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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 appointed Minister, Dr. Fritz Real, at present Swiss Minister in Helsinki (Finland), to the post of Head of the Swiss Delegation to the Neutral Nation Commission for the repatriation of prisoners of war in Korea, in succession to Minister Dr. Egbert von Graffenried.

The Customary New Year's reception has taken place at the Palais Fédéral in Berne, the heads of the foreign diplomatic missions, headed by the Papal Nunzio as Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, were received by Dr. M. Feldmann, President of the Swiss Confederation.

The Governments of the Soviet Union, and the Chinese Peoples Republic have decided to raise their Legations in Berne to the status of Embassies.

The Federal Council has elected Dr. Charles Lenz to the post of Director General of Customs (Oberzolldirektor), in succession to Mr. Ernst Widmer.

Dr. Lenz was born in 1912 at Geneva, and is a citizen of Biglen (Ct. Berne). He studied national economy at the University of Geneva, and afterwards (1935) entered into the service of the Customs Administration. Since 1954, he occupied the post as Director of the 6th Customs District (Geneva).

The Swiss Federal Railways have carried 17.38 million passengers during the month of November, 1955, or 1.14 million more than in November 1954. Receipts: 21.29 million francs (November, 1954: 20.89 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 2.02 million tons, or 50,000 tons more than in November, 1954. Receipts: 39.18 million francs.

The Swiss Lower House approved cuts in the national defence tax varying from 10 to 40 per cent.

The tax, which is levied by the Government, now amounts to approximately two per cent of taxable income. Income tax, levied by the semi-autonomous cantons, is not affected.

The Swiss Attorney-General has forwarded to the federal High Court of Justice the bill of indictment against the four persons accused of having attacked the Rumanian Legation in Berne during the night of February 14-15 last. The case will be brought before the court in the spring at Lausanne. The weapons alleged to have been used by the assailants are said to have been supplied to them by a German living at Constanza, described as a specialist in the transformation of discarded war material and arms.

The Swiss Government approved a Bill for compulsory Civil Defence service.

All males between 15 and 65 will have to do three to six days compulsory service a year. Women between 15 and 50 may volunteer.

Anglo-Swiss trade negotiations to establish quotas in both directions for 1956 have opened in London on January 24th.

Since most of the trade between the two countries is liberalised the talks cover a comparatively narrow field, but subjects for discussion will include, particularly, U.K. export to Switzerland of agricultural tractors, vehicles, and some plastic materials.

On the import side the negotiations will cover Swiss watches and watch parts, pharmaceuticals, apparel and underwear, and some specialised industrial machinery.

CITY SWISS CLUB

OUR NEXT

SOIRÉE FAMILIALE

at which Ladies will be most welcome, is to take place on **Tuesday, 14th February, 1956**, at the Dorchester Hotel (6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.).

After Dinner, Mr. ALBERT FERBER, the well known artist, will give us a pianoforte recital.

THE COMMITTEE.

The talks, now an annual event, are conducted at official level and are expected to be concluded in a few days. General views on the trade situation will be exchanged, and it is likely that opportunities for U.K. exporters of manufactured goods, and secondarily of raw materials in the chemical, metallurgical, textile and leather industries will be discussed.

The present commercial agreement between the two countries, which expired on December 31, has been prolonged to allow the anticipated new agreement to come into force.

Lieutenant-Colonel Pierre Mange (Bière) has been elected commander of the "Eidg. Pferdeanstalt", with promotion to the rank of Colonel, in succession to Colonel Von der Weid, who is relinquishing his post for reasons of health.

The Federal Council has appointed Lieutenant-Colonel, Dr. med. R. Käser of Berne, to the post of chief medical officer of the Swiss Red Cross.

Cantonal

At the end of last year, the town of Zurich numbered 414,011 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

The Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich, has honoured Professor, Ernest Juillard of Lausanne, with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

The Bristol Old Vic company will present Sheridan's "The Rivals" at the International Festival at Zurich in June. [A.T.S.]

