

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: - (1951)

Heft: 1155

Rubrik: News at random

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED IN 1920 BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

Advisory Council: R. DE CINTRA (Chairman); O. F. BOEHRINGER, L.S. CHAPUIS, J. EUSEBIO, GOTTFRIED KELLER, R. KELLER, R. PFENNINGER, A. STAUFFER, G. E. SUTER.

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. 36. NO. 1155.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30th, 1951.

PRICE 8d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

(Fortnightly issue.)

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TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

For some time past, negotiations have taken place with the Swiss Presidents Assembly and the Swiss Economic Council, with a view to putting the "Swiss Observer", which was founded in 1919, on a sound financial basis.

Greatly increased costs of production during the last few years, due to higher wages and the heavy cost of paper, have greatly endangered the continuation of the Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain. To partly counter these ever mounting expenses, a slightly higher subscription rate came into operation in April of last year, which, however, proved inadequate to meet the case, and a further small increase may be found necessary in the near future.

Encouraged by the wish expressed by a large majority of our subscribers, that this publication should be carried on at all costs, we put the position before the members of the above named institutions, taking the view, that the responsibilities hitherto borne by the Publishers and the Editor alone, should now be shared by the Colony as a whole.

We are pleased to announce, that an Advisory Council has recently been formed, consisting of the following members:—R. de Cintra (Chairman), O. F. Boehringer, Ls. Chapuis, J. Eusebio, Gottfried Keller, R. Keller, R. Pfenninger, A. Stauffer, G. E. Suter.

This newly constituted Council is to act in an advisory capacity concerning administrative and financial matters only, the Editor to remain completely independent.

We are glad to say, that our Minister, Monsieur H. de Torrenté, is in full agreement with the steps taken and the conclusions arrived at.

We sincerely hope that the contribution of the Colony's paper can be assured. As Publishers and Editor of the "Swiss Observer" we appeal most earnestly and fervently to all our compatriots and English friends connected with the life of our Colony, to give this Council their wholehearted support. We on our part shall endeavour to keep the "Swiss Observer" as useful and interesting as possible.

O. F. BOEHRINGER,
for the Publishers.

A. STAUFFER,
The Editor.



NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has promoted Mr. E. A. Pernet, at present a member of the staff of the Consulate General in New York, to the rank of Consul.

Consul Pernet entered the service of the Confederation in 1919. Six years later (1925), he was attached to the Swiss Legation in Vienna, and in 1926 he was transferred to our Legation in London, where he remained until 1943, when he was put in charge of the Swiss Consulate in Manchester with the rank of Vice-Consul.

Since May, 1946, Mr. Pernet is attached to the Consulate General in New York.

(Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Pernet, were well-known in the London Swiss Colony, and we tender him our best congratulations on his well-deserved promotion.)

The Federal Council has decided to take up diplomatic relations with the German "Bundesrepublik" in Bonn. An appointment of a Swiss Minister will be shortly announced.

During the month of January, 1951, the Swiss Federal Railways have carried 16.82 million passengers or 339,000 less than in January, 1950. The receipts are given as 19.35 million francs (Jan., 1950: 19,766 million francs.)

Goods traffic has increased by 503 tons over January, 1950, and is returned as 1.66 million tons, the receipts of which totalled 29.27 million francs or 8.89 million francs more than during the same period in 1950.

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M. Lucchini, President of the "General Direktion" of the Swiss Federal Railways is shortly relinquishing his post on reaching retiring age. The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Hugo Gschwind in his place.

Dr. John Favre, at present Director of the District I of the Swiss Federal Railways, has been elected a member of the "General Direktion."

M. Jiri Brotan, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Legation in Berne, has walked out. He left the Legation some three weeks ago. He is reported to have asked the Swiss Government for asylum.

In the year 1950, 2,672 (1949: 2,930) persons have emigrated from Switzerland to overseas countries.

