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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Emil Bisang, at present First Counsellor of Legation at the Swiss Legation in Canada, to the post of *Chargé d'Affaires* in Pakistan, in succession to M. Walter Hofer.

Monsieur Bisang hails from Ettiswil (Ct. Lucerne) and was born at Geneva in 1900. He studied law at the Universities of Geneva, Oxford and Melbourne. He entered into the service of the Political Department (Foreign Office) in 1929, having previously been in the journalistic profession. He held in succession posts at the Swiss Consulates in Lyons, Sydney and Melbourne.

In 1940, M. Bisang was transferred to the Swiss Legation at The Hague with the rank of Attaché, and later on occupied a post in the section for Foreign Interests in Berne. Five years later (1945) he was promoted to the grade of Counsellor of Legation, and sent to the Swiss Legation at Washington, which post he occupied until 1948, when he was transferred to Ottawa.

* * *

The traditional dinner offered by the Diplomatic Corps in Berne in honour of the Federal Council, and representatives of the cantonal Governments, took place in Berne.

It was presided over by the Papal Nunzio, Mgr. Testa, in the presence of all the foreign Ambassadors, Ministers and *Chargé d'Affaires* accredited to the Confederation.

Amongst the visitors were the President of the Swiss Confederation, M. R. Rubattel, Federal Councillors Petitpierre, Kobelt, Feldmann and Streuli, delegations of the cantonal Governments, the town of Berne, high grade officers and the President of the International Red Cross Committee.

* * *

Mademoiselle Frances Willis, American Ambassador in Berne, has paid an official visit to the Government of Basle-Town. After a visit to the Ports, the University, the Hospital (Bürgerspital) and a chemi-

cal factory, the distinguished visitor was entertained to dinner, where Dr. C. Peter, President of the cantonal Government, extended to her the greetings of the authorities to which she replied in a speech of thanks.

* * *

Customs receipts during the month of April, 1954, amounted to 62 million francs, or 2.5 million francs more than during the same period in 1953.

For the first four months of the current year, the receipts totalled 156.2 million francs, which exceeds last year's figures by 12.7 million francs.

* * *

An air agreement between Persia and Switzerland was signed in Teheran.

* * *

The Swiss Government has announced the lifting of the sales tax on gold coins and gold bars with effect from May 15. The tax will now remain only on industrial gold containing less than 90 per cent. fine gold.

* * *

Mr. Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister, visited Berne, where he was the guest of the Swiss Government. He was welcomed by M. Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister, afterwards he was received by M. R. Rubattel, President of the Confederation.

It is the first time that a Russian statesman has visited the Swiss capital since the Bolshevik revolution.

Cantonal

At the recent elections for the Municipal Council of Winterthur, the following have been elected: Dr. H. Ruegg (Dem.) 6,339 votes; F. Brunner (Dem.) 6,084

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votes; A. Schätti (BGB) 5,942 votes; Dr. Hans Bachmann (Lib.) 5,912 votes; E. Hardmeier (Soc.) 4,637 votes; E. Frei (Soc.) 4,439 votes, and H. Zindel (Soc.) 4,416 votes.

Dr. Hans Ruegg has been re-elected as Mayor.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The 25 million francs loan issued by the town of Zurich at 2 1/2 per cent. has been oversubscribed, and allocations had to be reduced. [A.T.S.]

* * *

After a one year interval the "Tellspiele" at Interlaken will again be held from July 11th to September 5th. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The picturesque little town of Gruyère (Ct. Fribourg) has celebrated the 700th anniversary of its foundation. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A serious explosion occurred at the Chemical Works, Hoffmann La Roche, Basle. Twenty-two persons were injured of whom five have since died. The material damage is estimated to exceed 100,000 frs. The cause of the explosion will be thoroughly investigated so as to prevent further happenings of this kind. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Five people were injured when a tramcar in Basle left the rails and collided with a house in the Reinacherstrasse. The tramcar was badly damaged, the damage being estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 50,000 frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The accounts of the canton Basle-Town for 1953, close with a credit balance of 648.175 frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Hermann Renfer, formerly General-Manager of the "Basler Lebensversicherungsgesellschaft" and a honorary lecturer at the University of Basle, has celebrated his 80th birthday. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Joseph Müller, a former President of the Tribunal of St. Gall has been made an honorary citizen of the parish of Tablat (St. Gall-East). [A.T.S.]

