Walther, surgeon-in-chief of the "Schwesternhaus" of the Red Cross in Zurich, for his research work on cancer diseases. (The Prize amounts to 20,000.—frs.) [A.T.S.]

Pastor Rudolf Trub, for 42 years a preacher in Emmenda (Ct. Glarus), is shortly vacating his post. [A.T.S.]

The "Rothkreuz Pflegerinnenschule Lindenhof" in Berne has celebrated its 50th Jubilee. Federal-Councillor Kobelt attended the celebrations. [A.T.S.]

The late Mme. Rosina Kühni of Köniz (Ct. Berne) has left an amount of 50,000.—frs. to the community of Köniz towards the costs of building a home for old peoples. [A.T.S.]

The family of the late Charles Gonset, of Yverdon, has given a sum of 10,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Marcel Wild, "Restaurateur", has been elected President of the community of Courtelary. [A.T.S.]

A motor-car, driven by Armand Bieri, of Berne, collided at a level-crossing between Signau and Schüpfen (Ct. Berne) with a train. The driver and his father, Jakob Bieri, were killed outright, and the wife of Armand Bieri received serious injuries. [A.T.S.]

A monument to the memory of the soldiers who died during the Frontier occupation, was inaugurated in Tafers (Ct. Fribourg). [A.T.S.]

Two masked men entered the Post Office in Prattelen (Ct. Basle); whilst one of the intruders threatened the staff with a revolver, the other rifled the safe taking its contents amounting to 4,805.—frs. The men then decamped, jumped into a motor-car, and drove off at a great speed firing several shots which fortunately did not hit anybody. [A.T.S.]

The Dental Institute of the University of Basle has celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation; on this occasion, Professor Dr. Spreng, head of the Institute addressed a large audience on the history of this institution. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Albert Oeri, formerly Editor-in-chief of the "Basler Nachrichten" has retired from Parliament (National Council) of which he was a member (liberal) since 1931. He was born in 1875. [A.T.S.]

Professor, Dr. Karl Bernhard (Winterthur) has been elected Professor of physiology at the University of Basle, in succession to the late Professor Edlbacher. [A.T.S.]

The Electricity Works of the town of Basle have celebrated its 50th anniversary. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Oscar Frey, President of the Board of the "Schweizerischen Industriegesellschaft" in Neuhausen, has celebrated his 40th service jubilee with this concern. [A.T.S.]

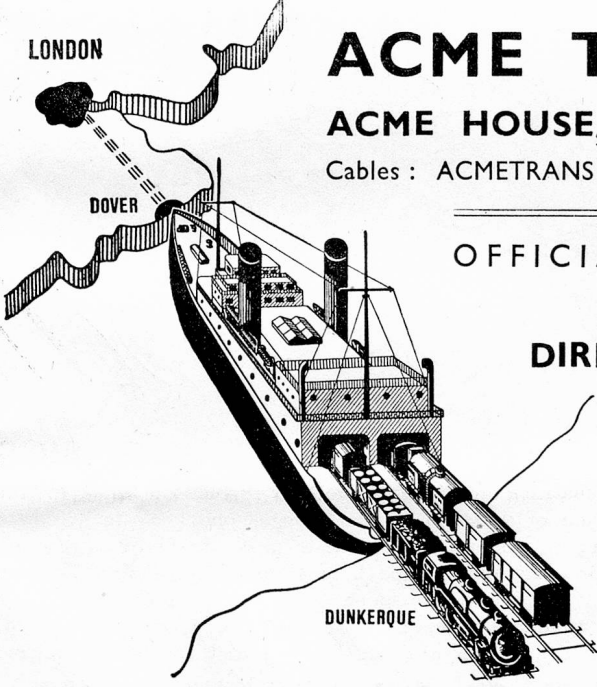
The late Karl Haller (Flaschnermeister) of St. Gall, has left 38,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

The OLMA exhibition in St. Gall closed its doors after a duration of eleven days. The exhibition, which was a great success, was visited by 231,000 people. [A.T.S.]

On the way home from a wedding party, a coach carrying ten passengers, left the road in a dense fog near the village of Lenz (Ct. Grisons), and fell down an incline. The Grandfather of the bride was killed instantaneously, whilst the bride and her mother received serious injuries, the rest of the passengers were slightly injured. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Hans Sprecher, Manager of the Cantonal Bank of Grisons has retired from his post. He entered the Bank in 1918 and was elected Manager in 1945. [A.T.S.]