Switzerland has agreed to make Belgium a loan amounting to 150 million Swiss francs. In return, Belgium will step up the supply of non-ferrous metals to Switzerland, agreeing to deliver supplementary quantities of 4,000 tons of electrolytic copper, 3,000 tons of secondary copper and 2,500 tons of zinc, all at world market prices. The loan will carry interest at 2 per cent. and repayment will be made in six monthly instalments.

Cantonal Professor Dr. Fritz Lang (Lucerne) has been elected Professor of Medicine to the University of Zurich, in succession to the late Professor F. Zollinger. [A.T.S.]

Dr. G. Kummer, a member of the editorial staff of the paper "Die Tat" Zurich, has retired from his post for health reasons. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Alfred Hofstetter, for the last eleven years a member of the government of the canton of Appenzell a.Rh., and from 1942-1945 "Landammann", is retiring from his post. [A.T.S.]

The late Paul Matter-Bally, Manufacturer in Köllichen (Ct. Aargau), has left an amount of 173,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

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A smash and grab raid on a jewellers shop in Lausanne (Petit-Chêne) occurred on the 10th of this month. Articles to the value of 15,000.—frs. were stolen.

[A.T.S.]

Army

A military court, which has been sitting in Berne for several weeks, has passed sentences in the "Bunker" action, which caused at the time a sensation in Switzerland.

A Colonel and two Lieutenants were given suspended sentences for their part in the faulty construction of fortifications. A sentence of four months imprisonment was imposed on the Colonel, while one lieutenant received six months and the other three months, each will have to pay 1,000.—frs. costs. Six civilian constructors received sentences ranging from three months to two years imprisonment. Sixteen of the accused were acquitted without receiving any compensation, one received a compensation of 500.—frs.

:0:

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland :—

Charles Schürch, formerly secretary of the "Schweiz. Gewerkschaftsbundes", and for a number of years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, in Berne, at the age of 69.

Dr. h.c. Ernst Alfred Schorer, a former President of the "Verwaltungsgericht" of the canton of Berne, in Berne, aged 83.

Dr. Hans Bringolf, at the age of 76, he was formerly Attaché at the Swiss Legations in Paris, Berlin and Vienna.

Jean Hegnauer, President of the "Generaldirektion" and member of the Board of the "Publicitas" A.G. Lausanne, in Gstaad, aged 58.

Professor Otto Schürch, Head of the surgical section of the "Bürgerspital" in Basle, and Professor of surgery of the University of Basle, in Basle, at the age of 56.

Professor Adrien Taverney, from 1916-1928, Professor of literature at the University of Lausanne, in Lausanne, aged 93.

Dr. Fritz Schäublin, from 1893-1902, a teacher, and from 1902-1932, rector of the "Humanistischen Gymnasiums", at Basle, in Basle, at the age of 84.

Paul Chervaz, formerly Professor and Director of the College Santa Maria, in Pollegio (Ct. Ticino), aged 72.

Dr. h.c. Hans Hunziker, a former General Manager of the PTT administration and afterwards Director of the Central Office for International Railway traffic, in Berne at the age of 72.

Professor Pierre Godet, a former teacher at the *Gymnasium* in Neuchâtel, and from 1927-1942 secretary of the University of Neuchâtel.

Dr. Stauffer, a well-known medical practitioner of Neuchâtel, and historian, in Neuchâtel, aged 87.

Alfred Kessler, from 1942-1951, a member of the government of the canton of St. Gall. The deceased, was for 17 years a member of the Grand Council of the

canton of St. Gall over which he presided from 1932/33, in St. Gall, at the age of 66.

