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The Swiss Observer

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The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Spring Session, lasting three weeks, of the Federal Chambers (States and National Council) came to an end on the 16th of April.

An extraordinary sitting, for three days, was held from April 24th — April 26th, 1951.

The Swiss people have decided, in a referendum, that the Swiss franc should continue to be linked with gold. In consequence, the Swiss franc, will continue to be backed by gold, but the National Bank will not be bound to convert paper currency into gold coins in time of monetary upheaval or war. This position has been more or less in existence since 1936.

Customs receipts during the month of March, 1951, amounted to 51.5 million francs, or 8.5 million francs more than in March, 1950.

During the first quarter of 1951, the receipts for customs duties totalled 147.3 million francs, which is 35.3 million francs more, than during the same period in 1950.

Mr. Arthur Lagneux of Quebec, President of the Rotary International, at present in Switzerland, has been received by Federal Councillor, Dr. K. Kobelt, who is himself a Rotarian.

Cantonal

The result of the election for the "Kantonsrat" Zurich, is as follows: Liberals: 26 (formerly 25); Peasant Party: 37 (formerly 36); Christian Socialists: 20 (formerly 16); Democrats: 17 (formerly 21); Evangelical Popular Party: 3 (formerly 1); "Landesring": 23 (formerly 20); Socialists: 51 (formerly 49); Communists: 2 (formerly 12); Liberal Socialists: 1 (formerly nil). The Communists have lost 10 out of 12 seats. [A.T.S.]

The following have been elected members of the government of the canton of Zurich: Dr. Ernst

Vaterlaus (Liberal) with 86,676 votes; Dr. Hans Streuli (Liberal) with 84,325 votes; Jakob Heusser (Peasant Party) with 83,670 votes; Rudolf Meier (Peasant Party) with 80,116 votes; Dr. Paul Meierhans (Socialist) with 70,398 votes; Franz Egger (Socialist) with 69,793 votes; Dr. W. König (Landesring) with 48,355 votes; Dr. W. Egli (Democrat) with 31,729 votes and Heinrich Schneider with 43,300 votes.

Dr. W. König (Landesring) succeeds Dr. Briner (Democrat) who has retired from his post, he is a member of the "Obergericht" of the canton of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Franz Stadler-Otto, head of the technical order Buro of the firm Landis & Gyr in Zug, has celebrated his 50th service jubilee. [A.T.S.]

Owing to his election as President of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways, National-Councillor, Dr. Paul Gysler, has resigned from his post as President of the "Schweiz. Gewerbeverbandes", which he has occupied since 1941. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Rudolf Walz, since 1945 rector of the Priests' seminary Solothurn, has been elected "Stadtpfarrer" of the Roman Catholic community of Solothurn. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Gerold Guyer, merchant and a native of Waldstatt (Ct. Appenzell a.Rh.) residing in Rio de Janeiro, has made a donation of 10,000.—frs. to the school house fund of the community. [A.T.S.]

The strength of the various parties of the Grand Council of St. Gall, after the recent elections, is as follows: Conservatives: 90; Liberals: 60; Socialists: 29; Independent: 7; Young Peasant Party: 11

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Democrats: 1. The Communists have lost their previously held seat. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Hans Gmür, since 1923 "Staatsschreiber" of the canton of St. Gall, has relinquished his post for reasons of health. [A.T.S.]

The late Edmund Moosherr-Sand of St. Gall, has left an amount of 440,000.—frs. to the community of the town of St. Gall, this legacy is destined for the furtherance of art and science in the town. [A.T.S.]

M. René Alblas, at present Manager of the Transport Office in Montreux, has been elected Manager of the Transport Office of the canton of Vaud. [A.T.S.]

The damage caused by a fire at the Chandoline hydro-electric plant near Sion (Ct. Valais) is estimated at £1 million; the plant, which was one of the most important in Switzerland, will have to be completely reconstructed. One worker was killed and another was seriously burned. [A.T.S.]

