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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

It was officially announced in Berne that Colonel Marcel Mercier, an attaché in the French Embassy, is no longer a member of the staff and has left Switzerland.

Colonel Mercier joined the embassy in Berne in June, 1952. He is an intelligence officer of wide experience and his work in that capacity was far flung, the activities of both Continental Communists and North African insurgents coming under his survey. He was a close friend of M. Dubois, the former Attorney-General, who committed suicide after the first reports of the espionage affair were published. M. Dubois, a warm admirer of France, did not disguise where his sympathies lay at the time of the Suez crisis.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Government has urged all householders to keep a permanent reserve of two months' food supply, to lessen the dangers of panic buying in times of emergency.

\* \* \*

The Federal Council intends to ask Parliament for a further credit of 7 million francs for aiding Hungarian refugees, and refugees from other countries.

Switzerland has so far taken 11,827 Hungarian nationals, and it is intended to offer asylum to another 500 refugees from Yugoslavia.

\* \* \*

Mr. J. Landis, for the last eleven years Chief of the Agricultural section at the Federal Economic Department, has tendered his resignation for reasons of health. Mr. Landis has for nearly 40 years rendered conspicuous services to the Confederation.

\* \* \*

The Federal Chambers (National and States Council) started their summer session on Monday, June 3rd, for the duration of 3½ weeks.

\* \* \*

General Hayashi, chief of the General Staff of the Japanese army, has paid a courtesy visit to

Monsieur Chaudet, head of the Federal Military Department in Berne.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 20.7 million passengers in April 1957, or 3.4 million more than during the same month in 1956. Receipts: 29.8 million frs. (April: 24.7 million frs.)

Goods traffic is returned as 2.11 million tons, which exceeds last year's figures by 160,000 tons. Receipts: 38.8 million frs. (April 1956: 37.5 million frs.)

### Cantonal

The town of Zurich numbered at the end of April 1957, 425,952 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Silvan Nussbaumer of Oberaegeri (Conservative) has been elected a member of the Government of the canton of Zug. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Henri Huber (Moutier) has been elected President of the Government of the canton of Berne. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg has held a solemn session to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the town of Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. Adolf Kellerhals of Olten (Christian Socialist) has been elected President of the Tribunal of the district Olten-Goesgen with 4,500 votes; his opponent Dr. Gasto Kupper (Independent) received 2,700 votes.

[A.T.S.]

## CITY SWISS CLUB

A Card Meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 2nd 1957. As no circulars will be sent out for this meeting will members kindly note the date and advise the Dorchester Hotel of their intention to be present by the day previous to the Meeting. (This can be done by telephoning Miss Martin at the Dorchester Hotel, Telephone: MAYfair 8888).

Th. von SPEYR,  
Hon. Secretary.

In April 1957 the town of Schaffhausen numbered 29,082 inhabitants. [A.T.S.]

The Austrian Minister in Berne, Monsieur Johannes Coreth, paid an official visit to the Government of the canton of Neuchâtel. After a visit to the castle he was entertained to luncheon by the Cantonal Government. [A.T.S.]

M. André Sandoz (Socialist) has been elected President of the Government of the canton of Neuchâtel for the period 1957 to 1958. M. Buettikofer (Le Locle) was elected President of the Grand Council. [A.T.S.]

The Netherlands Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur J. W. M. Snouck Hurgronge, was officially received by the Government of the canton of Geneva. [A.T.S.]

#### DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Hermann Gamper, for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Schaffhausen, in Schaffhausen at the age of 61.

Professor Dr. Friedrich Tobler, in Trogen, aged 77. The deceased was a well-known botanist and biologist, and author of many scientific works.

Bernard de Raemy, from 1904 to 1934 representative of the firm of "Gebrüder Sulzer" in Cairo, and from 1934 to 1944, chief of the Diesel section at the headquarters of this firm, in Fribourg at the age of 65.

Albert Matter, for many years chief engineer of the "Nordostschweizerischen Kraftwerken", Baden, in Aarau, aged 72.

Professor Dr. med. Goldschmid, from 1933 to 1951 Professor of Medicine at the University of Lausanne, in Lausanne at the age of 76.

Brigade-Colonel Walter Koenigs, a former member of the Instructors Corps, in Berne, aged 69. [A.T.S.]

