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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 Federal Council has nominated Mr. Ernst Theiler, to the post of Swiss Council in New Orleans, in succession to Mr. Stefano Luisoni.

Mr. Theiler was born at Olten in 1902, and is a citizen of Hitzkirch (Ct. Lucerne). He entered into the service of the Political Department in 1933, and was sent the same year to the Consulate General in New York. In 1941, he received the title of Vice-Consul, and in 1946, he was promoted to Consul and sent to New Zealand. Three years later (1949) Mr. Theiler was transferred to the Consulate in Leopoldville.

Monsieur Mégarbané, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Syria, has presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation.

Dr. Ernst Wyss, has been elected Director of the Federal Tax Administration, in succession to Director Paul Amstutz, who relinquished his post on reaching retiring age.

Dr. Wyss was born in 1893, and hails from Mirchel (Ct. Berne). On the completion of his University studies he practised for some time as a lawyer. He entered into the service of the Federal Tax Administration in 1918, subsequently held various important posts, until 1939, when he was nominated Vice-Director of the administration.

The Swiss Federal Railways have carried in the month of November, 1952, 15.96 million passengers or 234,000 less than in November 1951.

Relation between East Germany and Switzerland came to an abrupt end when the Swiss Delegation in Berlin had to evacuate the buildings in East Berlin (Friedrichstrasse) from where it had maintained semi

official diplomatic and trade contacts with the Communists.

Last year negotiations for trade relations between the two countries, and also for full diplomatic recognition by Switzerland broke down.

The Swiss Government has undertaken the representation of Irish interests in Persia, with the agreement of the Persian authorities.

A convention with Switzerland and this country on social insurance was signed at Berne. The convention deals with benefits and pensions for old-age, widowhood, orphanhood, and industrial injuries. It provides, among other things, that a national of either country who has qualified for a pension or benefit in one of the two countries should receive this pension or benefit while he is resident in the other country.

#### Cantonal

Mr. Jos. Ulrich, "Landschreiber" of Küssnacht a.R. (Ct. Schwyz), enters the National Council, owing to the death of National Councillor Knobel. He belongs to the Conservative Party. [A.T.S.]

The paper "Neue Winterthurer Tagblatt" has celebrated the 75th anniversary of its foundation, on which occasion a special edition, numbering 28 pages, was issued. [A.T.S.]

The Board of the "Schweiz. Bankgesellschaft" Zurich has nominated Dr. A. Jann, to the post of General Manager. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the 600th anniversary festival of the entry of the canton of Glarus into the Confederation close with a deficit of 71,755.—frs. [A.T.S.]

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The town of Le Locle numbers at present 13,003 inhabitants, this is the first time since 1916, that the population reaches the figure of 13,000. During the first world war the population increased, but during the two economic crises went back to less than 12,000. During the last 10 years the population has again increased. Le Locle numbers 3,270 watch makers and 905 mechanics. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. Ernst Steinmann, since 1921, Editor of the "Politischen Rundschau" has retired from his post. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The weekly paper "Die Nation", which for the last 20 years was published in Berne has ceased publication. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Aloys Baeriswyl, has been elected President of the government of the canton of Fribourg for 1953, and M. Maxime Quartenoud, its Vice-President. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the 31st of December, 1952, the population of the town of Solothurn, numbered 17,245, or 233 more, than on the same date in 1951. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The cantonal government of Basle-Town has awarded the Art Prize of the town of Basle, amounting to 10,000.— frs., to the Basle composer Albert Möschinger. This 55 year old artiste, who lives in Saas Fee, has composed various symphonies, cantates and songs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Arnold Vögelin, has been elected an additional Manager of the "Schweiz. Volksbank" office in Basle. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the 1st of January, 1953, the population of the town of Lausanne numbered 111,606 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Alfred Oulevay, has been elected President of the government of the canton of Vaud for the year 1953, and M. Lucien Rubattel its Vice-President. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two members of the Government of the canton of Valais, M. Maurice Troillet, and M. Cyrille Pitteloud, have intimated, that they do not wish to have their names put forward as candidates for the next re-election of the cantonal government. M. Troillet has been a member of the government since 1913, and M. Pitteloud since 1928. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Eugène Wegmann, Professor at the University of Neuchâtel, and Director of the Geological Institute, has been nominated Commander of the Legion of honour. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Meeting of the International Red Cross Committee, held recently in Geneva, has nominated Mr. Ernest Nobs, a former Federal Councillor, as one of its members. [A.T.S.]