* * *

National-Councillor Rudolf Schümperli (Socialist) of Romanshorn, has been elected a member of the Government of the canton of Thurgau with 17,375 votes, his opponent, Dr. E. Fritschi (Liberal) polled 15,664 votes. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the month of April, 1954, 48 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Thurgau, 12 persons were seriously injured and 26 received slighter injuries. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mme. Emile Vuichoud of Montreux has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

* * *

At the end of April, 1954, the town of Neuchâtel registered 30,000 inhabitants.

The "Comptoir de Neuchâtel" which takes place every two years, was opened at Neuchâtel. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Louis Casai, a member of the Government of the canton of Geneva for the last 21 years, will not be a candidate at the next autumn Governmental elections.

As already two members (Albert Picot and

Antoine Pugin) have declined to stand as candidates again, three new members for the Government will have to be elected.

[A.T.S.]

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. Hans Meyer-Rahn, eminent art collector, and from 1902-1948, Secretary of the "Gottfried Keller-Stiftung", in Lucerne, at the age of 86.

Emil Thut, for over 30 years Head of the "Strafanstalt" Lenzburg, in Lenzburg, aged 68.

Siegfried Pfyffer von Altishofen, a member of the Board of "Davom, A.G.", in Zurich, at the age of 74.

Dr. h.c. Heinrich Walther, for 44 years a member of the Government of the canton of Lucerne, and for 35 years a Member of Parliament (National Council), in Lucerne, aged 92. He was a *doctor honoris causa* of the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and the University of Tübingen.

Colonel Joseph Otter, a former commander of the "Schiessschulen" Walenstadt, in Kilchberg (Zurich) at the age of 87.

Camille Drexler, a well-known Basle inn-keeper, and a member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town, in Basle.

Dr. Walter Wellauer, a lawyer, and member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town, in Riehen, aged 63.

Hermann Knodel, Director and Member of the Board of the "Knorr Nährmittel, A.G.", Thayngen (Schaffhausen), in Thayngen, at the age of 72.



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Dr. Hans Becker, from 1932-1941, a member of the Government of the canton of Glarus, aged 78.

Eugène de Riedmatten, Founder and Partner of the "Banque de Sion", in Sion, at the age of 72.

Joseph Gogniat, for many years organist at the cathedral of Saint Nicolas, Fribourg, at the age of 73.

Christoph Tobler, for 50 years Director of the "Schweiz. Seidengazefabrik, A.G.", Thal and a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of St. Gall, in Thal, aged 80.

Mgr. Riccardo Morganti, priest, and for 42 years a teacher of religion at the cantonal *Gymnasium* at Mendrisio. [A.T.S.]

The undermentioned couples have celebrated their diamond-wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. & Mrs. E. von Känel of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Mr. & Mrs. G. Brupbacher-Hitz of Wädenswil (Ct. Zurich), Mr. & Mrs. S. Cavillier of Céliney (Ct. Geneva), Mr. & Mrs. M. Rusterhoz-Höhn of Schönenberg (Ct. Zurich), Mr. & Mrs. J. Brunner-Egli of Wald (Ct. Zurich), Mr. & Mrs. J. Läubli-Ilg of Ermatingen, Mr. & Mrs. E. Fankhauser-Gyger of Biel, Mr. & Mrs. E. Kuder-Züllig of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

For every two Swiss watches imported legally into Britain a third is smuggled in, Col. Edgar Primault, president of the Swiss Watch Chamber of Commerce, said.

Col. Primault blamed Britain's "inadequate" import quota, high customs duties and other taxes levied in Britain for making the smuggling of Swiss watches "a very attractive and remunerative business".

* * *

Britons have lost to the Germans their place as No. 1 visitors to Switzerland.

Britons spent 1,950,000 visitors' nights in Switzerland last year — the biggest number since the war.

* * *

The Union of Swiss Jewish Communities celebrated its golden jubilee.

It was founded in 1904 as the democratically elected umbrella organisation of the Jewish communities in Switzerland and is headed by a seven member Executive assisted by a central committee of 20. The two bodies are elected at the annual conference of delegates from 26 affiliated communities, which represent a total membership of 4,000 out of an estimated Jewish population of about 20,000 persons.