#### LEGACIES.

Mr. P. Gimmi, a merchant of St. Gall made further donations amounting to 68,500.— frs. Amongst the beneficiaries are the following: "Evangelische Kirchgemeinde" St. Gall 15,000.— frs., "Katholische Kirchgemeinde" St. Gall 5,000.— frs., and "Evangelische Kirchgemeinde" Amriswil 5,000.— frs.

Mr. Robert Hoehener, who died some time ago in Feldmoos nr. Thal (Ct. St. Gall), has left the amount of 18,500.— frs. to the "Evangelischen Kirchgemeinde" Thal-Lutzenberg, and 9,000.— frs. to various charitable institutions.

The late Dr. Wilhelm Baltisschweiler, formerly director of the "Allgemeine Unfall & Haftpflichtversicherung" Zurich, has left the amount of 1.5 million francs to the "Schweiz. Gemeinnützigen Gesellschaft."

Dr. phil. Theodor Schenk, at one time a teacher at the Gymnasium Berne, has left the sum of 100,000.— frs. to the University of Zurich, 10,000.— frs. to the "Bernischen Naturschutzverein," and 10,000.— frs. to the Liberal-Democratic Party of Switzerland.

The late Dr. med. K. R. Stierlin-Heberle of Stein a. Rh. has left the University of Zurich a donation of 20,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

#### ANNIVERSARIES

Dr. Fritz Keller (70), of Lucerne, editor-in-chief of the "Luzerner Tagblatt".

Federal-Councillor Dr. Markus Feldmann (60), of Thun. He entered the Federal Government in 1951, and held the post of President of the Swiss Confederation in 1956.

Jakob Herzog (90), of Truttikon (Ct. Zurich), well-known painter living in Winterthur. [A.T.S.]

#### DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

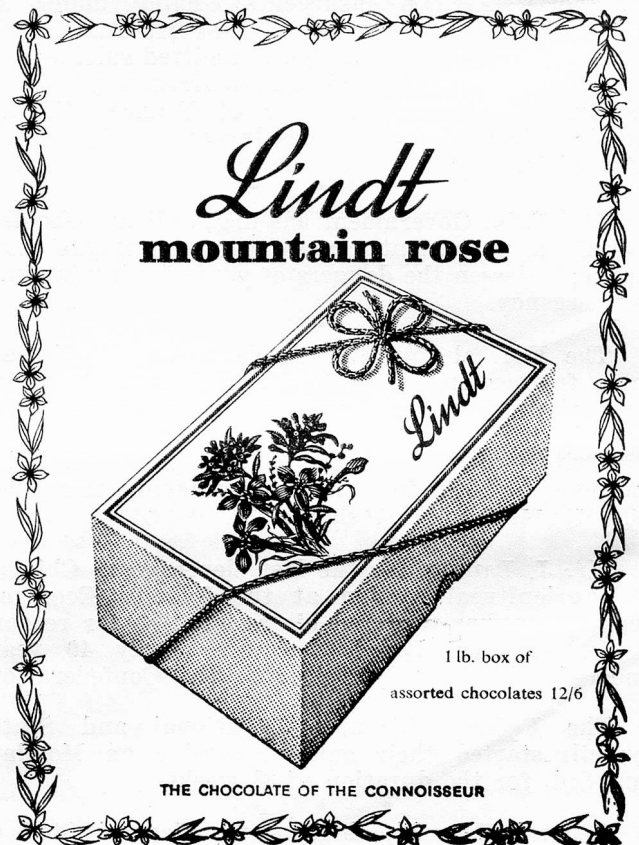
Mr. & Mrs. Benkler-Grathwol of Basle, Mr. & Mrs. Bigler-Favre of Pfaeffikon (Ct. Zurich), Mr. & Mrs. Boesch-Bosshard of Herisau, Mr. & Mrs. J. Zimmermann-Leder of Oberflachs (Ct. Aargau), Mr. & Mrs. Hohl-Platt of Teufen, Mr. & Mrs. E. Stucki-Gut of Winterthur, Mr. & Mrs. S. Valentin-Zonder of St. Moritz, Mr. & Mrs. K. Tafel-Hunziker of Basle.

Mr. & Mrs. H. Joos-Schlittler of Niederurnen (Ct. Glarus) have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65 years). [A.T.S.]

#### VARIOUS.

The Senate of the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences unanimously passed a resolution calling for a suspension of nuclear bomb tests pending an international conference of scientists to assess the dangers of increased radio-activity for mankind.

The resolution stated that "the increase of ambient radio-activity may not only represent an



immediate peril for man and for living creatures as a whole, but may also entail long-term genetic disturbances in many successive generations”.

