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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The death is reported from Zurich of Minister, Dr. Karl Egger, at the age of 68.

Minister Egger entered the Diplomatic Service of the Confederation in 1907, and was *en poste* at various Legations abroad. In 1922, he was appointed Swiss Minister in Buenos-Aires and ten years later (1932) he was transferred in the same capacity, to Madrid.

In 1939, Dr. Egger was sent as Minister to Helsinki, which post he occupied until 1946, when he retired from the service.

Monsieur José B. Pagnado Soler, Minister of the Republic of Dominica, has presented his credentials to M. von Steiger, Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation.

The newly appointed Minister has previously represented his country in Paris.

The Federal Council has agreed to the opening of a West German general-consulate in Switzerland.

An agreement concluded between Switzerland and Luxembourg abolishes visas for the travel between the two countries.

King Leopold III has addressed a letter of thanks to the President of the Swiss Confederation, in which he expresses his appreciation for the hospitality extended to him during the last five years.

Customs receipts during the month of July, 1950, amounted to 53.2 million francs, or ten million francs more than in July, 1949.

During the first seven months of the current year customs receipts totalled 303 million francs, which is an increase of 34.7 million francs over last years figures for the same period.

### Cantonal

The "gyro-bus" a new Swiss contribution, to world passenger transport, has passed its first tests at Altdorf.

The principle of the bus lies in the source of kinetic

energy contained in a top-like mechanism, which revolves on its own axis.

The central part of this mechanism is an extremely heavy steel fly-wheel, which is powered by a tri-phase electric motor. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The late Mlle. Agnes Arnold, daughter of the former "Landammann" Arnold, who recently died at Altdorf, has left an amount of 50,000.—frs. to various charitable and church institutions. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Society "Schweizerfreunde der U.S.A. (SFUSA) in Zurich, gave a luncheon in honour of the newly appointed American Consul General, Mr. Porter C. Kuykendall. Amongst the many guests present were the following: Dr. E. Vaterlaus, President of the Government of the canton of Zurich, Dr. E. Landolt, Mayor of the town of Zurich, representatives of the "Schweiz. Zentrale für Handelsförderung", Swiss-American Society, Rotary and Lions Clubs, and the Press. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Hermann Kesser, the well-known novelist and dramatist, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in his native town of Zurich. One of his recent plays, "Talleyrand & Napoleon" met with great success. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. J. C. Gasser, from 1913-1941, a preacher in Winterthur, has celebrated his 80th birthday. He made a name for himself as the author of a number of theological and historical works. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

During the month of July, 1950, 548 (July 49:461) traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne. 440 (July, 49:367) people were injured, of which 13 (July, 49:9) succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

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The amalgamation of the rural districts Tramelan-des-sous and Tramelan-dessus, under the name Tramelan, is proposed. [A.T.S.]

Mlle. Ilse Hohl, since 1908, "Bundesstadt Korrespondant" of a number of Swiss papers, has reached the age of 80. In appreciation for her long and distinguished services rendered as a Journalist, Mlle. Hohl has been nominated an Honorary Member of the Swiss Press Association. [A.T.S.]

Mme. Albertine Lanz-Werkmeister who recently died at St. Gall, has left various legacies to a number of charitable institutions, amounting to 133,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

The committee of the Conservative Party of the canton of Valais has decided to nominate a candidate for the seat in the Federal Government, which will become vacant owing to the resignation of Dr. Celio.

Dr. Joseph Escher (Brig), National-Councillor, and last year's President of the National Council, will be their candidate. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Franz Heinemann, for 38 years a lecturer at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, and from 1921-1945, Editor-in-chief of the "Luzerner Neusten Nachrichten", has celebrated his 80th birthday. Mme. Rosalie Fürst-Hochschild (St. Gall) reached the age of 100. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Otto Minery-Pfeifer (56 years old) from Basle, a member of the section Angenstein of the Swiss Alpine Club, was killed when descending the Stecknadelhorn (4,235 m.) in the Mischabel group. [A.T.S.]

Mr. H. Knuchel, an Interlaken police officer, was killed while attempting to climb the Zinal-Rothorn by the difficult Zermatt side. [A.T.S.]

Dr. André Repond, Director of the "Maison de repose" in Malévoz (Ct. Valais), has been nominated an Honorary Member of the Royal medical-psychological Association of Great-Britain. [A.T.S.]

Lightning, during a heavy storm, caused a breakdown in the "Sessel-Lift" at Saint Cergue (Ct. Vaud). Ten people who were "on the way" had to wait several hours, before the "Sessels" could be brought back to the station. [A.T.S.]

M. E. Pelichet, has been nominated "archéologue cantonal" by the government of the canton of Vaud, in succession to M. L. Bosset, who had recently vacated this post. [A.T.S.]

The canton of Geneva numbered 205,335 inhabitants at the end of July, 1950. [A.T.S.]

