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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss Minister in Vienna, Monsieur Anton Feldscher, gave the first reception at the new Legation, which was the former Palais Schwarzenberg.

The reception was attended by the Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Figl, members of the government and the Diplomatic Corps. There were also present Mme. Petitpierre, wife of the President of the Swiss Confederation, at present on a visit to Vienna, and Dr. Ernst Feist, formerly Swiss Minister in Budapest.

* * *

Counsellor of Legation, Dr. J. A. Cuttat, deputy chief of the political section of the Swiss Foreign Office, and formerly "chef du protocole" has been nominated 1st Counsellor of Legation in Washington. During the absence of Minister Bruggmann, he will act as Chargé d'Affaires.

* * *

Monsieur Hans Berger, Chargé d'Affaires in Peru, will represent the Federal Council on the occasion of the initiation of the new President of the Republic of Peru, which will take place at Lima.

* * *

M. Gabrielle Naville, at present Swiss Consul in Baden-Baden, has been appointed Consul at Capetown, in succession to M. Max Büchi, who has been transferred to Tananarivo.

M. Neville was born in 1892 in Geneva. In 1942 he entered into the service of the Swiss Legation in Berlin, where he was in charge of a section of the Special Division. Three years later (1945), he received an appointment at the Federal Political Department in Berne. In 1946, he was transferred as Vice-Consul to the Swiss Consulate in Freiburg, i.Br. and in 1947 to the Consulate at Baden-Baden.

* * *

Professor Theodor Heuss, President of the German Federal Republic, who spent a short holiday in Switzerland, paid a private visit to M. M. Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, at Chaumont. (Neuchâtel).

During the month of June, 1950, the Swiss Federal Railways have carried 15,42 million passengers, which is one million less than in June, 1949. The receipts for passenger traffic are : 23,16 million francs. (1949 : 24,66 million francs).

Goods traffic shows an increase of 166,00 tons over June, 1949, figures and is returned as 1,50 million tons. The receipts amount to 28,19 million francs. (1949 : 25,06 million francs).

* * *

This year 1st of August was celebrated throughout Switzerland with more than usual solemnity. The theme of all the patriotic demonstrations was one of national unity which bordered on a sacred union of all the political forces of the country. As usual, bonfires were lit even in the smallest villages and the inhabitants listened standing and bareheaded at the lecture of the Federal Pact of 1291.

Cantonal

Mm. Veuve Mely Pletscher-Wanner, of Bäch (Ct. Schwyz), who recently died at the Cantonal Hospital in Winterthur, has left an amount of 160,000.— frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Walter Honauer, architect in Zurich has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. The "Börsengebäude", various churches and schools as well as the building of the "Meteorologischen Zentral-Anstalt" all in Zurich, were built after his plans. From 1925-1930, he was Central President of the Association of Swiss architects. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor, Dr. W. Gonzenbach, for thirty years a lecturer of Hygiene at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, has given his "Abschiedsvorlesung" at the above Institute. [A.T.S.]

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Rotary Headquarters.

R.A.C.

During June 1950, 778 traffic accidents occurred in the canton of Zurich. 385 persons were injured of whom 8 succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Professor C. G. Jung, the eminent Swiss physiologist has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Three young alpinists, who set out to climb the north face of the 13,000 feet Mönch (Bernese Oberland), fell to their death while roped together to scale the Nollen glacier.

The names of the victims are: Fritz Michel, Markus Ilg and Werner Hartmann from Spiez and Wimmis. (Ct. Berne). [A.T.S.]

* * *

A postbag containing 17,000.— frs. sent from the Post Office in Brügg, near Bienne, to Bienne has been stolen. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Louis Dupraz, Vice-President of the historical Society of the canton of Fribourg, has been nominated a member of the "Medieval Academy of America" in Cambridge. (Massachusetts). [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Albert Dessonnaz, formerly editor-in-chief of the paper "La Liberté" of Fribourg, and since 1938 President of the section Fribourg of the Swiss Press Association, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary as well as his 50th jubilee as a Journalist. [A.T.S.]

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The oldest inhabitant of the town of Basle, Mme. Maria Klinger-Reinle has died in Basle at the age of 103. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Jakob Greuter of Oberglatt (Ct. St. Gall) a workman, has left an amount of 18,000.— frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Eight members of the Burgdorf section of the Swiss Alpine Club were climbing, with a guide, from the Tschierva hut over the Fuercla Prievlusa to the Bianco Grat, when they were caught in a violent storm; whilst in the middle of the rock wall. Albert Sshöne (aged

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members kindly note that the next

MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on **Tuesday, August 29th, 1950, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m. at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.**

Dinner will be followed by a game of Jass or Bridge.