Burglars entered a Jeweller's shop in the Rue Croix d'Or at Geneva and stole a number of watches to the value of 10,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

## Army

A military plane, type "Taifun" crashed near Meiringen, (Ct. Berne.) The pilot, Colonel Sigmund Eggenberger, aged 48, an Instructor of the Swiss Air Force, was killed. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Frédéric Firmenich, senior partner of the firm which bears his name, in Geneva, at the age of 79. The deceased was well-known for his far seeing views both in respect of improving the business, and the working conditions of his staff. He was honoured by the French Government who made him a Commander of the Légion d'Honneur.

National-Councillor, Kasper Knobel, in Schwyz, aged 71. He had occupied, since 1923, the post of "Oberförster" of the canton Schwyz, and from 1928-1944, he had been a member of the "Kantonsrat" Schwyz, and from 1943, until his death, sat in Parliament (National-Council).

Mgr. Joseph Pasquier, Doyen of the "Domherrenkapitels" of the St. Niklaus cathedral, Fribourg, and for 40 years a teacher at the College St. Micheal, at the age of 88.

Charles Sudheimer, a well-known engineer, in Lausanne, aged 80.

Ferdinand Gros, a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva, and at one time Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Geneva. Twenty-five years ago he founded the League of tax-payers. He was 82 years of age.

Colonel Otto Wyss, from 1928-1935 commander of the 2nd Dragoon regiment. During the last war, he served on the Headquarter Staff. He died at Grenchen, at the age of 62.

Ernst Steinemann, a member of the "Bezirksrat" and the "Kantonsrat" of the canton of Zurich, in Hagenbuch, aged 65.

Robert Kramer, composer, conductor and instructor of army trompeters. The deceased was for 32 years an army bands instructor, and had conducted numerous other bands; amongst them the "Metallharmonie, Zurich-Wiedikon", which he had led for 45 years. He had composed many songs and marches. He died at Zurich at the age of 80.

Jules Mayor-Delapraz, from 1934-1939 governor of the District of Vevey, in Vevey, aged 83.

Caspar Weber, Editor-in-Chief of the "Schweizerischen Politischen Korrespondenz", and a Colonel on the General Staff, in Berne, at the age of 59.



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Professor Wilhelm Bruckner, for many years a teacher of German, Greek and History at the "Basler Humanistischen *Gymnasium*" and Professor at the University of Basle, in Basle aged 82.

Josepf Real, Works Manager of the electricity works Schwyz, and a member of the "Kantonsrat" Schwyz, in Schwyz, at the age of 73.

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Kuhn (Cavalry), a well-known horseman, winning in 1920, the Grand Prix of the town of Lucerne, in 1921, the Grand Prix of the town of Nice (France), in 1924, the National jumping competition in Thun, and in 1925, the King's Prize in Stresa. (Italy). During the years 1926-1930, he was awarded first prizes in Brussels, Cologne and Aachen. He died in Zurich, at the age of 63.

Max Walder-Doggweiler, President of the Board of the "Schuhfabrik Walder & Co. A.G." Brütisellen, in Zurich, aged 77.

Joseph Wismer, from 1934-1952, a member of the Government of the canton of Lucerne, in Lucerne, at the age of 67.

Ernst Kunz, a former States Archivar, in Berne, aged 86.

Willy Müller, a well-known landscape painter and restorer of old paintings, in St. Gall, at the age of 63.

Guillaume de Week, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg and a member of the District Court (Saane), and co-founder of the international Society "Pax Romana", in Fribourg, aged 55.