### Economics

The steady deterioration in Switzerland's foreign trade balance was halted somewhat in the first half of this year, and in the second quarter there were signs of an improvement in the general economic situation. Imports during the first half of this year, valued at 1,785.9 million francs, were 179 million, or 9 per cent. less than those in the corresponding period of 1949,

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while exports at 1,643.5 million francs were almost unchanged from the 1,638.1 million for the first six months of last year. The unfavourable balance in Swiss trade during January-June, 1950, amounted to 142.4 million francs, less than half of the corresponding figure for January-June, 1949 of 326.9 million francs. The value of exports this year represented 92 per cent. of the value of imports as compared with 83.4 per cent. last year.

The Swiss National Bank continues to lose gold, as evidenced by its latest return for the week to August 7th. During that period gold stocks declined by Frs.20.8m. to Frs.6,179m.

To a large extent this loss was counterbalanced by a rise in foreign exchange holdings which advanced by Frs.18m. to Frs.326m.

Notes in circulation dropped by Frs.72.6m. to Frs. 4,210m. On August 7th the fiduciary issue was covered by gold to the extent of 146 per cent., the gold cover prescribed by law being only 40 per cent.

According to an official communique issued in Berne, concerning the Italo-Swiss customs agreement recently ratified by the Swiss Government, the agreement, valid from July 24th, 1950 to July 14th, 1951, proposes reductions in certain cases of the new Italian customs tariff and increases in various Swiss duties previously established in treaties with Italy. Two lists of customs rates have been issued: list A contains the stipulations governing new Italian duties and a list B contains the new stipulations governing Swiss duties. The customs duties in the latter list which

exceed rates ruling earlier will not come into effect immediately. The sole exception is the monopoly tax for white wine specialities, sweet wine and vermouth which will come into effect immediately.

—:o:—

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. Rudolf Mayr von Baldegg, at one time States Prosecutor and a member of the Supreme Court of the canton of Lucerne, in Lucerne at the age of 77.

Hans Brog-Stähli, Hotelier, in Rosenlaui (Ct. Berne) aged 59.

Johann Heuberger, Manager of the "Revisionsabteilung des Verbandes Schweizerischer Darlehenskassen", in St. Gall, at the age of 61.

Saly Mayer, Merchant, and a leading personality in the Swiss Jewish community, in St. Gall, aged 69.

Hans Vogel, Editor, in Berne, aged 67. The deceased was born in 1883 in Glarus; after many years as a Journalist, he was appointed in 1918, Editor of the "Berner Tagwacht" in succession to Robert Grimm. Hans Vogel was, for a number of years a member of the Municipal Council of Berne and the Grand Council of the canton of Berne.

Sister Elise Knuchel, founder of the Children's Sanatorium at Leysin, in St. Loup at the age of 96.

Edouard Willfratt, formerly secretary of the "Schwiz. Eisenbahnerverbandes", in Zurich, aged 67.

Colonel Alfons Girell di Gioranoel, a member of the Federal Instructor Corps, in Aarau, at the age of 65.

Pastor Charles Genequand, for many years a preacher at Versoix, in Geneva, aged 83. Many of his articles have appeared in the "Semaine religieuse".

Dr. med. & phil. Emil Abderhalden, in Zurich, at the age of 74.

The deceased was born in 1877 at Oberuzwil, and studied at the University of Basle. In 1904, he established himself at the University of Berlin. Seven years later (1911) he was appointed Professor of Physiology at the University of Halle.

During 1946 and 1947 he was a teacher of Physiology at the University of Zurich, and Director of the "Physiologischen-chemischen Institut" of this University.

Professor Abderhalden was a *doctor honoris causa* of the Universities of Zurich and Halle.

Alexander Hof, lawyer and former Mayor of the town of Delsberg, in Delsberg, aged 56.

Professor, Dr. Rudolf Fueter, in Zurich, at the age of 70. The deceased, who was a member of a Bernese family, studied philosophy at the Universities of Zurich and Göttingen, and later on became a lecturer at the University of Marburg. Subsequently, he became Professor at the following Universities: Werkakademie Clausthal (1907), University of Basle (1908) and Technical University, Karlsruhe (1913).

In 1916, he received an appointment as Professor of Mathematics at the University of Zurich, which post he held until his death. Professor Fueter, was a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Oslo.

Maria Odermatt, a former National-Councillor, in Alpnachstad, aged 83.

The deceased was born in Buochs (Nidwalden). In 1894, he was elected a member of the Rural Council of Alpnachstad of which he was a member for forty years, and President for thirty years. He was also a member of the "Kantonsgericht" and later on the "Obergericht." In the year 1901, he entered the "Kantonsrat", over which he presided in 1909. He became a member of the government of the canton of Obwalden in 1914 in which he remained for 25 years; in 1924, he occupied the post of "Landammann".

Mr. Odermatt sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1924-1943, as representative of the catholic conservative party.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The following couple has celebrated their diamond-wedding anniversary in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Biber-Stäubli of Horgen.

\* \* \*

Two members of the "flying staff" of Swissair have become triple flight millionaires, having each flown three million kilometers; their names are Flight-Captain Otto Heitmanek and Wireless Operator Christian Schaaf. Both have been in the service of Swiss Air traffic for the last twenty years.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Thirty British war orphans will shortly join the Pestalozzi Children Village at Trogen (Ct. Appenzel a/Rh.).