Members wishing to attend should send their cards to the Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, London, W.1, to reach him not later than Monday, August 28th, 1950.

C. E. SEINET,
Hon. Secretary.

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43) of Lützelflueh and Hans Joss (aged 50) of Grüne-matt were torn from the face of the rock by the wind and fell 1,000 feet. The two bodies have not yet been found. The other climbers reached safety. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Central Committee of the Conservative party of the canton of Grisons has decided to claim the seat in the Federal Government which will become vacant, owing to the resignation of Federal-Councillor Dr. Celio.

They put forward the candidature of National-Councillor, Dr. Josef Condrau. (Disentis). Dr. Condrau has been a member of the National Council for the last 15 years. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Adolf Kury, bishop of the Christian Catholic Church of Switzerland, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Olten. Bishop Kury was formerly a priest in Starrkirch and Basle. In 1924, he was elected as a bishop in succession to Dr. E. Herzog; he can look back on 57 years as a priest. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Burglars entered the house of M. Leopold Rey, dealer in antiquities of Sion (Ct. Valais), and got away with a number of valuable pictures and art treasures to the value of 200,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Hotel du Rhône" in Geneva, the building of which commenced in 1948, was recently opened. The Hotel contains 200 rooms with 283 beds and is pro-

vided with the latest modern equipment. The Hotel was erected at the cost of nine million francs. [A.T.S.]

Economics

Possibly as a result of the granting of foreign credits by Swiss banks, the return of the Swiss National Bank for the week to July 22 shows a decline in gold holdings of Frs.22.9m. to Frs.6,224m.

This loss was partly counterbalanced by an influx of foreign exchange, which item advanced by Frs.16.3m. to Frs.308m.

The fiduciary issue during the period rose by Frs.22.8m. to Frs.4,191m. The gold cover works out at 148.5 per cent.

* * *

The first trade agreement between Pakistan and Switzerland has now been concluded in principle at Berne.

* * *

Hungary is to settle debts incurred in the 1930's and to repurchase Swiss-held fixed interest Hungarian obligations (League of Nations loans, etc.) at quotations considerably above current Stock Exchange quotations under a recently-negotiated Swiss-Hungarian payments agreement.

The pact also fixed compensation for nationalised Swiss assets in Hungary. A separate agreement provides for compensation payments for Swiss participation in Hungarian railways.

Payments are to be made by the Hungarian National Bank without reference to the development of Swiss-Hungarian trade.

A new trade agreement provides for an exchange of goods between the two countries during the year ended June 30, 1951, to the value of Frs.45m. to Frs.50m. in both directions.

—oOo—

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Richard Amstein, for 45 years on the editorial staff of the "National Zeitung", Basle, in Basle, at the age of 70. The deceased was an Honorary Member of the "Nordwestschweizerische Pressverein."

Paul Zuber, since 1931, "Kurdirektor" of Arosa, in Chur, aged 54.

Jacques Taravella-Faller, from 1906-1941 a member of the Management of Jelmolli, Zurich, in Zurich at the age of 81. The deceased was a well-known personality in gymnastic circles.

Victor Eberle for many years conductor of the Male Choir "Liederkrantz" and "Orchesterverein" Einsiedeln, in Einsiedeln, aged 67.

Dr. h.c. Oscar Bosshardt in Basle, at the age of 77. Dr. Bosshardt was one of the pioneers of the "Rheinschiffahrt" and the author of the plans of the electric power stations: Augst-Wyhlen, Kembs and Birsfelden.

Antonio Bolzani, lawyer, and a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino, in Lugano, at the age of 56. In the army, he reached the rank of Colonel, where he commanded a regiment.

Mme. Emma Vulliemin, a well-known painter, and pupil of Théophile Bischoff, in Lausanne, aged 85.

Alfred Knöpfel, embroidery manufacturer and Vice-President of the Supreme Court of the canton Appenzell and a member of the "Kantonsrat" in Speicher. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The July number "Die Alpen" a monthly publication of the Swiss Alpine Club, has published statistics concerning alpine accidents which occurred during the period of May 1st, 1949 to April 30th 1950, according to which 61 accidents happened in the summer of 1949, with a loss of 75 lives. In the winter 1949-1950, 12 accidents were reported costing the lives of 15 persons. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The final accounts of the Federal Shooting Competition which took place in Chur last year, have just been published. They show a credit balance of 181,000 frs. Of this amount the sum of 40,000.—frs. had to be paid in taxes to the town of Chur and the canton of Grisons. 60,000.—frs. have been paid to charitable institutions, leaving an amount of 81,000.—frs. which has been handed over to the various Rifle Clubs in Chur, they having undertaken the organisation of this competition. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Urban Council of St. Moritz has unanimously decided to notify the Olympic Games Committee, that they would be prepared to organise the Winter Olympic Games in 1960. [A.T.S.]