The 35th Swiss Industries Fair, held from 7th to 17th April, 1951, in Basle, was a great success. The number of visitors recorded was over 670,000 at the turnstiles and this broke all previous records. Some 11,000 foreign visitors were registered at the Foreign Visitors' Office, coming from 67 different countries. From previous experience it can be taken that this is about half of all the foreign visitors. With few exceptions, all the 2,200 exhibitors did excellent business at the Fair. Very good orders were taken for watches, machine tools and textile machinery. The next Fair will take place from 3rd to 13th May, 1952.

—oOo—

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Albert Meyer, Founder of the "Magazine de la Samaritaine" Geneva, in Geneva, at the age of 88.

Mme. Agnes Schaub-Wackernagel, a co-founder of the Swiss "Lehrerinnenvereins" in Basle, aged 79.

Mme. Anna Schneider-Tschopp in Basle, at the age of 102. The deceased was the oldest woman inhabitant of the town of Basle.

Mlle. Elisabeth Sturzenegger, oldest woman citizen of the town of St. Gall, aged 102.

Robert Jaquillard, head of the Police force of the canton of Vaud, in Lausanne, at the age of 65.

Henri Kunkler, one of the pioneers of aeronautics in Switzerland, in St. Gall, aged 64.

[A.T.S.]

The undermentioned birthday anniversaries are announced from Switzerland:

Prof. Dr. Henry E. Sigerist (60), from 1921-1925, a teacher of the history of medicine at the University of Zurich, from 1925-32 at the University of Leipzig, and from 1932-1947 at the John's Hopkins University in Baltimore. Since 1947, Professor Sigerist has been working on a work entitled "The history of medicine."

Dr. jur. Armin Im Obersteg (70) a well-known lawyer, and expert on Transport and Insurance law in Basle.

Mme. Henrietta Besson-Hediger (102) of Gland (Ct. Vaud).

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F. Dobler (90), Founder and Honorary President of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Paris.

Mme. Josephine-Sophie Thurig (100) of St. Imier.

National-Councillor, Robert Grimm (70) Director of the Loetschberg railway, at one time Editor-in-Chief of the "Berner Tagwacht" (1909-1918), From 1938-1946, a member of the government of the canton of Berne, and for the last 40 years a member of Parliament (National Council).

Mgr. Dr. Viktor von Ernst (70), for many years a teacher at the Theological Faculty in Lucerne.

[A.T.S.]

The following couples have celebrated their diamond (66), wedding anniversary in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. Dunand, of Vésenaz (Ct. Geneva); Mr. and Mrs. Klempeter-Bühler, of Egg (Ct. Zurich).

[A.T.S.]

Wireless-operator Charles Domon, of the Swissair, has flown 1 million kilometers. [A.T.S.]

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

Nidwalden	Credit balance	36,663.—frs.
Obwalden	Credit balance	827.—frs.
Schaffhausen	Debit balance	332,000.—frs.
Graubünden	Debit balance	114,000.—frs.

[A.T.S.]

The oldest vessel on Lake Brienz, in the Bernese Oberland, has been taken out of service and will be

scrapped after 93 years of service. She is the 150-passenger *Interlaken*, which has been plying on Lake Brienz since 1858.

* * *

The Cantonal Council of Zurich, has adopted by 82 votes to 66 a proposal that the new State school law shall include a specific reference to God "as the foundation of all education."

A committee previously wanted the Concept of God cut from the draft.

A committee of another cantonal council, Lucerne, has proposed a provision in the new school law that education "Must be organised in co-operation with both the home and the Churches."

* * *

The City of Lausanne is preparing to receive, in July, some 40,000 gymnasts and athletes of both sexes, who will take part in a unique and typically Swiss festival.

Gymnastics, together with marksmanship, ranks as one of Switzerland's most characteristic national sports. Almost every township and village in the country has a local Gym Club, whose members enthusiastically drill and train. It has become customary that a Federal Festival, convening clubs throughout the country, should be held every four years in a selected centre. This year, it is Lausanne's turn to act as host.

Accommodation must be found for 150,000 to 200,000 spectators over these two weekends, apart from the 40,000 participants.