Dr. Georges Mattmüller, medical practitioner, and for a number of years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle Town.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following birthday anniversaries are reported from Switzerland: Dr. O. Schultess (80) a well-known authority of technical chemistry, of Basle. Anna Hegner (70), renowned violinist, of Basle. Colonel Max Högger-Wegelin (70), for many years Head of the "Standard Lack-und Farbenwerke, A.G.", Zurich and at present President of the Board of this concern. During 1935-45, Colonel Högger was "Platzkommandant" of the town of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Here are the balances of the accounts for 1950, of the following cantons:—

Neuchâtel	<i>Credit</i>	balance	1,125,500.—frs.
Solothurn	<i>Credit</i>	„	246,731.— „
Zug	<i>Credit</i>	„	331,000.— „
Valais	<i>Credit</i>	„	200,000.— „
St. Gall	<i>Credit</i>	„	773,750.— „

The accounts of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1950, show a surplus of 301 million francs.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The undermentioned couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in Switzerland:

Mr. and Mrs. César Villard, of Evilard, Mr. and Mrs. A. Bossy-Rapin, of Corcelles.

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Mr. and Mrs. Jean Weber, of La Chaux-de-Fonds, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following traffic accidents have been reported : *Ct. Valais* : during the year 1950, 889 accidents (1949 : 794), 39 persons killed and 483 injured. *Ct. Berne* : (February, 1951) : 196 accidents (Febr. 1950 : 219), 7 killed, 111 injured. *Ct. Fribourg* (February, 1951) : 14 persons injured and one killed. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Federal Government decided to purchase from Britain 150 fighters at a cost of 175m. Swiss francs. It is said in Berne that the fighters will be improved Vampires. The purchase is to be made outside the rearmament programme as it is for the renewal of Air force material and will therefore be included in the ordinary military budget.

* * *

Swiss newspapers described as a "regrettable slip" and "interference in Swiss affairs" statements made at a Zürich Press conference by Mr. Tauber, the Czechoslovak Minister in Berne. In the presence of a few foreign correspondents and two or three Swiss journalists, the Minister spoke of the danger to her neighbours of western Germany's remilitarization and criticized the policy of the allies in Germany as well as that of the Bonn Government. Some newspapers point out that as Switzerland is among Germany's neighbours it was not his part to give advice to the Swiss Government and that such statements were not within his diplomatic competence.

* * *

The Swiss Night Watchmen's Society, in its annual report, complains about 25,887 windows left open ; 90,697 doors, and 719 safes left unlocked.

* * *

During February the Swiss index of wholesale prices advanced by a further 2 per cent. to 230.1 (August, 1939, equalising 100). The increase is attributed to higher world market prices of raw and auxiliary materials.

At end-August, 1950, the index had stood at 204.8.

* * *

Police are investigating charges of endangering Swiss security against Pierre Nicole, son of the veteran leader of the Swiss Workers' Party, Leon Nicole.

In the newspaper *La Voix Ouvrière*, Pierre Nicole accused the Swiss Federal Council of "plotting to betray the people and involve our country in the anti-

Soviet war being prepared by the American imperialists."

The State Prosecutor charges Nicole with "spreading rumours dangerous to the State regarding foreign plans."

* * *

Celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year is the Aero Club of Switzerland, and to commemorate half a century of aerial activity and progress, official celebrations will be held in Berne on March 31st.

Founded in Berne on March 31st, 1901, the Club started operations with 72 members under the chairmanship of Colonel Schaeck. Until they were joined by powered aircraft and glider enthusiasts, the Club members were mainly concerned with ballooning and twice won the Gordon Bennett Trophy, which was held in Switzerland three times altogether.

At the inauguration of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in Paris in 1905, Switzerland was represented by the Club. Since then the development of Swiss flying has been largely bound up with the history of the Club, which now boasts 33 branches and 5,800 members, among whom are large numbers of model aircraft constructors.

In addition to the Jubilee celebrations in Berne, there will be a Spring Congress at Lucerne on May 26th, the International Round Switzerland Flight from August 12th to 16th, the Flying Week at Saanen-Gstaad from August 12th to 18th, and other flying meetings.

