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# The Swiss Observer

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**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain**

Advisory Council: R. DE CINTRA (Chairman); O. F. BOEHRINGER, LS. CHAPUIS, J. EUSEBIO, GOTTFRIED KELLER, R. J. KELLER, R. PFENNINGER, A. STAUFFER, G. E. SUTER.

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The Swiss Government has published the texts of an exchange of wartime letters between President Roosevelt and M. Eduard von Steiger, then President of the Swiss Confederation, in which the Swiss emphasised their traditional policy of impartiality toward belligerent states.

Two letters, written in January and March, 1945, followed an Allied request to stop trading with Nazi Germany.

The Swiss letters did not specifically refuse to stop trade but said, "The unchangeable policy of neutrality followed by the Federal Council does not permit it to regulate its action according to its sentiments".

The Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office) at the end of last year had a personnel of 1,206 (1953: 1,244).

Dr. h. c. O. Zipfel, Delegate for "Arbeitsbeschaffung-und wirtschaftliche Landesverteidigung" has tendered his resignation to the Federal Council to take effect at the end of the current year.

The Federal Council has nominated as his successor, Dr. Fritz Hummler, at present Director of the "Ateliers de constructions mécaniques de Vevey, S.A."

During the month of February, 1955, the Swiss Federal Railways have carried 16.65 million passengers, or 184,000 more than in February, 1954. Receipts: 20.73 million francs (February, 1954: 20.50 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 1.72 million tons, which exceeds last year's figures by 373,000 tons. Receipts: 32.15 million francs (February, 1954: 29.29 million francs).

The Italian Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Egidio Reale, who is leaving his post, gave a farewell

party which was attended by 500 people. Apart from the members of the Diplomatic Corps, there were present Federal Councillors Feldmann, Etter, Streuli, and Chaudet, former Federal Councillors von Steiger, Stampfli, Pilet-Golaz, Minger, Rubattel and Weber, as well as high grade army officers, representatives of municipal and cantonal authorities, industrialists, bankers, etc.

At the end of December, 1954, the number of civil servants employed by the Confederation numbered 94,441 (1953: 93,687).

Customs receipts for the month of March, 1955, totalled 66.3 million francs, or 5 million francs more than in March, 1954.

During the first three months of the current year, 129.3 million francs were collected, 19.5 million francs more than during the same period in 1954.

### Cantonal

National-Councillor, Arnold Wagner (Stans) has tendered his resignation as a member of the Government of the canton Unterwalden, to which he had belonged since 1943. [A.T.S.]

An unregistered postal packet containing 151,000.—frs. in notes disappeared from Sihl post office, Zurich. The police were able to lay hands on the thief in the person of a clerk (21) employed at the post office, but 900.—frs. were missing. [A.T.S.]

## CITY SWISS CLUB

Will members kindly note that the next

### MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on **Tuesday, May 17th, 1955,** at **6.30 p.m.** for **7 p.m.** at the **Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.**

The Dinner will be followed by a game of Jass, Bridge or Canasta.

Members wishing to be present should send their card to the Manager of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. to reach him not later than Monday, May 16th, 1955.

THE COMMITTEE.

The Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich has honoured Professor, Dr. Paul Casparis, Director of the Pharmaceutical Institute of the University of Berne, with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Switzerland's oldest bank "Aktiengesellschaft Leu & Co.", Zurich, has celebrated its 200th Jubilee. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Josef Jud, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Zurich, has celebrated his 103rd birthday. He is a citizen of Krummenau. (Toggenburg). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A party of fifteen skiers from Thun, ignoring warnings of possible avalanche dangers undertook an excursion to the Giglistock (Bernese Oberland). Seven of them were overtaken by an avalanche, four were able to free themselves on their own accord, one was dug out of the snow later on by a rescue party, whilst two members, Jeanpierre Goetsch (18) of Thun, and Fritz Rufener (19) of Blumenstein, lost their lives. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Maxime Quartenoud, has celebrated his 20th Jubilee as a member of the Government of the canton of Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The 16th century "Landhaus" at Solothurn was completely destroyed by a fire. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. P. H. Börlin, at present Conservator at the "Landesmuseum", Zurich, has been elected Conservator of the Basle Art Gallery. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The University of Basle has conferred on Mr. Jakob Schweizer of Oberdorf (Basle Country), a former President of the Cantonal Court, and a member of the "Landrat" the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Hermann Keller has tendered his resignation as a member of the Government of the canton of Appenzell, A.Rh., for reasons of health. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Alois Löhner, "Stadtammann" of Wil (Ct. St. Gall) has been nominated an Honorary citizen of the town of Wil. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. P. Hausheer (Aarau) has been nominated "Landammann" of the canton of Aargau, and Mr. Ernst Schwarz "Landesstatthalter". [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Considerable damage has been caused through a fire which broke out at the "Rolladenfabrik, A. Griesser, A.G." Aardorf. (Ct. Thurgau). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mlle. Germaine Krepf (44), of Zurich, was overtaken by an avalanche on the ascent of the Pizzo Rotondo (Ct. Ticino) and lost her life. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. med. Michelet (70) a medical practitioner in Sitten (Ct. Valais), was killed when piloting a Piper sports plane which crashed near Siders. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Jean Schutz, watchmaker, in Neuchâtel, has celebrated his 103rd birthday; he is the oldest inhabitant of the canton of Neuchâtel. [A.T.S.]

## DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Caspere Gatti, from 1939-1954, President of the Appeal Court of the canton of Ticino, in Motto di Dongio.

Dr. Jakob Müller, from 1924-1939 in command of the Zurich cantonal police force, and afterwards for several years Head of the army police force, in Küssnacht-Zurich, at the age of 70.

Louis Zuern, member of the Board of the cigarette manufacturing firm E. Laurens, S.A., Geneva, in Geneva, aged 58.

Albert Schlaepfer, Printer and Publisher of the "Appenzeller Zeitung", in Herisau, at the age of 78.

Dr. med. Ernst Tschopp, Pharmacologist at the CIBA, and President of the Botanical Society, Basle, in Basle, aged 56.

Colonel Léo de Meyer, a former delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, in Fribourg.

Hans Lätt, formerly town clerk of Olten, in Olten, at the age of 75.

Laurent Rey, a former member of the Government of the canton of Valais, and Director of the Cantonal Bank, in Sitten, aged 89.

Maurice Dumartheray, in Geneva, at the age of 64. The deceased held the post of Secretary-General of the Astronomical Society of Geneva, he was also a member of the "Société Astronomique de France", and the British Astronomical Association. [A.T.S.]

Pastor, Dr. j.c. Benedikt Hartmann, for many years a teacher at the "Bündner Kantonsschule", and author of historical and biographical works, in Schliers, at the age of 82.

Heinrich Alfred Gautschi-Humbel, Founder, Manager, and from 1938-1950, President of the "Aluminium, A.G.", Menziken, in Menziken, aged 84.

Emmanuel Chevalley, civil-engineer, and a former Managing-Director of the "Salinen" works, Bex, in Aigle, at the age of 73.

Dr. Fritz Weiss, rector of the "Realgymnasium", Basle, in Basle, aged 61.

Rodolphe Mellet, formerly Professor of Chemistry at the University of Lausanne, in Lausanne, at the age of 78.

Aimé Kling, for 20 years a member of various orchestras, and Honorary President of the Geneva Musician's Association, in Geneva, aged 81.



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## VARIOUS

Here are further balances of the accounts for 1954 of the following cantons:

Fribourg	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	131,390.—frs.
Appenzell, I.Rh.	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	25,818.—frs.
Valais	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	1,088,961.—frs.
Vaud	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	1,733,620.—frs.
Berne	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	11,743,456.—frs.
Schwyz	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	100,369.—frs.
Neuchâtel	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	2,693,832.—frs.
Obwalden	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	60,387.—frs.
Ticino	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	245,431.—frs.
Lucerne	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	173,444.—frs.
Thurgau	.....	Credit	Balance	.....	540,000.—frs.

\* \* \*

At the end of last year the Swiss Merchant Fleet on the high seas numbered 31 ships totalling 165,000 tons. 702 seamen are employed on these ships of whom 287 are of Swiss nationality.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Exploration has announced at Zurich that a small group of Swiss explorers is being sent to central Greenland this year to prepare the way for the main expedition in 1957-58.

At the same time, the Swiss Foundation announces that very large Swiss map-making expeditions will be sent to the Himalayas next year.

\* \* \*

Swiss chocolate prices will be reduced by 10 per cent. on May 1, because of the recent drop in world prices.

\* \* \*

Switzerland has built a turbo-jet fighter known as the P16, which is about to begin tests.

\* \* \*

Groups of Swiss officers are expected to visit British Army units in Germany in the next few weeks to familiarise themselves with "Centurion" medium tanks, of which Switzerland is to buy 100. The purchase was approved by the Swiss Federal Parliament on 25 March.

\* \* \*

For 424 years Catholics and Protestants have shared the church at Altstaetten.

Now the "partnership" has been dissolved.