Mme. Veuve Regina Hess Brettauer of Zurich has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

The "Bernische Kraftwerke, A.G.", has elected Mr. Walter Jahn, to the post of "Direktionspräsident", in succession to Mr. H. Seiler, who has resigned. The new President joined this concern in 1919. From 1945-1951, he was in the army as commander of the 3rd Division. [A.T.S.]

At the end of 1955, the population of the town of Delsberg (Jura) numbered 8,351. [A.T.S.]

Mlle. Anna de Weck, the daughter of the late Louis de Weck, President of the Government of the canton of Fribourg from 1861-1880, was presented with the traditional easy-chair, on the occasion of her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Werner Rätz, Manufacturer of Biezwil (Ct. Solothurn) was killed when his car collided with a tree near Büren, his wife received serious injuries. [A.T.S.]

On the 1st of January, 1956, the town of Olten registered 18,110 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

Mr. John Kenneth Blackwell has taken up his appointment as British Consul in Basle, in succession to Mr. A. E. Franklin. [A.T.S.]

Neon signs have been banned in the old quarters of Schaffhausen. The local authorities approved the ban unanimously to preserve the character of the city. They have also banned all illumination for the purpose of advertising on facades one or more floors above street level. [A.T.S.]

Zizers, a town in the Upper Rhine valley, formally bequeathed to the Bishop of Chur by the German Emperor Otto Roman, on December, 28th 955, celebrated its 1,000th birthday with prayers and the ringing of bells. [A.T.S.]

The castle of Lenzburg belonging to the Ellsworth family of New York, has been purchased by the Government of the canton of Aargau. [A.T.S.]

Traffic accidents during the year 1955, in the canton of Thurgau numbered 666. 43 persons received fatal injuries. [A.T.S.]

The town of Lausanne numbered at the end of 1955, 115,476 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

A Communist-sponsored proposal to cut taxes on small incomes and raise them on big incomes was rejected by the Geneva electorate in a popular ballot held recently. The vote was 9,448 for, and 19,115 against. Only 45 per cent of the electorate took part in the ballot. [A.T.S.]

The population of the town of La Chaux-de-Fonds at the end of 1955, numbered 37,101, that of the town of Neuchâtel, 30,226. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Fritz Weber-Lehnert, Head of the "Brauerei Wädenswil", and for 28 years President of the



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Board of the "Zürcher Dampfbootgesellschaft", in Wädenswil, at the age of 86.

François Barbier, founder of the co-operative movement in the canton of Neuchâtel, and Head of the United Co-operative Society, La Chaux-de-Fonds, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, aged 81.

Major Auguste Pittet, administrator of the arsenals Payerne and Moudon, in Payerne, at the age of 58.

Ludwig Lenzlinger, since 1953, President of the Criminal Court of the canton of Zurich, and at one time a member of the "Kantonsrat", Zurich, in Winterthur, aged 57.

Mme. Irma Deviras-Chervais, the oldest "Jura-siennes" in Courgenay, at the age of 103.

Dr. phil. Frieda Gallati, well-known historian, in Glarus, aged 80.

Dr. Gustave Fragnière, a well-known medical practitioner, in Fribourg, at the age of 70.

Professor Leo Courvoisier, astrologer, in Riehen, aged 82.

Dr. Ernst Erny, from 1931-1950, a member of the Government of the canton Basle-Country, in Liestal, at the age of 72.

Ad. Mercier, riding-master, in Basle, aged 78.

Karl Kälin, a judge at the Criminal Court of the canton of Schwyz, and editor of the "Neuen Einsiedler Zeitung", in Schwyz, at the age of 52.

Dr. Eduard Wymann, Priest, and Keeper of the archives of the canton of Uri, in Altdorf, aged 86.

Louis Grisoni, from 1944-1950, President of the commune of Cressier, and from 1945-1953, a Member

of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel.