This pronouncement followed a statement by the Swiss Federal Commission for the observation of radio-activity, which said that “atomic explosions, if continued for some time at the present rate, would cause a danger to human life which must not be underestimated”.

\* \* \*

The Federal Gymnastic Society which has a membership of 245,000 gymnasts has celebrated its 125th Jubilee.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Hotel Proprietors Association has celebrated the 75th anniversary of its foundation.

\* \* \*

*Petrol Price in Switzerland.* The Price of Petrol has been still further reduced recently. To-day's prices are: Standard Petrol, 50 Cts. per litre (3/9 per gallon); Super Petrol, 57 Cts. (4/4); Diesel Oil, 47 Cts. (3/7).

In Bâle and in the Lower Ticino, Standard Petrol is 1 Ct. cheaper, and the Upper Valais and the Grisons 1 Ct. dearer.

\* \* \*

*Swiss Industries Fair — Bâle 1958.* The 42nd Swiss Industries Fair has been fixed to take place from 12th to 22nd April, 1958. In place of textile machinery it will again be the turn of machine tools for the metal working industry to be represented there.

\* \* \*

*Swiss Sensational Luminous Wrist Watch.* A leading Swiss watch factory has invented a new luminous wrist-watch. It is independent from the old-fashioned pattern of radium-illuminated figures and, instead, is equipped with a miniature battery and a tiny electric bulb. The new invention not only enables its bearer to tell the time in pitch darkness but can also be used as a flash-light, as its beam is powerful enough to light up door-plates, telephone directories and note-books. Moreover, it has a built-in Morse transmitter for short-distance communi-

tions. Its battery lasts several years and can be recharged in a trice. In addition to these revolutionary new features the watch is also water-proof, shock-proof and anti-magnetic, and is said to “cost not more than any other good Swiss wrist-watch”.

\* \* \*

*Zurich by Night — Yodelling, Dancing under the Stars, and Lake Cruising.* Participants in the nightly conducted tours of Switzerland's metropolis, called “Zurich by Night”, are taken to a night-spot where

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the entire cast of the show bursts into yodelling and alphorn-blowing as soon as the conducted tourists appear (and switches to dixieland jazz when they are out of sight). Other highlights of the tour include auditions of Swiss folk music, a motor-boat cruise on Lake Zurich, a visit to a hill-top restaurant famous for its panoramic view of the light-flooded city, and a midnight call at an elegant nightclub of the non-yodelling variety. Everywhere free drinks and snacks are provided, and participants are taken back to their hotels after the tour.

\* \* \*

*Swimming and skiing all on the same day* is one of the combinations offered to sport fans in summer-time Switzerland. More than 500 ski enthusiasts are to compete at Jangfrauoch in the traditional International Ski Race on July 7th and can cool off afterwards in the swimming pool at the nearby resort of Wengen where the "bathing season" starts as early as June 15th.

\* \* \*

*The Sailing School at Hilterfingen on the Lake of Thun* this year was already open for the Easter holidays. Other sections of the school, at Spiez and Neuhaus, were in operation at Whitson. A staff of teachers and a fleet of boats are ready for action, living up to the school's motto "It's Easy to Sail" and endeavouring to make "good sailors" also out of those who do not own sailing-boats. Sparkling Lake Thun, which is described as one of Europe's most rewarding sailors' playgrounds, will be the arena of international sailing regattas from June 20th to 28th. At Whitsun, also, the Lake Thun Water Ski School at Gunten, which owns the area's fastest motor-boat, resumed its activities.

\* \* \*

"*Summer in Switzerland*" Events 1957. Just issued by the Swiss National Tourist Office, a 31-page brochure entitled "*Summer in Switzerland*" Events (with a cover featuring yachts sailing over a blue lake, and electric railways speeding over boldly constructed viaducts, to some holiday paradise) gives details of the most important events scheduled for the season which has just commenced. There are approximately 700 attractions of a sporting, cultural, folklore and social character. A number of celebrations to commemorate events of between 75 and 2,000 years ago have also been planned. For instance, there is the Gotthard Jubilee to mark the opening of the Gotthard Railway 75 years ago (June 1882), one of the most important north-south routes across the Alps. June is also the month in which the trim mountain resort of Champéry in the Canton of Valais is celebrating its centenary. A quincentenary stands even higher in the public estimation; Stein am Rhein, a picturesque little town on the Rhine, will be celebrating 500 years as a member of the Swiss Confederation by presenting special theatrical performances in the medieval market-square from July to August. Fribourg, the university town famed for its fine old buildings, will be celebrating, from the middle of June onwards, its foundation by the Dukes of Zaehringen 800 years ago. Bale, the stronghold of humanism on the Swiss Rhine, can survey a history two and a half times as long when, on 23rd August, it observes the 2,000th anniversary of its foundation with celebrations staged on an elaborate scale. Of less historical significance, but just as attractive, are

