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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 Swiss electorate in a referendum last month rejected by 503,791 votes to 229,324 the proposal that the building of the Rheinau electric power plant should be stopped. The scheme, on which 52 million francs have already been spent, was objected to on the ground that it would be destructive of amenities.

Here are the particulars of the poll:

	Yes	No
Zürich	81,425	90,865
Bern	26,600	79,125
Luzern	8,180	23,329
Uri	1,364	3,509
Schwyz	3,612	6,412
Obwalden	551	2,452
Nidwalden	1,154	2,428
Glarus	1,665	5,274
Zug	2,056	4,433
Fribourg	1,393	9,979
Solothurn	5,634	19,556
Baselstadt	16,511	21,930
Baselnd	7,004	10,965
Schaffhausen	7,983	6,718
Appenzell A.Rh.	1,339	8,172
Appenzell I.Rh.	325	1,557
St. Gallen	9,478	49,697
Graubünden	3,963	17,332
Aargau	24,856	47,562
Thurgau	6,695	24,225
Ticino	1,849	10,909
Vaud	7,400	25,081
Valais	1,690	12,325
Neuchâtel	2,598	9,013
Genève	3,999	10,943

Total 229,324 503,791

Participation in poll: 50.8 per cent.

The Federal Assembly, that is the two Chambers of Parliament sitting together, elected Dr. Max Petitpierre, Head of the Federal Political Department

(Foreign Office), as President of the Confederation for 1955.

The President was born on the 26th of February, 1899, in Couvet (Ct. Neuchâtel). He studied law at the Universities of Neuchâtel, Zurich and Munich. His thesis for the doctorate in law dealt with the recognition and execution of foreign judgements.

After the conclusion of his studies, he established himself as an advocate and notary in Neuchâtel. From 1926-31, and again from 1938-44, he was Professor of International law at the University of Neuchâtel.

In 1937, he was elected a member of the Grand Council of his native canton, and five years later (1942) he entered Parliament (States Council) as a Liberal.

On the 14th of December, 1944, Monsieur Petitpierre was elected a Member of the Federal Government in succession to Monsieur Pilet-Golaz, since then he has been in charge of the Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office). M. Petitpierre was President of the Confederation in 1950.

Dr. Markus Feldmann, has been elected Vice-President of the Confederation. He was born on the 21st of May, 1897 in Thun (Ct. Berne). He received his schooling in Thun and Berne and afterwards studied law at various Universities. In 1924, he became a member of the editorial staff of the "Neuen Berner Zeitung", and in 1928, he was promoted to Editor-in-Chief of this paper. Seventeen years later (1945) he was elected a member of the Government of the canton of Berne. He sat in Parliament (National-Council) from 1935-1951. On the 13th of December, 1951, he entered the Federal Government in succession to Federal-Councillor von Steiger. From 1933-1935

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he occupied the post of "Zentral President" of the Swiss Press Association.

* * *

The Federal Council has nominated Monsieur Clemente Rezzonico to the post of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to India and Thailand, in succession to Minister Max Grässli.

Minister Rezzonico was born at St. Imier in 1897, and is a citizen of Pedrinata (Ct. Ticino). He received his schooling at St. Imier and Basle, and afterwards studied economic and political science at the University of Berne, where he obtained his doctorate.

Dr. Rezzonico entered the Federal Political Department in 1916, and was subsequently transferred to London and Rome. In 1937, whilst in London, he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. Two years later (1939) he returned to Berne and was during the war in charge of the Press section of the Swiss Foreign Office. From 1946-1949 he held the post of 1st Counsellor of Legation in Paris. In 1949, he was appointed *Chargé d'Affaires* in Pakistan, and a year later (1950) he was nominated Swiss Minister in Peking where he remained until June last.

* * *

Mr. Armin Locher (Cath. Cons., Appenzell I.Rh.) has been elected President of the States Council (Ständerat). He was born in 1897 at Obereg. For ten years he occupied a post in an embroidery firm at St. Gall, and since 1927 he has been co-proprietor of the brewery firm of Johann Locher in Obereg. In 1937, he was elected a member of the cantonal Government, and in 1946, he became President of the Cantonal Bank. Mr. Locher has sat in the States Council since 1937. In the army he holds the rank of Colonel.