* * *

Dr. Paul Koch, of St. Gallen, has been elected a Fellow of the Textile Institute. He is head of the Scientific Department of Stoffel & Co., a prominent Swiss textile firm. Before the war he lectured on textiles, at the University of Dresden, Germany, and at Graz, Austria. He has contributed to many scientific journals, encyclopaedias, and to other textile publications.

* * *

REMARKABLE ORGANISATION OF THE FEDERAL POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONES AT GENEVA CONFERENCE. Geneva newspapers are stressing the "crushing task" accomplished by the Cable and Telegraph Bureau at the "Maison de la Presse" (Press Headquarters), in connection with the Conference. About 12,000 words of copy are cabled to every part of the world, every day. Apart from this, are the stories, write-ups and

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reports sent out by telex and telescriptor through machines set up for the press agencies; in addition, copy is sent out by the USSR from the Hotel Métropole. Lastly, the public telegraph office in Geneva is, of course, much busier than usual.

Nevertheless, despite a 50% increase in the telephone communications between Geneva and Paris, the wait for a call between the two cities can be reduced to two or three minutes: this is due to the installation of additional lines. The coaxial cable connecting Berne and Paris has been extended to Geneva through the existing telephone circuits: this allows for 960 simultaneous communications and, in addition, the transmission of TV programmes.

* * *

ELECTRIFICATION OF FRENCH RAILWAYS IN THE PROXIMITY OF THE SWISS FRONTIERS. The negotiations in Berne and Paris concerning the electrification of railways proximate to the Swiss frontiers have culminated in an agreement between the two countries and the opening, by Switzerland, of a credit of 250 million Swiss francs in favour of the Société nationale des chemins de fer français (SNCF). This fund will be employed to electrify the lines on French territory: Reding-Strasbourg-Bâle, Dijon-Vallorbe (leading to the Lake Geneva region) and Frasne-Pontarlier (on the Verrières-Neuchâtel route).

* * *

A GOOD YEAR FOR SWISS SPAS. Switzerland's 24 spas employ the 250 known thermal springs in the country — a surprising number considering the smallness of the national territory. Climatic conditions prevailing in Switzerland are also particularly favourable and serve as an excellent auxiliary to the thermal treatments. Furthermore, most of the springs are very abundant, and in several resorts treatment can be given in running water.

The 1953 report of the Swiss Association of Thermal Resorts has been written and published by Mr. August Schirmer, National Councillor and President of the Association (President also of the International Federation of Spas and Health resorts). The report stresses the efforts made by foreign spas — in Great Britain and France particularly — to popularize such treatments. It also shows that, as compared with 1952, a greater number of patients were treated at Swiss spas last year: 6.75% increase, with over 595,000 night registrations. (This is excellent, considering that one resort opened for only a very short season and that another was being completely reorganized). The 1947 record (607,640 night registrations) has yet to be beaten.

* * *

ISLE OF BRISSAGO. A very interesting Exhibition, entitled "Art Treasures", was opened in late April on the Isle of Brissago (port of call by steamer from Locarno, Ascona, Brissago and all Italian ports of Lake Maggiore). It contains sculptures and paintings by Veronese, Rembrandt, Rubens, Bassano, Tencalla, Teniers, Ruydsael, Corot, Rodin, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Ensor and other masters; these works have been lent from private collections in Ascona.