Dr. med. Hans Wiedmer-Aebi, formerly surgeon-in-chief at the District Hospital, Burgdorf, in Burgdorf, at the age of 65. [A.T.S.]

* * * ANNIVERSARIES.

Mr. Fritz Hatt (80) President of the Board of the firm Danzas & Cie., Basle, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, Basle, and the International Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Guido Müller (80) from 1921-1947, Mayor of Bienne, and from 1925-1943, a Member of Parliament (National-Council).

Mr. Friedrich Niggli (80) of Zollikon-Zurich, composer and pianist.

Mr. Christian Foppa (75) of Vigens (Ct. Grisons), The "Jubilar" was from 1911-1929, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Grisons, and from 1925-1939, a member of the National Council.

Army-corps Commander Constam (70) of Küssnacht, from 1938-1944, in command of the 6th Division, and from 1944-1950, commander of the 3rd Army-corps.

Dr. Hans Georg Wirz (70) of Berne, Professor of War History at the University of Berne, and chief bibliothecarian of the "Schweiz. Volksbibliothek".

Colonel Alfred Gübeli (70) of Lucerne, formerly commander of the 8th division (1934-1942), and commander of the 2nd Army-corps (1943-1949).

Dr. Adolphe Sicé (70) of Basle, "Ordinarius" for tropical hygiene at the University of Basle, and "Dozent" at the Swiss Tropical Institute, Basle.

Paul Renggli (70) of Bienne, since 1938, a member of the Board of the "Allgemeinen Schweizerischen Uhrenindustrie A.G.", Bienne. The "Jubilarian" held from 1931-1938, the post of Director "Des Bundesamtes für Industrie, Gewerbe & Arbeit". In the 2nd world war, he was "Direktor des Kriegs Industrie und Arbeitsamtes", from which he retired in 1941.

Madame Emmy Fredenhagen-Lüscher (70) of Basle, for many years President of the "Basler Frauenverein".

Dr. Eugen Dietschi (60) of Basle, for 35 years Editor of the "National Zeitung", Basle. Since 1929, he has been a member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town, and since 1941 a Member of Parliament (National Council). Dr. Dietschi is President of the "Basler Kantonalbank", and since 1954, "Zentralpräsident" of the Swiss Liberal Democratic party. From 1952-1954, he was "Zentralpräsident" of the Swiss Press Association. [A.T.S.]

* * * LEGACIES AND DONATIONS.

The executors of the will of the late Georg Reinhart (Winterthur) have donated the well-known and valuable picture "Postboten Roulin" by Vincenz van Gogh to the "Kunstmuseum", Winterthur. The "Kunstverein", Winterthur received an amount of 50,000.—frs. and the "Galerieverein" 10,000.—frs.

The late Wittwe Laura Schellenberg of Erlenbach (Zurich) has left an amount of 10,000.—frs. to the communes of Erlenbach and Küssnacht for charitable purposes.

Mme. Elise Hürlimann of Walchwil (Zug) left an amount of 14,000.—frs. to the commune of Walchwil for charitable purposes.

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The recently deceased Mme. Emma Schaub of Basle has left 200,000.—frs. to social, cultural and charitable institutions.

The family Birchmeier, Proprietors of the "Metallwarenfabrik Birchmeier & Cie", Künten, have given an amount of 50,000.—frs. to the commune of Künten (Ct. Aargau) towards the costs of a new school building, and 50,000.—frs. towards the costs of a new church.

The firm Ruepp & Co., A.G., "Mechanische Strickerei" in Sarmenstorf Ct. Aargau) has made a donation of 100,000.—frs. towards the building of a new school.

An anonymous donor has informed the community of Meilen (Ct. Zurich) that he will give an amount of 200,000.—frs. for the building of a home for old people.

The late Mme. Elise Forrer-Anderes of Zurich has left a legacy amounting to 23,648.—frs. to the community of Erlenbach (Ct. Zurich) towards the erection of a parish hall.