In commemoration of the battle of Calverna, which took place 450 years ago, an historical procession took place at Müntstair (Ct. Grisons). Speeches were made



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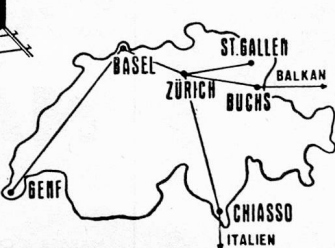
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by Dr. Planta, President of the cantonal government, and National Councillor Dr. Condran. [A.T.S.]

The new "Aarebrücke" in Aarau was inaugurated at the beginning of this month. The costs of this new bridge amounted to 1.7 million francs. [A.T.S.]

One man was killed, and another seriously injured when a motor-car driven at an excessive speed crashed in Arbon (Ct. Thurgau). The accident was caused through the drunkenness on the part of the driver. [A.T.S.]

The late Eduard Ernst Sigg, of Frauenfeld, has left the sum of 11,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

The architects, Guidini and Bernasconi, in Lugano, have been awarded 1st prize for their plans for the erection of a new building for the government of the canton of Ticino. [A.T.S.]

A regrettable incident happened during one of the sittings of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino, when one of the members, Edoardo Zeli (Socialist) boxed the ears of another member, Darani (Conservative), Director of the paper "Popolo e Libertà." The President interrupted the sitting, and when the meeting was resumed Zeli apologised for having caused an interruption in the course of the sitting. [A.T.S.]

The community of Pully (Ct. Vaud) has given an amount of 5,000.—frs. towards the "Ramuz Fonds," which was founded to commemorate the works of the famous writer. [A.T.S.]

Theophile Aubert, a former watch-maker, has celebrated his 102nd birthday anniversary in Corseaux s. Vevey. [A.T.S.]

During the period of May 1st-September 30th, 1949, 354 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Neuchâtel. Thirteen people were killed and 274 injured. Eighteen accidents were caused by drivers who were under the influence of alcohol (!). [A.T.S.]

Professor J. G. Baer, lecturer on Zoology at the University of Neuchâtel, was installed as rector of the University. [A.T.S.]

## Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The scarcity of paper and the costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Monday, December 5th, 1949, together with remittance for 6/-.

A semi-blind musician, who for many years had played his violin in the streets of Geneva died suddenly when boarding a train, he was 72 years of age.

To the surprise of the authorities, an amount of 50,000.—frs. in notes and an amount of about two million lire and several pieces of jewellery were found at his home. It is estimated that he left altogether the sum of 100,000.—S.frs. [A.T.S.]

M. Jacques Chenevière, since 1914 a collaborator of the International Red Cross in Geneva, and since 1919, a member of the committee, has received a medal in recognition of his work in connection with the International Red Cross. [A.T.S.]

Edouard Chapuisat, former Director of the "Journal de Genève," and a member of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva since 1938, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

### Army

The Federal Council has accepted the resignations of Army-Corps Commanders Borel and Gübeli, expressing to them the thanks of the Swiss Government for their services rendered.

The following promotions in the high command of the Swiss army are announced:

Colonel Marius Corbat (Berne), hitherto Commander of the 2nd Division, has been promoted to the



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command of the 1st Army-Corps. (Colonel Corbat, is the brother of our compatriot, André Corbat, of 20, Gloucester Court, Kew Road, Kew.)

The new Army-Corps Commander was born in 1893, and is a member of the Instructors Corps. At the outbreak of the last war (1939) he was in command of the Infantry Regiment 9. Two years later (1941) he was promoted to Colonel of Brigade and in 1943 to Colonel of Division.

Colonel Franz Nager (Zurich), at present commander of the 8th Division, will be in command of the 2nd Army-Corps.

Colonel Nager, was born in 1896, and is a member of the Instructors Corps, in 1940, he obtained the rank of Colonel and the post of Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army-Corps. In 1943, he was promoted to the Command of the 8th Division.

The command of the 2nd Division has been entrusted to Colonel of Division Karl Brunner (Zurich) formerly "Unterstaffs Chef" of the General Staff section.

Colonel of Division Brunner, was born in 1896, and is a member of the Instructors Corps. He reached the rank of Colonel in 1939, on his appointment of Chief-of-Staff of the 9th Division. He was in succession Chief-of-Staff of the 1st Army-Corps, Commander of the Mountain Brigade 11, and on his promotion to Colonel of Division, occupied the post of "Unterstaffs-chef" Front (General Staff).