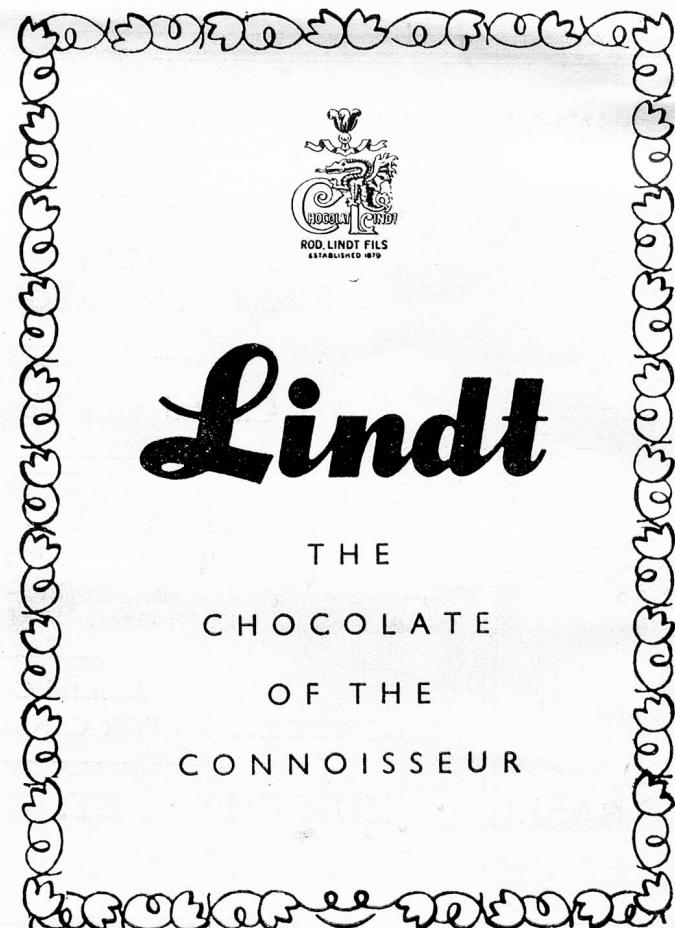
The "Associazione Amici delle Belle Arti" in Ascona are the organisers of the Exhibition. Visitors will most certainly enjoy the magnificent setting chosen for the display: an Italian-style villa and its beautiful gardens.

NEW CABLE-LIFT AT DAVOS. On April 24th last, the Federal Department for Post Office and Railways granted Davos a concession for the building of a new cable cabin and chair lift from Davos Platz to Brämenbühl. The Cable Cabin will convey passengers from Davos Platz (altitude 4,608 ft.) to Ischalt (5,772 ft.) whence a chair lift combined with skitow will take them to Brämenbühl (7,652 ft.).

A NEW DIRECTOR AT THE ADELBODEN TOURIST OFFICE. It has already been announced that Mr. Ernest Hess, Director of the Adelboden Tourist Office, has been appointed to replace the late Mr. Roth at Interlaken. Mr. Fred Rubi, of Wengen, the son of Mr. Christian Rubi (founder and pioneer of the Swiss Ski School Association) has been nominated to the post at Adelboden. Mr. Rubi is a ski ace in the international class and the author of a thesis (written for the obtention of a Master's degree in political science) on the development of winter sports and the Swiss travel trades, their structure and economic importance.

THE LUCERNE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC WEEKS (August 8-28). The programme has already been announced and includes seven symphony concerts with two executions of Beethoven's IXth, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler and participation of the soloists: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Elsa Cavelti, Ernst Häfliiger and Otto Edelmann.

The symphony concerts will be conducted successively by Wilhelm Furtwängler, Herbert von Karajan,



Rafael Kubelik, Ferenc Friesay, Edwin Fischer and André Cluytens. Soloists announced are: Gioconda de Vito, Clara Haskil, Edwin Fischer, Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Enrico Mainardi and Igor Oistrakh. The official orchestra for the 1954 Festival will be the London Philharmonic.

THE FEDERAL MARKSMANSHIP CONTEST, 1954. The Federal Marksmanship Contest is to be held in Lausanne from July 8th to 25th. It is estimated that some 75,000 marksmen will attend. A festival play ("La Rose au Fusil") — musical score by Carlo Hemmerling and libretto by Géo Blanc (authors of the 1955 Vintners' Festival Play in Vevey) — is being produced for this occasion.

* * *

The Swiss National Council approved expenditure on 100 de Havilland Venom jet fighters. The planes will be built under licence in Switzerland at a total cost of about £9,500,000.

* * *

SWISS WOMEN SKIERS' BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS. At the World Ski Championships recently held at Are (Sweden) two young Swiss skiers put up brilliant performances. Both are farmers' daughters. Ida Schoepfer from Flühli (Canton Lucerne) won the Ladies' Downhill World Championship Title, and also the Championship for the "Combined"; she came second in the slalom. Madeleine Berthod from Château d'Oex (Canton Vaud) won a Silver Medal in the Giant Slalom and was classed second in the "Combined".