* * *

Mr. Rudolf Weber, (BGB, Berne) has been elected Vice-President of the States Council. He was born in 1887, and is a Farmer by profession. From 1914-1946, Weber was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, over which he presided in 1946. He was a member of the National Council from 1919-1935, and has been since a member of the States Council.

* * *

Dr. Hermann Häberlin (Radical, Zurich) has been elected President of the National-Council. He was

born in 1894, and is a citizen of Amlikon (Ct. Thurgau) and Zurich. On the completion of his University studies in Zurich, Munich and Berlin, he obtained the post of Secretary of the Liberal Party, and Editor of the "Zürcher Volkszeitung". Since 1929, he has been connected with the Press Service of the "Arbeitgeberverbandes Schweiz. Maschinen und Metall-industrieller". Since 1941, Häberlin also edited the paper "Werkzeitung der schweiz. Industrie". Since 1939, he has been a member of the "Kantonsrat", Zurich, and since 1943 a member of the National Council.

* * *

Mr. Paul Burgdorfer (BGB, Berne) has been elected Vice-President of the National Council. He was born in 1903, and is a citizen of Vinelz (Ct. Berne). He received a commercial education, and spent several years abroad. In 1936, he was appointed Principal of the "Gewerbverbandes" of the canton of Berne, and since 1943 he has sat in the National Council.

* * *

The Federal Council has filled two vacancies in the Swiss Civil Service, caused through retirement owing to the age limit having been reached, namely the posts of chief of the Federal Justice Department, and Federal Police Department.

Dr. Edgar Mottier (born 1902) of Salvan (Ct. Valais) has been appointed chief of the Federal Justice Department in succession to Dr. Emil Alexander.

He studied *juris prudencia* at the Universities of Lausanne and Heidelberg, and entered into the service



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of the Department in 1928, where he has occupied various posts.

Dr. Robert Jezler (born 1907) of Schaffhausen has been nominated head of the Federal Police Department in succession to Dr. H. Rothmund. After having studied law at the Universities of Rome and Berne, he established himself as a lawyer in Berne. He entered into the service of the Police Department in 1935.

* * *

The Federal Assembly has elected two new members of the Federal Tribunal, to replace Judges Strebel and Läuch, who have resigned.

Dr. Josef Plattner of Untervaz (Ct. Grisons), and Dr. Karl Dannegger of Berne, have been elected.

Federal Judge, Dr. Josef Plattner was born in 1902 at Chur. He studied law at the Universities of Zurich and Berne. For some time, he was in charge of the Inland Revenue office of the canton of Thurgau. In 1936, he was elected a member of the Superior Court of the canton of Thurgau.

Federal Judge, Dr. Karl Dannegger, was born in Berne in 1895. From 1919-1924, he held the post of Clerk of the Court at the Superior Court of Berne, and afterwards established himself as a lawyer in Thun. In 1936, he was appointed a member of the Superior Court of the canton of Berne.

* * *

M. Robert Petitmermet has been elected President of the Federal Tribunal for 1955/56, and Mr. Wilhelm Stauffer, Vice-President.

* * *

The Federal Council has made the following appointments in the Consular Service: Walter Hofer,

Counsellor of Legation, to be Consul-General at Manila, and Rudolf Scheurer, to be Hon. Consul at Liberia.

Mr. Hofer was born in Berne, and is a citizen of Walkringen (Ct. Berne). He entered the service of the Federal Political Department in 1929, where he occupied various posts. In 1948, he was appointed Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia, and in 1951, he was transferred in the same capacity to Pakistan.

Mr. Rudolf Scheurer was born in 1915 at Bargaen. (Ct. Berne).

* * *

Mr. Armin Jeker of Oberbuchsitten (Ct. Solothurn) has been appointed Director of the Federal Finance Control, in succession to Dr. F. Rüedi.

* * *

Customs receipts for the month of November, 1954, totalled 58.1 million francs, or 4.5 million francs more than in November, 1953.