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Puppetry is gaining in popularity in Switzerland and there are already a number of private puppet or marionette theatres in various towns noted for the very high standard of their productions. Zurich is probably, however, the only city to possess its own puppet theatre under the management of the School of Applied Art. From the outset this miniature theatre has had the active collaboration of highly gifted artists, poets, and musicians, and has been able to attract good audiences and to win the approbation of the most exacting critics.

The season will last until mid-September and performances will be given three times a week.

* * *

Visas between Switzerland and Austria will not be necessary after August 15, according to an agreement reached in Vienna.

Under the agreement, Swiss may obtain work in Austria and Austrians may work in Switzerland, providing the necessary authorisation is obtained.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

Avec ses 25 liaisons radiotélégraphiques directes, la Suisse se classe au niveau des grandes nations. Le chef de la sécurité aérienne américaine a exprimé sa reconnaissance toute spéciale au service radio de sécurité aérienne de la Suisse, en qui on peut avoir pleine confiance.

* * *

La fabrique suisse de locomotives et de machines de Winterthur a reçu commande de 12 locomotives spéciales pour la ligne Djibouti - Addis Abéba; BBC, Baden fournit l'équipement électrique.

* * *

Pour l'électrification du Congo Belge, le ministère des colonies de Belgique a émis en Suisse un emprunt de 60 millions de francs, en échange de quoi notre pays recevra de grosses commandes d'équipements électriques.

* * *

Les universités de Munich, Erlangen et Würzburg ont introduit des cours de rhéto-romanche.

* * *

Berne a été désignée comme siège permanent de la Fédération internationale de l'art photographique.

* * *

Sous le titre "Lisez — et remerciez" la revue allemande de la Croix-Rouge annonce qu'en 4 ans la Suisse a fait don de 200 millions de francs à l'Europe.

RISKS SWISS MUST TAKE IN JOINING E.P.U.

(The following article is reprinted from the July 22nd issue, 1950, of the "STATIST" by courtesy of the Editor).

Since the preliminary agreement to create a European Payments Union was signed by the representatives of all 18 O.E.E.C. countries in Paris on July 7, public discussion in Switzerland — whose assent was given only conditionally — has shown convincingly that, if the plan succeeded, the benefits to Europe would so vastly outweigh the drawbacks that, in principle, the plan already has the approval of Swiss public opinion.

Nevertheless, in Switzerland it is felt that this project is a daring experiment. So exceedingly complicated is the financial mechanism contemplated, and so numerous are the escape clauses, that even the competent authorities are unable to answer satisfactorily the host of questions raised by business men and bankers who will have to operate the plan in practice. Until clarification has been reached, it is felt, many latent risks of unknown magnitude will remain.

According to one version the Union is to remain in existence until the currencies of all O.E.E.C. countries have become mutually convertible. That is to say, as regards payments arising in current trade. In reality, however, there is no ground yet for assuming that the Union could remain in existence after June 30, 1952. Without Marshall aid the attempt at convertibility among the 18 O.E.E.C. countries could not be made at all. In the next two years up to \$600 million will be contributed to the pool by the E.C.A. out of Marshall funds for the purposes of the present experiment, to enable all members of the Union to receive payment from one another in any currency needed to pay for imports from other members of the group. Conversion of O.E.E.C. currencies into dollars will not be possible. Nor necessary, because the Marshall plan already provides dollars to cover deficits that arise in the balance of payments of O.E.E.C. countries in trading with the U.S.A.

But as in trade between O.E.E.C. countries and countries outside the group all existing exchange restrictions continue in force convertibility in the real sense cannot be achieved yet and would vanish again if the Union were liquidated when Marshall aid ceased.

As it is extremely improbable that the O.E.E.C. dollar gap in trading with the U.S.A. will be closed by mid-1952 it is possible — but by no means certain — that help in a different form may be forthcoming for some of the O.E.E.C. countries unable to square their balances of payments with the U.S.A. Nobody can tell what the effect of the resumption of trade on a multi-lateral basis by countries of the O.E.E.C. will be. Perhaps the revival of intra-O.E.E.C. trade may be so great that a number of these countries will be able to square their balances of payments with one another without the help of the Union. But very likely the weakest members of the group might still be unable to earn enough of the currencies of the other members to pay their way. In the event of such a degree of partial success the Union in its initial form might be liquidated and some new kind of help provided for the weaker countries.

Prudently, therefore, one should not count on the European Payments Union existing for more than two years. There is no justification for making the assump-

