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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Monsieur Henry, Beat von Fischer, Swiss Minister in Egypt, has also been accredited to the Kingdom of Ethiopia, he will reside in Cairo.

Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Holzapfel, has been nominated Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the German Federal Republic in Berne.

Swiss electors, in a referendum, rejected by 290,000 votes to 247,000 a Government-sponsored Bill to prolong the law under which the building and enlarging of hotels in tourist centres is subject to Government authorisation. The Government wanted to prolong the law, which has been in force since 1915, to 1955.

The Israeli Minister of Health, Dr. Joseph Burgh, who has been visiting Switzerland in connection with the United Israel campaign, called on the Swiss Minister of the Interior.

The Swiss Federal Railways are this year celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. Here are a few figures which will help to explain the extent of this national railway system. The total length of the Federal Railway network is approximately 2,000 miles. Another 2,000 miles are operated by private companies. Only some 60 miles of the nationally owned lines are still used for steam transportation because of the geography of the country, the network includes over 3,000 railway bridges and 240 tunnels, the longest of which is the Simplon tunnel with a total length of 12 miles.

A serious crime wave which has swept Switzerland during recent months has given rise once more to the question whether the death sentence should be re-introduced into the Swiss penal code.

The matter is to be debated in Parliament shortly. The death sentence in Switzerland was repealed once before (1874), following a nation wide referendum. In the next four years a crime wave, similar to the present one, swept the country.

By another referendum it was decided to authorise cantonal governments to reintroduce the death sentence. It was not until 1938, that a new penal code covering the whole of Switzerland was finally approved, and abolished capital punishment.

The Federal Council has instructed the Swiss Minister in Peking, Dr. C. Rezzonico, to obtain from the Chinese Government exit-visas for the five St. Bernhard monks, who are at the present segregated in the Province of Yunnan.

M. Bolivar Parades Zarama, Chargé d'Affaires, of the Republic of Ecuador, has presented his credentials to M. M. Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister.

M. Eugen Wimmer (Zurich), has been appointed Honorary Vice-Consul, and will be in charge of the Swiss Consulate in Abidjan. He is since 1925 in Abidjan, where he is Manager of a building firm.

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 18.08 million passengers in January, 1952, or 1.26 million more than in January, 1951, the receipts show an increase of 1.55 million francs over last year's figures and total 21.08 million francs.

Goods traffic has declined by 51,000 tons compared with January, 1951, figures, 1.61 million tons having been carried.

Cantonal

A new steamer carrying 800 passengers, has been launched at the building yard at Wollishofen, of the "Zürcher Dampfboot, A.G.". The name of the new boat is "Linth". [A.T.S.]

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