During the first eleven months of 1954 customs receipts amounted to 464.9 million francs, which is 42.7 million francs more than during the same period in 1953.

Cantonal

Bills granting the franchise to women were rejected by roughly 119,000 votes to 48,000 in the canton of Zurich, where it had been proposed by the extreme Left party, and by 21,000 votes to 17,000 in the canton of Basle-Town, where it had recently been approved by a small majority in the local parliament. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Conrad Ferdinand Meyer Foundation has awarded cash prizes amounting to 3,000.—frs. to the following: Hans Boesch (author), Hildi Hess (sculptress), and Viktor Aerni (painter). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Federal Gymnastic Festival will take place in Zurich from July 14th to July 17th. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The commune of La Chaux-de-Fonds has nominated M. Maurice Favre, conservator of the history and watch museum, an honorary citizen of the town of La Chaux-de-Fonds. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. Albert Keller of Reute (Ct. Appenzell A.Rh.), a former National Councillor, has donated 10,000.—frs. for starting an Albert Keller Fonds. [A.T.S.]

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The Federal Statistical Buro has just published figures of the 1950 census, according to which the population of the canton of Valais, on the 1st of December, 1950, numbered 159,178 (80,209 males and 78,969 females). Sitten: 10,904 inhabitants; Brig: 3,854; Naters: 3,243; Conthey: 3,485; Nendaz: 3,722; Bagnes: 3,609; Orsières: 2,286; Leuk: 2,336; Fully: 3,150; Martigny-Ville: 3,487; Martigny-Bourg: 1,863; Martigny-Combe: 1,051; Saxon: 2,421; Monthey: 5,608; Saint Maurice: 2,728; Siders: 7,161; Visp: 2,727; Zermatt: 1,395. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The undermentioned deaths were published in the Swiss Press:

Dr. Hitz, lawyer, and formerly a member of the National Council, in Zurich, at the age of 71.

Alois Amstutz-Reichmuth, "Bezirksammann", and a former member of the "Kantonsrat", Schwyz, in Schwyz, aged 66.

Alfred Albrecht, consulting-engineer, Director of the "Buss, A.G." Basle, in Basle, at the age of 58.

Dr. Heinrich Huttenlocher, Professor of Mineralogy at the University of Berne, in Berne, aged 65.

René Mozer, consulting-engineer, and member of Boards of various industrial concerns, in Geneva.

Alfred Glatz-Bider, a teacher at the "Realschule", Basle, and for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town, in Basle, owing to an accident, at the age of 75.

Wilhelm Hoch, Manager of the engineering works, Winkler, Fallert & Co., A.G., Berne, in Berne, aged 81.

Leo Delsen, Founder and Manager of the "Städtebundtheater" Solothurn-Biel, in Solothurn, at the age of 68.

Albert-François Müller, Head of the Foreign Service of the "Schweiz. Rundspruchgesellschaft", Berne, in Berne.

Fritz Kähr, formerly Manager of the "Central-schweizerischen Kraftwerke", Lucerne, in Lucerne, aged 71.

Professor, Dr. August Egger, from 1905-1944, Professor of law at the University of Zurich, in Zurich, at the age of 80.

Anna Richli, for 40 years a school-teacher in Lucerne, and author of novels, fiction and biographies, in Lucerne, aged 70.

Friedrich Traffelet, painter, in Berne, at the age of 57.

Jacques Keller, until recently Vice-Director of the Federal Wheat Administration, in Berne, at the age of 65. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The following anniversaries are mentioned in the Swiss Press:

Professor, Dr. med. Heinrich Zangger (80) of Berne, formerly Professor of medicine at the University of Zurich, and world renowned toxicologist.

Dr. Walter Boveri (60) of Baden, President of the Board of the A.G. Brown, Boveri & Co., Baden.

Dr. Gotthard Egli (70) of Lucerne, since 1935 a member of the Government of the canton of Lucerne, and a Member of Parliament (States-Council) since 1935.

Professor, Dr. med. vet Heusser (70) of Zurich, Director of the animal clinic of the Veterinary-Medical Faculty of the University of Zurich.