The Protestants have moved into a church of their own and the old church becomes Catholic property.

Fr. Joseph Klinger and the Protestant pastor, the Rev. Hans Gutknecht, celebrated the separation by commending the good understanding that had existed between the two communities for so long.

\* \* \*

Sir Winston Churchill in Syracuse received a silver cup, inscribed: "To Sir Winston S. Churchill. To the man who prevented the invasion of Switzerland in 1944."

The cup, 2ft. high, was the gift of a wealthy Zurich landowner, who learned from the recently published Yalta documents that Stalin had counselled the entry of Allied troops into Switzerland for a speedier ending of the war.

But Sir Winston had objected and the plan was dropped.—Reuter.

\* \* \*

The "Pilatus" Circus, well loved in Switzerland, is performing again as the result of public donations totalling 355,407 francs (about (28,000) which saved it from ruin.

The Buhlmann family, which had run the circus for generations, went bankrupt after a series of disasters, including accidents to performers and destruction of their "big top" in a storm.

Swiss newspapers appealed to the public to save the circus, and a company was formed to buy back the circus for the Buhlmann family, replace equipment and pay arrears of salary.

\* \* \*

Bomb-proof first-aid posts, with a total of 770 beds, have been built into the basements of all big buildings constructed in Basle during the last two years.

\* \* \*


The United States Government has announced that it will negotiate tariff concessions with Switzerland to compensate for the 50 per cent increase in duties on imported watches imposed in July.

Among the 16 items proposed for consideration are coal-tar dyes, ciné cameras, hat braids, and handkerchiefs. Switzerland claims that the new watch tariffs have affected about £25 million worth of her exports to the United States. The value of United States imports of all the items suggested for discussion is about £6 million a year, of which Switzerland is responsible for about £4,500,000.

The U.S. Government also said that it is adding about 40 new items to a list of commodities which it is considering for possible tariff concessions to Japan.

\* \* \*

Switzerland exported more than 1,000,000 pairs of shoes in 1954, and doubled its shoe exports to Britain,



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according to the Swiss office for the development of trade in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

*Spring Skiing Ahead.*

Once again Saas-Fee is organizing "Ski excursion weeks in the upper Alps". The first week is scheduled to begin on March 27th and the last to end on June 4th. All the summits, from Mont-Rose to Mont Blanc, figure in the programme for these ten weeks. The famous "High Trail" from Saas-Fee to Chamonix will be covered as far as Verbier during the second and third weeks, and from beginning to end during the seventh and eight weeks. The guide, Heinrich Zurbriggen of Saas-Fee (Valais) will send details on request.

*Vevey. The Winegrowers' Festival. 1st — 14th August, 1955.*

Applications for tickets to the following performances are now accepted by the Swiss National Tourist Office, 458, Strand, London, W.C.2:—

Morning (8.30) 4th, 6th, 9th and 12th August, 1955.

Evening (20.15) 5th, 7th, 10th, 13th and 14th August, 1955.

Prices range from 21.—frs. to 70.—frs. per seat, and are chargeable against V-Form, i.e. the respective amount is deducted from the basic currency allowance. The seating plan of the Open-air Theatre, which will accommodate 17,000 spectators, may be inspected by personal callers. Early application is advisable, since no guarantee can be given that seats are secured until the respective tickets are received from the issuing office in Switzerland. Ask for the special Festival folder.

*Montreux — An Entertainment Centre.*

Among the many events organized for the spring and summer, we wish to call attention to the following dates:— April 8th-11th: International Rink Hockey Championships; May 15th: opening of Montreux-Beach; May 15th: Unveiling of the Mannerheim Monument; May 25th-28th: "The Narcissus Rally", Seventh International Motor-coach Rally; in June: Sixth Festival of Italian Opera; July 30th-31st: Water-skiing Competitions for the "Upper Lake Trophy"; September 7th-21st: Tenth Montreux September Music Festival with the Paris National Orchestra.

Not to mention of course the famous Winegrowers' Festival which will be taking place at Vevey, some 3 miles from Montreux, from August 1st to 14th.

*The Highest Railway in Europe is Being Brought up to Date.*

In order to speed up traffic, the Jungfrau Railway Company in 1951 transformed the Eismeer-Jungfrauoch section of the line into a rack railway. It has also ordered two additional light trains, each of which will be able to carry 143 passengers and will cover the distance between Kleine Scheidegg and the Jungfrauoch in 42 minutes instead of 54 minutes, thus enabling passengers to spend more time admiring the magnificent panorama offered by the Jungfrauoch, at an altitude of 11,333 ft.