Dr. Fritz Wieser, Journalist, and a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle Town, since 1937, Central President of the "Schweiz. Mieterverbandes". He was in his younger days a prominent member of the Communist party, which he left in 1925. He died in Basle, aged 63.

Maurice Jordan-Werner, Engineer and a former head of the Swiss Federal Railways Works, Bienne, in Bienne, at the age of 74.

Herman Uehlinger, a former Manager of the "Allgemeinen Trenband A.G., Basel" and afterwards Manager of the "Basler Handelsbank", in Basle, aged 71.

Dr. Philippe Bourquin, Conservator of the Natural Historical Museum, and a teacher at the *Gymnasium*, La Chaux-de-Fonds, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, at the age of 64.

Fritz Hodel, raw silk merchant, in Basle, at the age of 60. The deceased held the posts of President

"Der Gesellschaft Schweizerischer Seidenindustrieller", and Vice-President of the "Basler Verkehrsverein".

Josef Frey, a former member of the Government of the canton of Lucerne (1920-1949), in Lucerne, aged 77.

Dr. Albert Hautle, Founder of the "Nordostschweizerischen Verbandes für die Schifffahrt Rhein-Bodensee" and its President for 35 years, in Goldach, at the age of 82.

Mme. Rösy von Känel, a well-known writer of novels, in Zurich, aged 58. One of her most successful novels was "Passion", published in 1949.

Professor Dr. Paul Niggli, Professor of Mineralogy at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and the University of Zurich, at the age of 65.

The deceased was born in 1888, at Zofingen, and in 1915 was appointed Professor at the University of Leipzig. Five years later (1920), he was appointed Professor of Mineralogy, both at the Federal Institute of Technology and at the University of Zurich. From 1928-1931, he was rector of the ETH, and from 1940-1942, rector of the University of Zurich.

Dr. med. vet. Fritz Thommen, Director of the "Schlachthof" and "Kantonstierarzt" of the canton of the Basle-Town, in Basle, aged 63.

Jean-Ernest Wenger, architect, and from 1927-1947, President of the commune of Genthod. The deceased was for over 30 years a teacher at the Technical School in Geneva. He died in Geneva at the age of 78.

François Mermilliod, a well-known shot, in Geneva, aged 60.

Gustave Deville, Engineer, in Geneva, at the age of 70.

Joseph Indergand, States Councillor, Proprietor of the Hotel "Kreuz" in Amsteg, and the Hotel "Schweizer Alpenklub" in the Madervanertal, and since 1936, a member of the Government of the canton of Uri, in Uri, aged 58. [A.T.S.]

The undermentioned Anniversaries are announced in the Swiss Press:

Alfred Huggenberg (85) Gerlikon, well-known author of peasant folk-lore.

Hans Erni (85) Davos, author of many novels and plays in romantsch and composer of songs. He was for many years Editor of the paper "Casa paterna".

Adolphe Henn (80) Geneva, Music Publisher, he has organised many concert tours for famous musicians,

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such as Paderewski, Kubelik, Ysaye, etc., etc., and has published a great number of works by well-known Swiss composers.

Robert Cantieni (80), Chur, music teacher at the "Bünder Kantonschule", conductor and composer. Amongst his best-known works are "Guardia grischuna", and the song "Cara lingua de la mamma."

Dr. Paul Burckhard-Lüscher (80), formerly rector of the "Mädchen Gymnasium" Basle.

Dr. Rud. Riggensbach (70), Basle, a great Connoisseur of art, and a former librarian of the "Basler Kunstverein".

Dr. Eugen Blocher (70), Basle, from 1928-1952, a Federal Judge. He presided over the Federal Supreme Court in 1949/50.

Arnold Schimpf (70) Basle, a former President of the "Kaufmännischen Verein", member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town, and a popular essayist.

Dr. Max Gertsch (60) Zurich, well-known author of dramas and comedies, amongst them "John Law", "Diktatur", "Menschenrechte", and "Sir Basils letztes Geschäft". President of the "Gesellschaft schweizerischer Dramatiker." [A.T.S.]