Dr. Walter Stampfli (70) of Solothurn, from 1940-1947, a member of the Federal Council.

Albert Steffen (70) of Basle, well-known author, dramatist and Head of the "Goetheanum" Dornach. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The heirs of the late Dr. Max Richard, surgeon-in-chief of the "Krankenhaus" Rorschach have given a legacy of 40,000.—frs. to the hospital.

Mr. Jakob Schmid, Engineer of the Swiss Federal Railways who recently died, has left the amount of 25,000.—frs. to his home commune of Rafz (Ct. Zurich). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couple has celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. Kohler-Sémon of Porrentruy.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Vermess of Bonaduz (Ct. Grisons) have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Army has been equipped with new detection instruments for atomic, chemical and biological warfare.

The instruments were produced by Swiss private industry. Official photographs have been released only of the anti-atomic equipment.

One instrument, which looks like a portable radio set, is carried by a gas-masked soldier in rubber suiting to detect radio-active areas.

* * *

The Swiss Government has demanded the recall of the Czechoslovak military attaché in Berne and two of his assistants.

An official communique said that their activities were "incompatible with diplomatic usage". The attaché, Major Ludvik Sochor, has been in Berne since 1952.

* * *

The Lower House of the Swiss Parliament decided to defer until its March session the final vote on the proposed purchase of 100 Centurion tanks from Britain. The delay is due to a difference of opinion between the two Houses and to a procedural error in the Lower House. As the Swiss newspapers put it, for the second time the discussion on armoured vehicles and anti-armour weapons has ended in a complete muddle.

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The Geneva guide René Lambert, who led an expedition in the Gauri Sankar group in the Himalayas, returned to Geneva. The object of the expedition was not to attempt scaling Gauri Sankar (23,400ft.) — unless conditions were found perfect — but to explore and map the region, which is mostly unknown. The party succeeded in this, and has brought back photographs, sketches, and measurements which will make it possible to draw a complete map of the group, although the work was hampered by the monsoon, which lasted 10 days longer than usual.

Mr. Lambert and his partner, Mrs. Kogan, of Nice, tried to climb Cho Oyu. On a first attempt they met the Austrians who scaled that peak on October 19, and a second attempt was foiled by bad weather. The botanist of the expedition is bringing back seeds of some 1,200 Himalayan plants which he intends trying to grow in Switzerland.

* * *

The Swiss Parliament have voted in favour of lowering the luxury tax from 10 to six per cent from 1955-1958.

* * *

The Swiss Government has granted ex-President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala a three-month visitor's visa to Switzerland.

* * *

Swiss children will in future have to undergo cycling tests before being allowed to ride a bicycle on any public road.

They are trained free of charge by traffic officers, who issue them with certificates when they qualify. Thereafter they must bring their bicycles every three months for free inspection.

The Swiss put the training under three months' test. During that time the accident figure dropped 83 per cent.

* * *

Max, a 12-year-old Zurich boy, wanted to make some money to help his ailing and widowed mother.

He advertised in a local newspaper, offering to act as dog-sitter.

A few hours after the advertisement appeared, Max received enough offers to look after dogs to take up all his time after school.

But after his first week as Zurich's No. 1 dog-

sitter, Max was in trouble. Twice he arrived late for school and with no homework done.

What could he do, Max asked his teacher, "with all those people wanting their dogs taken for walks or kept company when they go out in the evening?"

The teacher saw there was a real problem. He called for volunteers among Max's schoolmates willing to take turns at sharing Max's duties.

Today Max has ten regular schoolboy helpers in Dog Sitters Ltd., and all indications are that the company is here to stay.