* * *

Rainstorms in the Swiss Alps, combined with the rapid rise in temperature, have again increased the

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danger of avalanches. The railway line from Visp to Zermatt was cut by snow slides in several places, and the Gorner Grat Railway suspended services. The "Gorner Grat Derby" international ski race was cancelled.

* * *

Sion airport, now classed among the five top aerodromes in Switzerland, had a busy 1950. International and intercantonal tourist traffic has exceeded all expectations, and the geographic situation of the airport, which is in the Rhone Valley in South-Western Switzerland, has enabled it to take its place alongside those of Cointrin (Geneva) and Kloten (Zurich). More than 400 foreign planes landed without accident on Sion's excellent runway during the year. There were 2,334 flights in the region, and military planes used the airport almost daily. During the recent avalanches planes from Sion dropped supplies to people cut off by snow.

* * *

The 18-hole golf course at Crans-sur-Sierre (Valais), one of the finest in Switzerland and well-known to English tourists, is to have a rival in the nearby Moubra valley. The second nine-hole course, which is to be opened this summer, is claimed to be technically perfect — but golfers are warned that the new links will be difficult and will call for maximum skill and precision. Thanks to a sunny autumn work on preparing the greens by an entirely new method has been speedily completed and the course will be

ready in time for its scheduled opening on June 1st, 1951.

* * *

Latest aid to brighter travelling in Switzerland is a mobile cinema which can be attached to a normal passenger train. Engineers of the Swiss Federal Railways stripped seats from an ordinary coach and replaced them by comfortable chairs, erected a screen at one end and blacked out the windows. Part of the current needed to drive the film projector comes from a dynamo powered by a petrol motor.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

La 20th Century Fox va équiper toutes ses salles de cinéma sonore en Amérique avec les projecteurs de télévision de feu le professeur zurichois Dr. F. Fischer. Ces appareils constituent une des inventions suisses les plus importantes de ces dernières années.

* * *

Une exposition du peintre lucernois Werner Hartmann vient de remporter un succès peu ordinaire à Paris. Le gouvernement français et la Ville de Paris ont acquis deux toiles, rare hommage rendu à un artiste étranger.

* * *

La cantatrice suisse Vera Bryner récolte en Amérique une moisson de lauriers dans le rôle de "Carmen" de l'opéra de Bizet. Depuis son passage à Buffalo, la critique l'appelle "la grande Carmen."

* * *

A concert to be given beneath Lucerne's famous Lion Monument — a giant memorial carved out of living rock to commemorate the 786 Swiss killed defending the French Royal Family during the Revolution in 1792 — will be one of the highlights of Lucerne's International Musical Festival, to be held this year from August 11th to September 2nd. According to the preliminary programme other concerts will include: Opening concert (conductor: Leopold Stokowski) on August 11th, Boccherini Quintet on August 13th, Symphony concert (Wilhelm Furtwängler) on August 15th, Symphony concert (Igor Markevitch) on August 18th, Symphony concert (André Cluytens) on August 22nd, Chamber music concert (the Fischer-Schneiderhans-Mainardi Trio with William Primrose) on August 23rd, Scenes from Richard Wagner's "Twilight of the Gods" (Wilhelm Furtwängler) on August 25th, and on September 1st and 2nd Bach's Mass in B Minor, conducted by Herbert von Karajan and performed by the choral society of Vienna and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. The Serenade at the Lion Monument, on August 19th, will be given by the Zurich Collegium Musicum conducted by Paul Sacher. During the festival there will also be a chamber music concert devoted to works of Swiss composers, an organ recital and a competitive festival at the Conservatoire. The names of soloists will be announced later and the general programme, which will contain full details and booking forms, will shortly be available from the Official Enquiry Office in Lucerne, 4 Schweizerhofquai. Advance booking commences on July 9th.