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. & Mrs. J. Frei-Schwager of Feuerthalen, (Ct. Zurich); Mr. & Mrs. E. Zürcher-Stubenvoll of Basle; Mr. & Mrs. G. A. Jost-Beevers of Winterthur; Mr. & Mrs. J. Zbinden-Nitsche, of Basle.

Mr. & Mrs. Ch. Burgat-Maccabez, of Saint Aubin, have celebrated their Platinum wedding anniversary. (65). [A.T.S.]

A number of Legacies and Donations are mentioned in the Swiss Press:

Mr. & Miss Dietrich & Anna Jenny of Mollis, (Ct. Glarus) have each given 10.000.— frs. to the "Bürgerheim Fonds" of the community of Mollis, and in addition the firm of Jenny & Cie, has made a present of 10.000.— frs. to the "Gemeindhaus Fonds" Mollis.

The late Mme. Berta Hess-Attinger of Winterthur has left an amount of 193.000.— frs. to various charitable institutions.

Madame Jda Debrunner-Hanhart, Ermatingen, has made a gift of 10.000.— frs. for the renovation of the "Paritätischen" church, Ermatingen, and the heirs of Dr. W. Reinhart (Winterthur) have given an amount of 5.000.— frs. for the same purpose.

The Board of the "George Fischer, A.G., Neuhausen, have given an amount of 50.000.— frs. to the "Naturforschende Gesellschaft" Schaffhausen.

The heirs of Rudolph Stähelin (Basle) have presented the "Kunstmuseum" Basle with a number of paintings by Corot, Daumier, Picasso and Manet. [A.T.S.]

The following traffic accidents, during the year 1952, are reported:

Ct. Thurgau: 635 accidents, 19 killed and 145 injured;  
Ct. Basle-County: 525 accidents 26 killed, and 414 injured;  
Ct. Basle-Town: 1,619 accidents, 24 killed and 1,014 injured. [A.T.S.]

Helicopters with detachable baskets holding guides and dogs, are to be used in Switzerland for mountain rescue work.

The Matterhorn peak is now safe from mechanization. The Swiss Federal Government has granted the commune of Zermatt the desired concession to build a cable railway from Zermatt (5,315ft.) to Schwarzsee (8,495ft.), but has made it clear that the cable railway could in no case be regarded as the first stage of a line that might sooner or later be extended either towards the Matterhorn or towards the Furggengrat (the arrival point of a cable railway from Breuil).

The Government's decision endorses an earlier decision by the commune of Zermatt. It also gives satisfaction to 95,000 petitioners in many countries and to more than 40 alpine associations which, under the leadership of the International Union, have for two years been strenuously opposing the Matterhorn cable railway scheme originated by some Italian business men. Furthermore, the Italian Government has recently made use of existing legislation for the protection of nature to put an end to the scheme.

It is stated that the Zermatt-Schwarzsee cable railway will leave undamaged the forest extending above Zermatt, and will hardly be seen from the village. The middle station, "Furi" will therefore be the starting point of many summer excursions, and in winter several ski runs will diverge from it over the northern and eastern slopes of the Matterhorn group.

Switzerland's winter sports season has opened with the first of many important ski-ing competitions. During the season no fewer than 342 competitions, of which 30 are international events, are being organised. 112 are of national or regional importance and 182 are mainly of local interest. No single region has been forgotten in the allocation of the different events. Ice hockey fans have also much to interest them. A great rivalry is evident among all the regions of the country and the first championship matches point to a close struggle. But the ice rinks, whether natural or artificial, are not commandeered solely by ice hockey players. Skating enthusiasts can use them as they like or just watch the experts either giving demonstrations or taking part in their own competitions. Curling, itself a sport which has many admirers and which demands a fair degree of concentration and skill, will be the subject of matches in several of the resorts. The bobsleigh has numerous exponents in the country, and the bolides are attracting many spectators, particularly at St. Moritz and Les Avants, above Montreux.

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It was on April 15th, 1803, that the deputies of the two regions of Switzerland that came under the Abbey of St. Gallen and those of several old Confederate bailiwicks proclaimed the foundation of a new Swiss Canton — that of St. Gallen.