Eighteen children are from London and the Home Counties, and the remainder are from Leeds and Hull.

Many who are delicate and underweight will be given health again under a training programme which provides for schooling in the morning and handicrafts,

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games and excursions in the afternoon. There is no fixed age at which the children leave the village, but they return each year to their own countries for a vacation.

The international village, dependent on voluntary support, was founded in 1944. It is named in honour of Heinrich Pestalozzi, the great humanitarian, whose 200th anniversary was celebrated in 1946.

Over 1,400 enquiries and fifty definite entries have been received for the Sixth International Competition for Musical Performers, to be held at Geneva from September 25th to October 8th. Entries will be accepted up to July 15th. All enquiries to the Conservatoire of Music, Geneva.

During August and September the open-air theatre at Interlaken is giving a series of weekly performances of "William Tell." Three hundred persons will take part, as well as several herds of cattle and horses. The costumes are faithful reproductions of those of the epoch of the national hero, and the artists are all local amateurs. Since 1931 more than 250,000 people have witnessed the 150 performances which have been given, at Interlaken, of this ever-popular Swiss national drama.

The well-known Swiss organist, M. Hans Vollenweider, who has played in many English and continental churches, gave a delightful recital of music by Bach, in the Cathedral, Bury St. Edmund's, on Wednesday, August 2nd.

A large and appreciative congregation was present for a recital arranged in connection with the bicentenary of the great composer. It is seldom that an audience has the opportunity of hearing an all-Bach recital, and M. Vollenweider's playing was of an extremely high order, demonstrating that he is a very brilliant organist. Perhaps the outstanding work of his programme was the G Minor Fantasia and Fugue.

A large aircraft hangar was recently completed at the Swiss airport of Kloten-Zurich. The hangar covers a span of 245ft. without intermediate stanchions, the roof being carried on seven steel arch ribs of the lattice truss type. The trusses rest on reinforced concrete walls, which are founded on wooden piles. The arch ribs are of non-symmetrical three hinged arch design and the hangar is provided with two large collapsible doors which entirely cover its frontage. The roof consists of thin corrugated aluminium sheets placed on wooden laths. The roof steelwork weighs about 136 tons, representing about 6 lb. per square foot of covered area. The contractors were Messrs. Wartmann and Company, of Brugg; Professor F. Stüssi was the consulting engineer.

#### PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

Grâce à sa faculté d'adaptation aux goûts de sa clientèle américaine l'industrie suisse des mouchoirs de coton brodés a vu passer son exportation de 566 mille douzaines en 1948 à 859 mille en 1949; cet essor se confirme en 1950.

Les ateliers de Sécheron-Genève ont construit un transformateur géant de 160 tonnes destiné à l'Algérie.

Transporté par route jusqu'à Lyon, puis par eau jusqu'à Alger, il sera mis en place à Arba après un nouveau voyage terrestre.

Le principe de la toupie (utilisation de l'énergie cinétique) vient d'être appliqué à une invention suisse de portée historique. Après 3 ans d'essais avec une locomotive gyroscopique, la fabrique de machines d'Oerlikon a mis au point un gyrobus électrique qui fonctionne entre Fluelen et Altdorf. Ce véhicule ne demande pas de ligne aérienne; il se charge en très peu de temps pendant les arrêts aux stations.

La plus grande entreprise de l'industrie américaine du bois vient d'acquiescer les droits d'exploiter l'invention de l'ingénieur suisse Fahrni, de Zurich, pour la production de panneaux préfabriqués. On construit déjà de tels panneaux sous licence en Suisse, aux Pays-Bas, en Belgique et en Tchécoslovaquie; d'autres centres de production vont s'ouvrir au Danemark et en Espagne. L'industrie suisse a reçu commande pour plus de 5 millions de francs de machines brevetées.

Le nouveau téléphérique Crans-Bellal, construit par Bell et Cie S.A. Kriens, est unique en son genre en Europe. Il comporte 50 cabines à 4 places permettant un débit horaire de 480 personnes.

Une enquête effectuée en Angleterre au sujet des programmes radiophoniques préférés du public a mis Schwarzenburg à la 3ème place sur 26 émetteurs. Le service britannique d'outre mer et "La voix de l'Amérique" suivent aux 5ème et 7ème places.

Le numéro de juin de la revue militaire norvégienne (officielle) est consacrée à la défense suisse. On y loue en particulier la rapidité de notre mobilisation, les bons rapports entre subordonnés et chefs, la bonne volonté du soldat et le travail hors du service.

M. Robert Schnyder de Wartensee, directeur de l'institut de psychologie appliquée à Lausanne, a fait une série de conférences à Vienne, en 1949. La Chambre de commerce viennoise l'a invité à donner, pendant une quinzaine de jours, au mois de juin 1950, une nouvelle série de cours et de conférences qui ont eu un très vif retentissement dans les milieux économiques les plus étendus et dont la presse autrichienne a parlé fort élogieusement.

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