Here is the programme of international events that have been arranged for this winter in Switzerland, which has just been published by the Swiss Ski Federation:

December 26th: Jumping Competition at St. Moritz. January 1st: Jumping Competition at Davos. 5th to 8th: International Women's Races at Grindelwald. 8th to 9th: Lauberhorn (Alpine) Races at Wengen, and Gothard Meet (Nordic) at Andermatt. 15th to 16th: The Four Tracks Cup at Villars-Bretaye (Alpine trials) and International Races (Nordic) at Le Brassus. 29th to 30th: Mont-Lachaux Cup at Crans-Montana, Wassergrat Derby at Gstaad and Philips Derby at Lenzerheide. January 29th to February 6th: International Jumping Week with competitions at Unterwasser, Arosa, St. Moritz and Le Locle. 17th to 20th: St. Moritz White Ribbon. March 4th to 6th: Parsenn Derby at Davos. 11th to 13th: Arlberg-Kandahar at Mürren. 18th to 20th: Gornergrat Derby at Zermatt. 26th to 27th: The

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The Swiss National Championships will be held at Davos on February 4th and 6th, Alpine Events; at Ste. Croix, February 12th and 13th, Nordic Events and Relays; and at Obergoms (in the Haut-Valais), February 27th, the 50 Kilometres Cross Country Race.

Swiss industry is to the fore in the production of snow-clearing machines. The latest machine is a 200 h.p. snow plough making it possible even at the height of winter to keep certain Alpine roads open to traffic. Postal buses can thus go through the snow-covered passes of Julier, Maloja, Ofen (in the Grisons) and Les Mosses (in the Alps of Vaud).

The radar installations of the Zurich-Kloten airport which took three years to construct have just been completed. They consist of a radar interception apparatus and a precision radar for landing. The cost of the installation amounted to about 1.85 million francs. It makes Zurich-Kloten one of the best equipped airports in the world.

An entirely modern new theatre capable of being used for symphony concerts, opera, ballet and musical shows has just been completed at Lausanne in the main building of the Swiss Comptoir. Possessing a large, very deep, operatic stage, and seating 1,900, it is the work of a Lausanne architect, Marcel Mailard, who took as his inspiration the classical French conception with a central dome and semi-circular balcony. The stage is 85 feet wide and 43 feet deep. It is closed by a sliding partition which when opened makes it possible to extend the stage a further 69 feet. The acoustics are perfect, thanks to the walnut panelling which forms an elegant and warm setting. Lausanne will now be able to welcome the greatest orchestras as well as the largest opera companies, ballets and musical shows.

The 1955 Locarno Film Festival will be held from July 9th to 19th. It will probably coincide with a UNESCO meeting devoted to ethnography.

The St. Gall Football Club, the oldest in Switzerland, recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of its foundation; although the minutes of the first meeting are missing from the club's records, the club nevertheless possesses a copy of statutes dated April 19th, 1839.

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Mlle Hedda Heusser, soprano, a obtenu un succès étourdissant à l'Opéra royal néerlandais d'Amsterdam et de La Haye. Elle donnera, en outre, des récitals à la radio de Cologne, à Francfort et à Düsseldorf.

La fabrication de tous les insignes, médailles et distinctions des championnats du monde de tir de Caracas a été confiée à une maison spécialisée du Locle, de même que celle du trophée officiel "Venezuela", fait d'or, d'argent et d'émail.

Le centre zurichois de la haute couture suisse a pris un développement remarquable: en trois ans, les exportations ont presque doublé, passant de 43 à 81 millions de francs.

La plus grande centrale d'énergie à vapeur du monde, dans le vallée du Delaware (U.S.A.), a été construite selon le système d'une maison de Winterthur universellement connue.

A l'Observatoire de Neuchâtel, un chronographe transportable, fabriqué par une maison de St Imier, a atteint la précision absolue, soit une "variation" de 0,00 seconde après 24 heures.

Dernière nouveauté, une fabrique suisse d'horlogerie vient de lancer sur le marché une montre avec compteur de secondes, dont l'aiguille ne saute qu'une fois par seconde.

On vient de construire, à Bâle, le premier "silo à autos" de Suisse.

Un atelier de constructions de Vevey vient de lancer un nouveau type de trolleybus.

Une importante industrie de l'Irak, la fabrication du sucre de dattes, est en voie de complète transformation grâce aux travaux de recherches du chimiste suisse Mohler.

Au récent championnat national suisse de dactylographie, on a pu constater le succès rencontré auprès des concurrents par une machine à écrire suisse, de réputation mondiale, qui a remporté sept premiers prix.

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