*A Century of Swiss Railways.*

The fourth volume of the work commemorating the centenary of the Swiss Federal Railways, which was celebrated in 1947, has just been published. It deals with administration, organization and traffic.

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Contrary to what might be expected from the somewhat forbidding subtitle, this volume succeeds, as the previous one, in bringing to life an essential aspect of the smooth running of the Swiss Railways.

The first volumes of this work dealt with the following subjects: 1) Generalities, history, finances, statistics, staff; 2) Fixed installations of normal and narrow gauge railways; 3) Rolling stock on normal and narrow gauge railways.

\* \* \*

#### *An Artistic Event at Zurich.*

The exhibition of "Etruscan Art and Culture", which has opened at the Kunsthaus in Zurich and will continue until the beginning of April, offers a fascinating general view of the life and artistic creations of a people who are still in many respects an enigma and who ruled over central Italy before the Romans. Architectural remains, burial vaults decorated with mural paintings, terra cotta statuettes, sculpture in stone or cast in bronze and marvels of the goldsmith's art give an idea of this culture lost in the depths of antiquity.

It is only in recent decades that this culture has been more clearly identified and studied, and even made use of by modern art in its search for new sources of inspiration. In order to enlighten a public poorly informed about these remote matters, the Kunsthaus has set aside a special section, organized by Italian experts, for initiating the public into Etruscan culture. The main exhibition displays more than 400 works, varying in importance but all very characteristic, of Etruscan art, through the courtesy of the Italian Government, the Pope, who has kindly lent works from the precious collections in the Vatican, and the principal archeological museums of Paris, Munich, London and New York. But it is interesting to note that some very fine objects have also been lent by private Swiss collectors. This exhibition organized by the Zurich Kunsthaus is certain to arouse great interest by its eminent contribution to the knowledge of Antiquity and the history of art.

\* \* \*

#### *New Road Patrols Organized by the Swiss Touring Club.*

The Swiss Touring Club has decided to organise road patrols to be located on sections of the roads where the traffic is particularly dense or which, for one reason or another, present certain difficulties. In summer these will mainly be on the Alpine passes and in winter in the vicinity of certain winter sports resorts. The new T.C.S. patrols are provided with small cars. Members of the patrol wear a khaki uniform and their cars are black and yellow with the Swiss Touring Club badge and the words "Touring Secours" painted on them. This emergency and enquiry service, which was introduced last month, is at the disposal of all road users.

\* \* \*

#### *The 11th International Music Competition in Geneva, 1955.*

227 candidates from 34 countries took part in the 10th International Music Competition held in 1954. This year, the competition will be taking place from September 17th to October 1st, and will consist of the following sections: vocal, piano, organ, viola, trumpet and sonatas for piano and violin.

The prospectuses containing the regulations and

programme of the competition have just been published. Entries should be sent to the Secretariat of the Competition, Geneva Conservatory of Music, before July 15th.

\* \* \*

#### *A New "Heidi" in Colour.*

A new film version of Johanna Spyri's famous book has just been made by the Praesens Film Co. in Zurich. The wonderful scenery of the Grisons which was used for the setting of the film, will appear in all the glory and freshness of its natural colours.

The scenario writers — Richard Schweizer and Max Haufter — and the actors are those that made the first version, which is at present being shown in America. The children, Elisabeth Sigmund and Tommy Klanoth, are the same, only two years older. Their success can but be greater. The film is directed by Franz Schnyder.

Once again the first part of the film is set in the picturesque village of Latsch in the Grisons. Other views have already been taken on the Languard Alp and the Fuorcla Surlej, near Pontresina. Nature, wild and of an incomparable beauty, plays an even greater part in this second version than in the first.

\* \* \*

#### *Holiday Courses in 1955.*

As in previous years, a great many holiday courses have been arranged to take place in Switzerland this summer. These of course are mainly *language courses*. There will be *courses in French language and culture at the following universities*: GENEVA, 4 series of courses of 3 weeks each, from July 11th to October 1st, 1955, for beginners, advanced students and teachers, as well as a seminary on International Institutions from July 11th to August 16th, in French, with simultaneous translation into English and German; LAUSANNE, 5 series of courses 3 weeks each, from July 11th to October 22nd (three levels of instruction) with a series of lectures "A panorama of contemporary literature from 1920 to 1954" and "Problems of to-day"; NEUCHÂTEL, a course of 5 weeks from July 11th to August 13th, medium and advanced levels.