TELEVISION IN FRENCH SWITZERLAND. The Swiss Federal Post Office and Railways Department has published the following communiqué :

"At a session held in Berne, on February 19th, and presided over by Federal Councillor Escher, statements and reports were read by Messrs. Edward Weber, Director General of the Federal Post Office, and Marcel Bezençon, Director General of the Swiss Broadcasting Association (Société suisse de radiodiffusion); the session was attended by delegates from Cantons Fribourg, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Berné, and the cities of Lausanne and Geneva; present also were delegates from French-Swiss broadcasting companies.

The discussion following the reading of the reports, showed that there is unanimity in French Switzerland, regarding the method of operating a TV service in this part of the country. If the Cantonal authorities give their approval to the scheme, the French Swiss delegates will request the Federal Council to create a TV experimental station in Western Switzerland, using the stationary equipment in Geneva and organising, in Lausanne, ambulatory installations for the remaining part of the region. If, after the TV experiments in Zurich have been completed, namely, towards the end of September 1955, the competent authorities do decide to develop TV in Switzerland, it is already now understood that the permanent centre in Geneva and the ambulatory centre in Lausanne would continue to be used without prejudice to other developments of a similar kind in the two cities concerned or in other zones of French Switzerland".

* * *

THE KLOTEN-ZURICH AND COINTRIN-GENEVA AIRPORTS IN 1953. Following the introduction of the "Tourist" class in European Air travel, these Swiss inter-continental airports enjoyed a great increase in traffic last year.

KLOTEN records 47,823 flights (as against 36,053 in 1952) and the transport of 495,564 passengers (372,832), 7,902 tons of freight (6,406) and 2,924 tons of post freight (2,409). The KLOTEN Control Tower handled approximately 192 departures and arrivals of planes per day (average in 1952: 149). The new Radar equipment at KLOTEN was installed at the end of August and has been in operation since December 1st 1953.

At COINTRIN, 23,345 flights were recorded (21,348 in 1952), with a total of 364,809 passengers (282,593), 6,636 tons of freight (5,473) and 2,069 tons of postal freight (1,904). As at Kloten, new Radar equipment was installed in August and has been in operation since November 1st.

* * *

57 NATIONS REPRESENTED AMONG THE 700-STRONG STAFF OF THE I.L.O., GENEVA. Fifteen recently appointed functionaries of the International Labour Office (I.L.O.) have signed their oath of loyalty to the Office. The ceremony was presided over by Mr. David A. Morse, Director General.

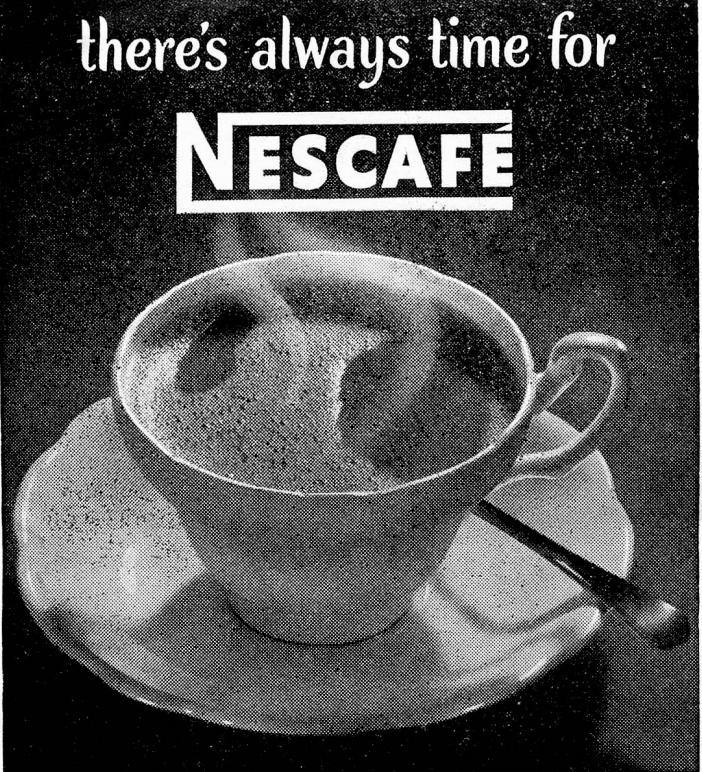
At the present time, 57 nations are represented among the 700 functionaries composing the staff of the I.L.O.

* * *

THE 1960 WINTER OLYMPICS. Davos and Klosters will probably apply for the honour of acting host to the 1960 Winter Olympics.

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