The programme of the Festival is an ambitious one, for it also includes performances of an open-air play "Terres du Rhone" (with massed choir and orchestra) written by one of the highest ranking authors of Western Switzerland, C. F. Landry, and set to music by Hans Haug.

Work on the organization of this event — and it does require a great deal — has been going forward for the last two years. Two thousand five hundred voluntary helpers have been called in to cope with the task.

The interest offered by this grand spectacle of well trained, athletic bodies, will far exceed its original purpose. It will be a revelation of the harmony of movement, the perfect discipline of mass drill and eurythmics, the absolute control of thousands in concentration on a united, physical and artistic effort.

The weekend of July 7th and 8th is reserved for the ladies: 11,000 women athletes will give displays of mass drill and eurythmics and organizers have specified that the ladies "will make no attempt to break athletic records. This group will strive solely to develop typically feminine qualities and to stress the æsthetic value of their skill and the harmony of movement."

On the following weekend, July 13th to 16th, about 30,000 men will invade Lausanne. Mass demonstrations, individual performances and contests will be held at all the sports grounds in the city. On Monday, July 16th, at 11 p.m., 24,000 gymnasts will give a demonstration at the Blécherette airfield.

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The unique character of the Festival resides in the fact that it is the most popular national event of its kind — together with the four-year Federal Marksmanship Festival — and participants will include gymnasts and athletes of international class.

The Loetschberg, Switzerland's highest railway tunnel and the third longest in the country, was pierced exactly 40 years ago, when men working in two parties, one from the north and the other from the south, first made contact at a point 3,000 feet above the sea.

The tunnel, which connects Berne, the Swiss capital, with Brig, runs beneath a towering 6,000-foot mass of rock and snow. It was several months after the celebrated opening of the great Simplon tunnel that work started simultaneously at Goppenstein, in the picturesque Valais, and at Kandersteg, famous holiday spot in the Bernese Oberland.

For the first time workmen used electrically-operated compressed air drills which worked wonders with the tough rock. They had to blast their way through different types of rock from chalk to granite, but they kept up a steady advance of more than a dozen yards a day. To do so, they needed 370 tons of dynamite. Exactly a year after the tunnel was pierced it was sufficiently enlarged to allow for the construction of a double track, and in July 1913, the Loetschberg line — the first normal-gauge mountain railway to run by electricity — was opened.

It not only meant the opening of a region rich in art treasures and incomparable mountain scenery, but also the introduction of a speedier access to the international Simplon line for a large part of Switzerland and vast areas of Europe.

More through carriages between Calais, Lausanne, Montreux and Brig, for the benefit of British tourists wishing to spend their holidays at resorts in French Switzerland, have been recommended by a meeting of the "Commission romande de la Ligne du Simplon", held in Lausanne.

Created several years ago by the Canton of Vaud Chamber of Commerce, the Commission meets regularly to consider ways of safeguarding interests of the great international artery which passes through Switzerland linking Paris with Milan. It numbers among its members well-known political personalities and representatives of tourist interests from the four cantons of Vaud, Geneva, Fribourg and Valais.

At its last meeting under the chairmanship of Mr. Jean Peitrequin, Mayor of Lausanne, the Commission


discussed the retiming of the Simplon Orient Express, proposing the stop at Lausanne to be at a more suitable time (at present: 3.34 a.m.), the stopping of this train at Montreux, and the construction of a double track in the Rhône Valley and on the line between Basle and Yverdon.

Members of the Commission discussed the question of electrification between Dijon in France and Vallorbe on the Franco-Swiss frontier, and expressed the hope that the work would start with the least possible delay. They also want to see a speeding-up of customs and police formalities at the frontier stations of Vallorbe and Brig.

To celebrate the jubilee of the Swiss Costumes Association, a colourful festival is being held at Lucerne on September 8th and 9th, to which delegations from France, Italy, the Tyrol and Bavaria — all in their national costumes — have been invited. Thousands of people from all parts of Switzerland will take part, including groups wearing their picturesque local costumes, yodellers and flag-twirlers. At Tribtschen, near the famous Richard Wagner museum, centuries-old Swiss costumes will be on view.