In addition, French language courses have also been arranged for boys and girls *from the age of 14 onwards* at the Commercial High Schools of LAUSANNE (July 11th to August 20th, possibly also other modern languages and book-keeping); NEUCHÂTEL

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(July 12th to 6th August 6th and August 22nd to September 10th, possibly also English and Italian); and LA NEUVEVILLE (July 11th to 30th, mainly for German-speaking pupils).

The courses in German language and literature organised by the University of Commerce, the town and Canton of St. Gall, will be held at the Institute on the Rosenberg in July and August. They are intended for advanced students and teachers of German, whereas the courses organized by the town of Winterthur, from July 11th to August 20th, are intended for pupils of 14 and over.

A large number of private schools for boys and girls, both boarding and day institutions, take pupils during the summer holiday period, from the middle of July to the middle of September. The lessons (2 to 3 hours a day) are given in the mornings, the afternoons being reserved for sport and excursions. Lessons are mainly devoted to learning French or German, in some cases to other foreign languages and a general revision of different subjects.

In all cases, frequent outings and excursions are included in the time-tables of these holiday courses, as well as cultural and recreational activities; there is also every opportunity for students to practise their favourite summer sport. The atmosphere of these holiday courses is very friendly; in a word, they combine instruction with pleasure.

\* \* \*

*Holiday Season Tickets of the Bernese Oberland Railways.*

The Regional Holiday Season Tickets issued by the Bernese Oberland Railways, entitling holders to an unlimited number of journeys over a period of eight working days, have been made even more advantageous. As from next summer, they will also be valid for the Lauterbrunnen-Kleine Scheidegg-Grindelwald line. It should be noted that holders of this holiday ticket are also entitled to reduced fares on the Kleine Scheidegg-Jungfrauoch excursion. The regional holiday mileage ticket (which entitles the holder to a reduction of 50% on normal fares) will also be valid for the Lauterbrunnen-Wengen-Scheidegg-Grindelwald section of the line.

\* \* \*

*Raymond Lambert in Nepal.*

This popular guide from Geneva, who may well be called the "pioneer of Everest", since he paved the way to a certain extent for Hilary and Tensing,

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is preparing to start on a new expedition. With the famous Canon Détry, of the Grand St. Bernard monastery, he will this time be reconnoitring the Langtang-Himal district of Nepal. The expedition is planning to bring back photographs and films and also intends to study the customs of this little-known part of the world and carry out scientific observations. Lambert, it will be remembered, recently returned from an expedition with Claude Cogan, the French mountaineer.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Government is reported to be considering the construction of four Alpine tunnels. Three of the schemes are for road tunnels, one under the San Bernardino Pass, the second under the Grand St. Bernard, and the third under the St. Gotthard. The fourth, an alternative to the St. Gotthard scheme sponsored by the Government of Canton Ticino, is stated to have been put forward by the Federal Railways and is an outcome of railway and road competition.

The Federal Railways scheme provides for the boring of a second Gotthard tunnel, west of the existing one. The gallery, 9½ miles long, with a siding in the middle, would make it possible to transport on wagons 220 motor cars an hour between Goeschenen and Airolo. It would involve the building of large loading platforms at Goeschenen and Airolo, at the north and south ends respectively of the tunnel.

**PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.**

Une machine à relier et à coller, entièrement automatique, que construit une fabrique de machines de Frauenfeld, rencontre un succès éclatant sur le plan international. Alors que l'on introduit, d'un côté, les cahiers séparés d'un ouvrage tout entier, de l'autre sortent les exemplaires terminés, prêts à l'usage. Dans divers pays d'Europe, et même d'Australie, sont mis sur le marché des périodiques, des agendas, des annuaires du téléphone reliés au moyen de cette machine.

\* \* \*

L'industrie horlogère suisse recherche de nouveaux marchés. Elle a chargé une maison zurichoise de réaliser un film de propagande parlé en arabe. On peut imaginer les difficultés qu'il a fallu vaincre pour transposer, à l'intention du public arabe, le commentaire anglais et adapter texte, images, musique et atmosphère générale.

\* \* \*

Les trains légers reliant Genève à Zurich sont au nombre des plus rapides d'Europe. Ils viennent au troisième rang après les liaisons Paris-Lyon et Milan-Bologne.

\* \* \*

L'usine de Vermilion (province d'Alberta) est la première au Canada à utiliser des groupes de générateurs comprenant des turbines à gaz. C'est une entreprise de Baden, universellement connue, qui a construit toute l'installation, alimentée au gaz naturel.

\* \* \*

Le Corbusier, le célèbre architecte d'origine suisse, a reçu mandat de construire un nouveau musée à Tokio.

*Semaine Suisse.*