On April 15th this year the present cantonal Parliament meets in solemn session to commemorate this historic date. But it will be several months later — on either Saturday, August 22nd, or 29th, before the long-awaited 150th anniversary celebrations will take place. The fine medieval "Klosterplatz", which is dominated by the abbey church and is classed as one of the most beautiful in Switzerland, will be the scene of a specially written festival play with words by the poet Georg Thürrer and music by Paul Huber. There will be speeches by the Landammann (the president of the cantonal government) and the President of the Swiss Confederation.

In the afternoon a colourful carnival procession will wind through the streets of the old town, and in the evening there will be popular festivals in the parks, the squares and the public buildings of the city that is known throughout the world for its textiles and embroideries. All parishes in the canton will celebrate special religious services on either Sunday, August 23rd, or 30th, and these will be followed by civic celebrations.

\* \* \*

A new road atlas of Switzerland, which divides the country into 17 sections and includes maps of all the main towns, a list of 29 Alpine passes and a distances table, has just been published. Its practical make-up permits easy reference. The publishers are Kümmerly and Frey of Berne.

## HOME AFFAIRS.

PIERRE BÉGUIN.

### "WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN SWITZERLAND"

Both here, and abroad, it has often been observed that although Switzerland is unquestionably the oldest democracy in the world, and one that has developed to its extreme limits the system of government by the people, she is at the same time of the last of the civilised States to refuse votes to women.

This brief recapitulation of the situation is perfectly exact. It should be remarked, however, that in all those countries where women's suffrage has been introduced, this has been done by an act of Parliament or by the Government and that, nowhere, have the men been consulted. In our country, however, no reform of any kind whatsoever can be undertaken without the electoral body, that is to say the entire body of adult males, being under the obligation of expressing their opinion on the matter. And that, no doubt, forms a serious obstacle to an innovation which comes within the logical order of things and of general evolution. This obstacle has not been met with elsewhere. There is nothing to tell us as to whether men, in other countries, if they had been consulted by means of a popular referendum would have shown themselves willing to share with women those rights of which they are the sole possessors, up to the present.

The fact must be faced also that, if men were not consulted in other countries regarding the institution of women's suffrage neither have the women been asked, up to now, to declare officially as to whether they

desired to enjoy civic rights. Rights were allocated to them, regarding which it was not known, as the result of an incontrovertible test, whether or not they really wanted them.

Now, however, such a test has just taken place. And, this, in Switzerland, in Geneva, to be more exact. After several negative votes on this subject had been registered during the last few years, in various of the Cantons, the Genevese decided to settle the matter, one way or another. They argued as follows: "It is often said by those who are against women's votes, that the women themselves have no wish to enjoy this right. We will consult them regarding this. Before giving them the vote, we want to know what is their opinion on this subject." And that is how it came to pass that recently, all the women of Swiss nationality domiciled in Geneva, took part in a kind of plebiscite, which proved to be a most interesting consultation.

We are now in the possession of the results of this extremely original consultation. The women who participated in the voting showed in a very definite manner that they were in favour of the extension of civic rights to women who had attained their majority. This opinion was expressed by six to one votes. The result is therefore quite clear and definite, if one considers that it will no longer be possible to pretend that women are not interested in an eventual active participation in public affairs.

There is, however, a shadow cast on this picture by the fact that more than 40% of the women kept away from this consultation and refrained from expressing any opinion. They just stayed at home. They did not want to be bothered. If they proved anything, it was their thorough lack of interest. And, this aspect of the consultation must also be borne in mind, quite impartially.

Indeed, by reason of these far too numerous abstentions, it is only a little less than half the women who have demanded in a clear and unequivocal manner the granting to them of civic rights. All the others — that is to say, rather more than half — have refused the present which was offered to them, or else have confessed to having no opinion at all, on the matter. If one takes this into account, then the consultation held in Geneva, loses some of the precise clearness which it appeared to possess at first glance.

This means that plenty of water will flow under our bridges before feminine suffrage is established in Switzerland. But, this is merely a question of time.

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