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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Chancellery has issued a report in connection with the £8 million Centurian tank deal.

As mentioned in our last issue (January 25th) the Federal Attorney's Office (Bundesanwaltschaft) was asked by the Swiss Government to investigate whether illegal profits have been obtained by third parties on war material procured by the Federal Military Department and whether such people are liable to legal penalties.

The 1,500 word *communiqué* from the Attorney's Office has now been published, and states that Colonel Hans Rieser, Military and Air Attaché in Washington — who was suspended and recalled to Berne during the course of the investigation — could not be prosecuted under the Swiss penal code, but disciplinary procedure would be opened for alleged violation of the Swiss civil statute.

According to the *communiqué* Colonel Rieser, who was Military and Air Attaché in London till April, 1952, claimed that he was asked by the makers of Centurian tanks, Vickers-Armstrongs Limited, to propose a representative for them in Switzerland. Colonel Rieser proposed his brother Hubert (a contractor) with whom Vickers-Armstrongs came to an agreement in June, 1950. Hubert was to receive one per cent commission from Vickers-Armstrongs if the Swiss Parliament voted credits to buy Centurians, as it did in 1955. It stated that Hubert Rieser said he intended to pay his brother one-third of the commission for acting as intermediary in his appointment by Vickers-Armstrongs. Hubert Rieser received 395,000.— frs. and placed 50,000.— frs. in a special cash account for Colonel Rieser.

The Federal Military Department has entrusted Federal Judge Schoenenberger with the task of investigating whether Colonel Hans Rieser can be charged with "blameworthy and reprehensible" conduct. In the meantime Colonel Rieser is relieved of his post as Military and Air Attaché without pay.

Colonel H. Rieser was well known in the Colony whilst *en poste* in London. He was born in 1901 in Berne, and is a citizen of Berne and Wuppenau (Ct. Thurgau). He attended schools in Berne and St. Gall and studied languages in Rome, Cambridge, London, Paris and Berlin. He then attended the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, where he passed his examinations as an architect.

After several years in this branch, he was until the beginning of the last war for five years General Secretary of the Swiss Aero Club. During the war he was commander of various units and joined the Federal Military Department in 1942. On March 1st, 1947, he was appointed as Military and Air Attaché at the Swiss Legation in London.

The receipts for the month of December, 1956, of the Federal Customs Administration amounted to 80.8 million francs. The Confederation (Bund) receives from this amount 60.4 million francs, or 6.4 million francs more than in December, 1955.

For the whole year of 1956 the receipts amount to 666.6 million francs. (1955: 585.0 million francs.)

Cantonal

Two persons were killed when a motor-car collided with a lorry near Reichenburg (Ct. Schwyz). The names of the victims are Edwin Keller (59), teacher in Küsnacht (Zurich), and Robert Hafner (54), contractor of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

The electric railway "Stansstad-Engelberg, A.G." has gone into liquidation. [A.T.S.]

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will members kindly note that the next

MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on Tuesday, February 12th, 1957, at 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m. at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1 (Stanhope Room).

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, February 11th, 1957.

THE COMMITTEE.