The recently deceased Charles Ruchonnet of Cully, has left an amount of 27,000.—frs. and 100 paintings to the hospital of Cully.

The late Jakob Hugentobler-Heer of Anlikon (Ct. Thurgau) has given a legacy of 8,000.—frs. to the parish of Bussnang.

The Board of the Georg Fischer, A.G., Schaffhausen, has made the following donations to the town of Schaffhausen: 50,000.—frs. for a public park at the top of the "Geissberg"; 25,000.—frs. for decorations at the new Municipal Theatre; 25,000.—frs. to the Georg Fischer Fund for cultural purposes, and 10,000.—frs. to the "Schaffhauser Musikollegium".

The late Mme. Frieda Hochstrasser of Münchenstein has left a legacy amounting to 35,000.—frs. to the "Pflegeheim am See", Küssnacht (Ct. Zurich).

[A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

Mr. & Mrs. C. Soliva-Baumann of Altdorf.

The Xmas collection of the "Schweiz. Kaufmännischer Verein" amounted to 30,000.—frs. This amount will be used for members who are receiving treatment in hospitals and sanatoriums. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Automobile Club has launched a campaign to popularise "friendly hand signals" among motorists.

The campaign aims at increasing road safety, making traffic more fluid on busy streets, and creating an atmosphere of courtesy and camaraderie among motorists.

King Paul and Queen Frederika of Greece have sent a New Year's gift of 1,000 francs (about £80) and a silver-framed picture of themselves to a Swiss woman in charge of a level crossing who saved their lives.

Last November, the woman, Mme. Haenni, saw a large car speeding towards her level crossing at Oberwinterthur. The crossing had its gates closed to allow an express to pass.

Realising that the car could not stop in time, she raised the gates again and let it through just before the train was due.

In the car were King Paul and Queen Frederika on a visit to Switzerland.

ACROW TO MANUFACTURE IN CANADA.

Over the past twelve months the demand in Canada for Acrow Steel Scaffolding and Formwork and other equipment for the construction industry has outgrown the capacity of the Company to supply from the United Kingdom. Acrow (Canada) Limited, a subsidiary of the Acrow Group, is therefore setting up a plant and housing scheme on a 250 acre site at Orangeville, Ontario, which when in full production will manufacture the entire range of Acrow equipment. In view of the high cost of internal transportation in Canada, however, the production of the new Works is intended to cover mainly the vast developments in central Canada, whilst the growing demands of Eastern and Western Canada will continue to be exported from Acrow's present U.K. factories and the new Coronation Works at Saffron Walden in Essex, now about to come into production.

SWISSAIR-DAIMLER CAR HIRE AGREEMENT.

Swissair and Daimler Hire Limited of Knightsbridge, London, have concluded an agreement covering the hire of "Drive-Yourself" cars by passengers abroad. Daimler have so far made arrangements with car hire companies in France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland for cars to be available to passengers on arrival at their destination. Provision for the same facilities in Austria, Greece and Turkey is under negotiation.

The present allowance of £35 under Exchange Control Regulations for the payment of car rental in Europe will apply to this scheme.

Rentals in Italy, for example, range from £2.17.2. per day for a Fiat 600 with 100 kilometres free, plus 4½d. per additional kilometre, to £6.8.7. per day for a Lancia Aurelia for an unlimited distance. These rates include insurance, oil and tax but not petrol. In Germany they range from 12/11 per day for a Volkswagen Standard, plus 4d. per kilometre for a minimum of 80 kilometres, to 28/7 per day for a Mercedes 300 plus 10½d. per kilometre.

In France they range from 19/8 per day for a 2 H.P. Citroen, plus 2½d. per kilometre (minimum 60 kilometres), to £2.2.10. per day for a Chevrolet or a Plymouth plus 7d. per kilometre. Discounts on the above rates are available, depending on length of hire and season.

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