the brilliant Rose Weeks in Geneva with festival ballet performances from 15th to 29th, a grand old-fashioned hackney-coach race at Interlaken on 16th June, and a beauty competition for motor-cars with a "Bal d'Elegance" which the high Alpine spa of Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera has announced for 10th August.

*Festive June in Lausanne.* From 6th June to 2nd July Lausanne is holding international festival weeks with guest performances by some of the most famous ballet companies, symphony orchestras, conductors and theatre groups in the world, including the Hungarian National Ballet, the London Festival Ballet, the Stuttgart Opera and the Comédie Française. At the same time some thirty hotels and restaurants are staging a "Fortnight of Gastronomy". This attraction, appropriate enough to Lausanne, the centre of French-Swiss cooking, is to conclude with a small exhibition of the culinary art.

\* \* \*

*A Parking Garage for 320 cars* was recently opened in the heart of the old town of Berne, under the name "Métro Autopark". It is the biggest car park of its kind in Switzerland. No point in the business centre is more than five minutes' walk from the garage, which is built underground so as not to spoil the picturesque appearance of the town.

\* \* \*

*Several new hotels have been completed in various Swiss towns* in time for the summer season. In Winterthur, far famed for its music and art, there is the luxuriously appointed "Garten Hotel" standing in its own splendid grounds. Its fifty bedrooms and fifty bathrooms are all fitted with air-conditioning. Opposite the SFR station in Bale the elegant Hotel

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\* \* \*

*New Suspension Cableways* carrying passengers up to rewarding panoramas and ski descents in Switzerland have either started work already or will be in service during 1957 in the following places: In Gryon and Leysin in the Vaudois Alps, from Leukerbad to the Gemmi-Pass, another one in the ski-region of the up-and-coming mountain resort of Verbier in Canton Valais, from Gornergrat above Zermatt to the Stockhorn, from Zermatt to the Schwarzsee (1st section), from Arosa to the Weisshorn, from Berninahaeuser to the Diavolezza, the best-known mountain for ski-ing in the Engadine, and another from Flims, one of the most popular winter and summer resorts in the Grisons, up to the Cassongrat.

\* \* \*

A league against noise — now a real scourge in Swiss towns — has been formed, and sections have been organized at Berne, Basle, Lucerne, Geneva, and Zürich under the leadership of prominent medical men, jurists, architects, and journalists.

The objects of the league are manifold. It intends to dispel the too widely held opinion that noises

which are an outcome of progress and mechanization cannot be avoided. It also hopes to convince the public that noise, which is one of the scourges of modern life, is endangering public health.

Architects and industrialists belonging to the league will examine means of silencing noisy machines, principally in the building trade, and endeavour to obtain the co-operation of all industrialists.

The league is to devote much of its activity to trying to suppress the evils of noise produced by machines, motor vehicles, tramcars, loudspeakers, wireless sets, and gramophones, as well as by midnight street orators and singers. There will also be a Press campaign and appeals to the authorities.

The Swiss Co-operative Movement has presented a new helicopter, for which nearly £40,000 was collected from members, for the use of Hermann Geiger, the Swiss Alpine pilot.

Swiss Federal railwaymen have received a wage increase of 9 per cent to meet the higher cost of living. The increase is called an "adjustment award." Last year the increase was 7 per cent.

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Im Bärner Bundeshaus!

Me sött ke Wort verlütere,  
Sött ds Gäld vom Huufe näh,  
Für Sammlige u Stütire  
Dr hingerscht Rappe gä!

Me sött i dene Tage  
E chly Humor no ha,  
Nid über d'Pryse chlage,  
Wär's het u wär's verma!

Es sött nid gäng ø jede  
So bääggelhäärig sy,  
Me sött halt zäme rede  
Trotz aller Zoologie!

Chly Freud ha u chly lache,  
Solang me Ursach het,  
Wie gseit, das sött me mache,  
U überhopt — me sött. . . !

Godi.

(Amerikanische Schweizer Zeitung).



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