It was in preparation for this year's festival that the 18th-century castle of Utenberg, half-way between Lucerne and Dietschiberg, was turned into a national museum of folklore and costume. One collection, known as the Panchaud de Bottens collection, was purchased two years ago and consists of 97 complete costumes from all parts of Switzerland. Exhibited on wax and wooden dolls and beautifully preserved, they provide one of the most complete collections of Swiss costumes.

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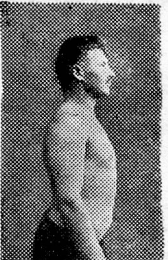


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ANOTHER OF NESTLÉ'S GOOD THINGS

Mr. Robert Kunz, 55 year-old assistant director of the Swiss Federal Transport Office, has been appointed director. He succeeds Mr. Fritz Steiner, an engineer from Neuchâtel, who retires on reaching the age limit.

Mr. Kunz, who comes from Grueningen, in the Canton of Zurich, studied law and political economy at the University of Berne and became a barrister in 1921. After practising for several years at the Zurich bar he joined the Federal Department of Posts and Railways in 1929 and made rapid progress. Six years later he became chief of the Legal Department of the Federal Transport Office. He was a member of numerous official delegations and in the last few years has made important contributions to discussions at international transport conferences.

* * *

One of Switzerland's oldest tramways linking Altdorf, centre of the William Tell legend, and Flüelen, last steamboat station at the southern end of the Lake of Lucerne, has been replaced by a modern motor coach. The new coaches will serve Altdorf and Bürglen — traditional home of Switzerland's legendary hero.

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Work just completed on the railway track between Villas-St.-Pierre and Chénens, in French-speaking Switzerland, will mean a speeding-up of trains between Lausanne and Berne, the Swiss capital.

Two months earlier than had been expected, work has finished on the construction of a second track. Three level crossings have been replaced by subways. Most important improvement from a technical point of view has been the enlargement of the radius of the curves, which means that express trains can now run at speeds up to 78 m.p.h., instead of 68 m.p.h. as before.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).

Leyn Harris, un homme d'affaires du Texas, a déclaré, après un voyage d'achat en Suisse : "Je suis si enthousiasmé du marché suisse que j'y retournerai l'année prochaine avec de nombreux acheteurs."

* * *

La journaliste américaine Sylvia Porter, spécialiste des questions économiques, a pris position dans différents journaux des U.S.A. au sujet de l'élévation des droits de douane sur les montres suisses. Elle déclare que de telles mesures sont erronées. "Nous ne ferons qu'éveiller, ainsi, de l'amertume des malentendus, des troubles économiques et de l'animosité politique dans le pays européen le plus important au point de vue stratégique, à la place de l'amitié et de la sympathie qui y règnent actuellement pour nous."

* * *

Le professeur Dr. Emile Staiger, de l'Université de Zurich, a été appelé à l'Université Columbia de New-York; c'est le premier professeur extraordinaire européen qui enseigne dans cette école depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale.

* * *

L'une des plus grandes filatures d'Australie a installé une nouvelle usine à Newcastle (Nouvelles Galles du Sud) équipée avec des machines suisses. Cette maison a déclaré que sa nouvelle fabrique était l'une des meilleures du monde.

* * *

Le comité olympique norvégien a chargé la maison Longines de St. Imier de chronométrer tous les temps des prochains jeux olympiques d'hiver.

* * *

La Cour internationale de Justice vient de désigner le conseiller national genevois Perréard comme membre d'une délégation chargée d'étudier la situation politique dans les Etablissements français de l'Inde.

* * *

Le Dr. E. H. Peneveyre, d'origine vaudoise, spécialiste de la construction des hôpitaux, a fait plusieurs conférences très suivies en Egypte; il y a été reçu par le ministre de l'hygiène.

* * *

L'Université de Montpellier a conféré le grade de docteur honoris causa aux juristes Roger Secretan, de Lausanne, et du Pasquier, de Neuchâtel; la faculté de théologie de cette même université a en outre offert une chaire au professeur Philippe Menoud de Neuchâtel.