* * *

Four hundred and fifty years ago — in 1501 — Basle became part of the Swiss Confederation, and

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to mark the occasion special festivities are being held there in July. The first ceremony will be at Liestal, capital of Basle-Country, on July 12th, when representatives of the Federal Council, the Council of States and the Army will be welcomed by the cantonal and communal authorities. Towards the end of the afternoon a special train will take them to Basle itself (which is the capital of Basle-Town), where in the large square in front of the Cathedral there will be a ceremony in honour of the delegates from Basle-Country. Next day they will go in procession to the scene of the battle of St.-Jaques-sur-la-Birse where, on August, 1444, 1,200 Confederates attacked 40,000 Armagnac mercenaries of the French army. Four thousand of the enemy were killed, and the Swiss were massacred to the last man in defending their homeland. The Armagnacs fled and the battle resulted in the eventual independence of Basle.

* * *

Vevey, holiday town on the Swiss Riviera, is the scene this year of the Rhône Festival which takes place every year at one of the towns on the course of the River Rhône. Starting from the famous Rhône Glacier in the Canton of Valais, the Rhône flows through the Lake of Geneva and crosses South-Eastern France until it empties itself into the Mediterranean near Marseilles. Each year the honour of holding the Rhône Festival goes to France and Switzerland alternatively. Last year it was the turn of Avignon in France and during this year's Festival, which opens on June 15th, the authorities of Avignon will officially present Vevey with the Rhône Banner. Among the people taking part in the celebrations will be 1,200 people from the principal Rhône towns wearing their picturesque regional costumes, and thousands of visitors are expected from all parts of Europe. During the four days of the Festival there will be carnivals, concerts and dances on the promenade, a regatta, canoe and swimming competitions and mountain excursions.

* * *

Although the Swiss Federal Railways is a nationalised concern, an important part in the Swiss railway network is played by the numerous private companies whose trains, most of them electrified by now, cover 1,800 miles of track. Capital investment in these enterprises in fact is more than two million Swiss francs, and the companies carry several million passengers every year. All Swiss high mountain railways, so popular with tourists, are in private hands,

and most of them are running all the year round without a break. Swiss private railways are noted for being in the fore with latest improvements in technical construction and passengers are assured of maximum comfort and safety.

* * *

Not content with having 41 restaurant and buffet cars on the main tracks in Switzerland, the Swiss Federal Railways have started, as an experiment, the sale of food and drinks in certain trains which do not possess restaurant cars. From March 1st, passengers on two trains travelling between Lausanne and Zurich have been able to buy assorted sandwiches, fruits, eggs, paper-wrapped cakes, as well as biscuits, chocolates, cold drinks, cigars and cigarettes. The experiment is being carried out by the 47-year-old Compagnie Suisse des Wagons-Restaurants, whose 31 restaurant cars, though they never leave the frontiers of Switzerland, run with the great international expresses 2,800,000 miles every year — more than hundred times round the world.

* * *

This year not only the Swiss Grand-Prix for motor-cycles and sidecars will count for the classification of the World Championship. This fact has made itself felt in the increased number of applications already received for the Berne event from competitors of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany.

* * *

The National Gymnastic Festival of Switzerland is being held in Lausanne from July 13th-16th, 1951. The mass exercises in which 25,000 gymnasts will participate will take place on Monday, July 16th, beginning at 11 o'clock, at the aerodrome "La Blécherette".

* * *

Apart from private tests in Lausanne, television has not yet made its appearance in Switzerland. But television will be illustrated in a new series of Swiss stamps to be issued next year to commemorate the centenary of the telegraph. Other stamps issued at the same time will picture the telephone, telegraph and wireless. The designer is Mr. Pierre Gauchat, of Zurich, and the stamps were chosen by a committee consisting of representatives of the Federal Commission of Applied Arts, the Central Committee of the Union of Swiss Philatelic Societies, and the Swiss Post Office. They met under the presidency of Mr. W. A de Salis, general secretary of the Swiss Post Office.

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