

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1957)

Heft: 1291

Rubrik: Prepaid subscription rates

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED IN 1919 BY PAUL F. BOHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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

EDITED BY A. STAUFFER WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE SWISS COLONY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 2321/2.

Published Twice Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON

Vol. 42. No. 1291.

FRIDAY, MARCH 15th, 1957.

PRICE 11d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES. (Fortnightly issue.)

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	{ 6 issues, post free	6/-
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	{ 24 issues, post free	21/-
SWITZERLAND	{ 12 issues, post free	Frs. 7.—
	{ 24 issues, post free	Frs. 13.50

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postscheck-Konto
Basle V 5718.)



NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The message of the Swiss Federal Government to Parliament proposing to grant the vote to women in federal affairs has been published recently. It puts forward some constitutional modifications, one of them making it clear that the word "citizen" used in the present text of the constitution would apply to women as well as men.

Other changes proposed are that women should be entitled to sit in the Lower Chamber of Parliament (National Council) and on the Federal Supreme Court. There would be an exception in the case of foreign women married to Swiss citizens; they could be elected only after holding Swiss nationality for 12 years.

As acceptance of the proposals would almost double the number of electors, there would be changes in the referendum rights which are part of the Swiss constitution. At present a law passed by Parliament must be submitted to a popular vote if at least 30,000 citizens demand it; in future the number of signatures necessary would be 60,000. The "right of initiative" allows a petition for an amendment to the constitution to be submitted by 50,000 citizens; in future the number would be 100,000.

M. Chaudet, head of the Federal Military Department, stated at a Press conference that he was asking for a supplementary credit of about 40 million francs for the defence forces. About half would be spent on training specialized technical units of the army, and the remainder on the purchase of training aircraft. These would include 20 Vampire trainers, to be built under licence in Switzerland.

The traditional dinner offered by the Federal Council to the heads of the diplomatic missions accredited to the Confederation, and their ladies, took place in Berne.

The report of the Swiss National Bank reveals gold reserves of nearly £600,000,000, or about £120 per head of the population, compared with reserves of £46 per head in the U.S.A.

Monsieur Joseph Marjai, the newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the People's Republic of Hungary, has presented his credentials to Dr. Th. Holenstein, Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, and to M. Max Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister at the Palais Federal in Berne.

The newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Iceland, Monsieur Helgi P. Briem, has presented his credentials to Dr. Th. Holenstein, Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation, and to M. Max Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister.

Customs receipts for the month of January 1957 totalled 75.9 million francs of which the Confederation benefits by 56.1 million francs, or 10 million francs more than during the same period in 1956.

The widow of the chauffeur who was killed in an attack on the Rumanian Legation in Berne two years ago has, by the order of the Federal Council, received a cheque of 30,000.— frs. as compensation for the loss of her husband.

The Italian Minister of Commerce, Monsieur Dall'oglio Stattete, has paid a visit to Federal-Councillor Dr. Th. Holenstein, to discuss commercial relations between the two countries.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will members kindly note that a

SOIRÉE FAMILIALE

(with Ladies)

will take place on **Wednesday, March 20th, 1957, at 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m., at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.** Dinner will be followed by two films, as well as by a short talk on the Petroleum Industry.

Will members kindly advise the Manager of the Dorchester Hotel not later than Tuesday, March 19th, 1957.

TH. v. SPEYR,
Assistant Secretary.