Colonel of Brigade Immanuel Roesler (Aargau), has been appointed to the command of the 8th Division with promotion to Colonel of Division. He was

formerly in command of the Mountain Infantry Regiment 15.

Colonel Roesler was born in 1900, and belongs to the Instructors Corps. He reached the rank of Colonel in 1944 when appointed to the command of the Mountain Infantry Regiment 15.

Colonel Jakob Annasohn (Thurgau), has been promoted to the rank of Colonel of Division, and will occupy the post of "Unterstaffs-chef" Front of the General Staff.

Colonel of Division Annasohn was born in 1901, and is a member of the Instructors Corps. He reached the rank of Colonel in 1946, on his appointment as Commander of the Infantry Regiment 25.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A Swiss Military Mission, consisting of Colonel of Division Brunner, Major (General Staff) Gallusser, a member of the Federal Instructors Corps, and First Lieutenant Zurbriggen (ski instructor and alpine guide) on the invitation of the Indian Government is shortly leaving for India for a stay of several months.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The autumn manoeuvres of the 3rd and 4th Army-Corps took place at the beginning of this month, in Switzerland, under the direction of Army-Corps Commanders Constam and Jselin. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Corporal Albert Kunz (aged 20) was killed when a Jeep in which he was travelling overturned. Kunz was a student of engineering and hails from St. Gall.

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In the Swiss National Defence Budget for 1950, announced in Berne on October 8th, by the Minister of the Armed Forces, Mr. Kobelt, provision is made for the purchase of an additional quantity of D.H. Vampires. The budget was estimated at nearly £37,490,000, of which about £3,000,000 is set aside for the purchase of Vampires.

### Economics

The Government of India has signed an agreement with the Oerlikon Machine Tool Company, of Zurich, Switzerland, for setting up a machine tool factory at Bangalore, South India.

It is officially announced that the Two and a-Half per Cent. Cash Bond Loan of the Swiss Confederation, of September, 1944, amounting to Frs.200m., will be repaid in full. No conversion loan will be arranged.

After negotiations lasting over a year an agreement has now been signed between the French Government and representatives of the Swiss shareholders of French electricity and gas enterprises nationalised in 1946.

Redemption of the compensation bonds handed to the Swiss will be completed within seven years, and these bonds, including interest, will benefit from an exchange guarantee.

In the past six months Switzerland's imports have fallen by about one-third in quantity and exports by about a quarter.

The share of the United Kingdom in Swiss trade has declined from 211,000,000 Swiss francs in the first half of 1948 to 137,000,000 Swiss francs in the first half of this year.

Since 1938 Swiss exports to the United Kingdom have declined from 11.3 per cent. of Switzerland's total exports to 4.2 per cent.

—oOo—

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Robert Paul Flury, Manager of the Bank in Wädenswil. He was for many years a member of the Board of the Schweiz. Südostbahn."

Maurice Hentsch, a former banker, and President of the Board of the paper "La Suisse" in Geneva, at the age of 75.

Fridolin Schwyter, a former "Landrat" and criminal judge, in Näfels, aged 79.

Charles Haegler, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the paper "Nouvelliste Valaisan" in St. Maurice (Ct. Valais), at the age of 75. The deceased was a prominent personality in the Conservative Party of the canton of Valais. He was, at one time, President of the Grand Council of the canton of Valais and "Bezirksstatthalter" of St. Maurice.

Dr. Jakob Baltensperger, from 1922-1948 Director of the Federal "Vermessungsamt" in Berne, aged 66. In the army he reached the rank of Colonel (Engineering Corps).

Professor Daniel Burckhardt-Werthemann, for many years "Konservator" of the Public Art Collection in Basle, and at one time Professor at the University in Basle, in Langenbruck (Basle-County), at the age of 87.

Pastor Hans Hännly, from 1907-1940 a preacher in Lenzburg, in Lenzburg at the age of 73.

Dr. Karl Koch, President of the Tribunal in Zurzach, the deceased was for 30 years a member of the Supreme Court of the canton of Aargau. He reached the age of 80.

Christian Gasser-Voegeli, from 1917-1934, Director of the "Kantonale Strafanstalt" in St. Gall, in Zollikon, aged 68.

Rodolfo Cavallini, a member of the actor family Cavallini, in Vevey, at the age of 57.

Friedrich Schaller, Founder and senior partner in the firm "Möbelfabrik" Schaller, in Lucerne, aged 72. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland:

Mr. and Mrs. Jakob Schmid-Weber of Herisau;  
Mr. and Mrs. Erbeau of St. Sulpice (Ct. Neuchâtel);  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosselet of La Chaux-de-Fonds;  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Züst-Künzler of Walzenhausen (Ct. Appenzell A.Rh.); Mr. and Mrs. F. Kammer of Bevaix. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Savings deposited with Swiss banks at end-1948 were Frs.230m. higher at Frs.7.500m., compared with end-1947, but the increase was Frs.100m. lower than a year previously.



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The Swiss have now made a wristlet chronograph which will tell its owner where he is, how fast he is travelling, the time of day, the date, the name of the day of the week and the phase of the moon.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways announced that the number of special trains was to be restricted and steam trains substituted for electric locomotives whenever possible because of the shortage of hydro-electric power.

\* \* \*

An edible mushroom with a top measure over 18 inches across, has been found near Neuchâtel.

\* \* \*

In 1948, the Swiss Federal Railways converted an old restaurant car into a "brake instruction car" which is being used for the training of locomotive men, especially at minor sheds where the permanent installation of training equipment would be too costly. The car is divided into two large compartments, one used as a lecture room and the other containing the model brake installations (Drols-hammer brake), including the brake blocks, manometers, dusts, and valves.

Compressed-air tanks are provided to imitate brake operations for trains with 50, 100, and 150 axles, respectively. As the valves are operated, the trainees can observe the reaction of the various parts of the equipment, including, the Stopex and Tustop devices for regulating the braking efficiency. The effect of emergency braking can also be studied.

Another special vehicle of a new design used by the Federal Railways, is an inspection car for overhead contact lines which checks periodically the correct position of the overhead wire, both vertically and horizontally. It can run at a maximum speed of 92 m.p.h. and can be placed either in front or behind the locomotive. The car, including the elevated observation cabin, is constructed of electrically welded steel plates and profiles.

Both the vertical and horizontal movements of a pantograph mounted on the car are recorded on a continuous diagram which reveals at a glance any undue deviations from the normal position. There are also optical instruments for the observation of the overhead line. The car is equipped with a recording instrument which registers oscillations of the vehicle due to irregularities in the permanent way.

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DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.I.

### AUTHOR'S TRIBUTE TO SWISS HOTELIERS.

In "Cairo to Riyadh Diary" (Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 10s. 6d. illus.) Mr. George Bilainkin, the British diplomatic correspondent and well known friend of Switzerland, describes his visit in 1947 to Saudi Arabia, where he was guest of King Ibn Saud; to Palestine, where he met President C. Weizmann, General Sir Alan Cunningham (last British High Commissioner), Generals MacMillan and Gale, the Officers Commanding, also, Egypt, where he was received by the Premier for 2½ hours, and by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

Mr. Bilainkin's latest provocative book says, in part about his return to Shepherds Hotel, Cairo. "There were smiles from the two best known hotel porters in the world, the brothers Meyer, who have served unlimited statesmen and persons of international distinction, crowned heads, royal princes, generals, admirals. The Meyers wear immaculate, but not ostentatious clothes and are a further credit for manners to Switzerland. Hans, at 65 he looks 45, began work in Switzerland in 1900, and joined Shepherds in November, 1906, as assistant hallporter. Since 1914 he has been chief, with Ernst, aged 53, as his assistant for 27 years. The Swiss Francesco Ferrari has been head waiter in the grill room since 1914 and Paula Weibel, housekeeper, since 1910. I wonder how many notable hotels can claim a similar record?"

The book is due out in mid-December. Mr. Bilainkin's "Tito" was out in November.

### OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, December 16th, 1949 (one issue only, owing to Xmas Holidays).

We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscriptions: F. Zimmermann, H. Muller, G. A. Schwarz, A. Gubeli, L. W. Krucker, W. G. Walter, E. Meyer, A. Muller, E. Goodbehere, G. Winzeler, A. Diethelm, W. Wagner, A. A. Bodenehr, C. J. Bernheim, J. H. Buchi, R. J. Helfenstein, G. Milli, A. Brauen, W. Fischer, J. Joerin, F. G. Sommer, Mrs. E. G. Collier.