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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has announced that the luxury tax will be abolished on 1st January 1959.

* * *

Mr. A. Gsell, Vice-Consul, has been put in charge of the Swiss Consulate in Laurence-Marques, in succession to Mr. Ch. Meyer, with promotion to the rank of Consul.

Mr. Gsell was born in 1913 and is a citizen of Lucerne. He entered the service of the Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office) in 1942. He has held previous appointments in Naples, Catania and Rome.

* * *

Monsieur Percival R. Gunasekera, Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Ceylon, has presented his credentials to Federal Councillor Dr. Feldmann, and M. Max Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister, at the Palais Fédéral in Berne.

* * *

The Swiss Federal Railways have carried 17.6 million passengers in June 1958, or 300,000 more than in June 1957. Receipts: 29.2 million francs (June 1957: 28.6 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 2.02 million tons, or 124,000 tons less than during the same period in 1957. Receipts: 40.5 million francs (June 1957: 43.9 million francs).

* * *

Customs receipts for the month of June 1958 totalled 81.8 million francs, of which the Confederation receives 59.2 million francs, or 6.1 million francs more than in June 1957.

Receipts going to the Confederation during the first six months of the current year total 345.7 million francs, or 4 million francs less than during the same period in 1957.

* * *

Cantonal

Miss Lydia Marbach (60), a retired nurse, of Berne, was killed whilst travelling on the "Sesselilift" from Marbach to the Eigerblick station. The chair became

separated from the cable and crashed on to the mountain side. The authorities have ordered an investigation into the cause of the accident. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A fire which broke out at the "Feldschlösschen" restaurant, in the Bahnhofstrasse Zurich, caused damage of over 20,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Zurich municipal council gave a reception and dinner to the Queen of Buganda and the Queen of Ankole on the occasion of their visit to the SAFFA exhibition. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. med. Rudolf Egli (26), of Berne, was drowned whilst bathing in the lake of Neuchâtel. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. René Wuilleret, advocate, has been elected Director of the Fribourg cantonal and university library in succession to M. François Esseiva. [A.T.S.]

* * *

462 traffic accidents have occurred during 1957 in the canton of Schaffhausen. 290 persons were injured, of whom eight died as the result of their injuries.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The Stena bridge, connecting Flims-Dorf and Flims Waldhaus, which was to be opened shortly for traffic, has collapsed owing to the sinking of one of the pillars. [A.T.S.]

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

70th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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Mr. Henri Marchand (34), of Geneva, piloting his own machine, crashed on trying to land on the Trento glacier. He and his wife (who was a passenger) received serious injuries and had to be taken to the hospital at Sitten. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The population of the canton of Neuchâtel on 30th July 1958 numbered 143,078 (60,324 Neuchâtelois, 70,435 Swiss from other cantons, and 12,319 foreigners). [A.T.S.]

* * *

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Georges Conus, Director of the "Schweizerischen Rudfunkgesellschaft", and from 1953 to 1954 President of the "Union Européenne de radiodiffusion", in Castiglioncello (whilst on holiday), at the age of 63.

Rudolf Mani, for fifty years a well-known mountain guide, in Kiental, aged 87.

Edouard Margot, a former Director of the Lausanne postal district, in Pully, aged 74.

Hans Roemer, Publisher and Vice-President of the Board of the "Buchdruckerei Berichthaus" and the "Tagblattes der Stadt Zurich", in Zurich, at the age of 52.

Heinrich Buehrer, at one time Director of the "Chemischen Fabrik Schweizerhalle" Basle, in Basle, aged 85. [A.T.S.]

* * *

LEGACIES.

The late Mr. Arnold Anderegg-Neiger, postmaster of Gadmen (Ct. Berne), has left 5,000.— francs each to the "Krankenhaus", and the "Altersheim" Oberhasli. [A.T.S.]

* * *

ANNIVERSARIES.

Professor Dr. Hans Stettbacher (80), of Zurich, formerly Professor of Pedagogics at the University of Zurich. From 1921 to 1923 Professor Stettbacher was editor of the "Schweizerischen Lehrerzeitung", and since 1923 has been editor of the periodical "Pestalozzianum".

Alfred Pocheon (80), of Yverdon, composer and violinist. From 1941 to 1947 he was Director of the "Conservatoire" Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

Werner Schawalder (26), of Rorschach, was killed in a collision between his motor-cycle and a motor-car in Rorschach.

A motor-cyclist named Vermot (47), of Cerneux-Pequignot, was killed between Neuchâtel and Yverdon, when he collided with a motor-car.

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A motor-cyclist, Ernst Blatter (79), of Meried-Gasel (Ct. Berne), received fatal injuries when he collided with a motor-car, which was driven with negligence and at excessive speed, between Schwarzenburg and Berne.

Owing to a burst tyre, Mr. Hans Diethelm-Arnold (51), of Arbon, crashed with his motor-cycle on to a field near Weinfelden. He was killed, and his wife, who was a passenger, received serious injuries.

M. Marius Morel (29), electrician, of Tramelan, was killed whilst overtaking a motor-car on his motor-cycle near Langenthal.

Five persons were seriously injured when two motor-cars, in overtaking, were involved in a collision. The injured were taken to the cantonal hospital at Aarau.

A motor-car driven by Max Blum (49), a post office clerk, of Zurich, crashed into a garden fence in Beringen. He was killed outright, and his wife and eight-year-old son received serious injuries.

Mr. Achille Mayer (40), of Neuchâtel, crashed with his motor-cycle into a tree between Montmollin and Corcelles (Ct. Neuchâtel) and was killed.

A motor-car driven at excessive speed skidded and collided with a cyclist in Rapperswil. The cyclist, Joseph Lumpert (13), received fatal injuries. [A.T.S.]

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VARIOUS.

The only railway which really crosses the Alps on the surface celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year. A technical miracle at the time of its construction, the Bernina Railway is still to-day a token of the genuine pioneer's spirit which has inspired Switzerland's railway builders ever since their earliest days. There may be faster connections between Switzerland and Italy, but there is hardly one as magnificent in scenery as this link between the glamorous resorts of St. Moritz and Pontresina and the Italian town of Tirano. The Bernina line is a normal electric railway without cog-wheels, the highest of its kind, and it operates all the year round.

Lausanne's increasing popularity as a tourist resort is expressed in the considerable number of additional hotel rooms made available through the construction of the following new hotels: Montillier (73 beds), Touring (70 beds), Regina (55 beds), Jan (100 beds), Esplanade (55 beds), City (100 beds). Three hotels were renovated — the Meurice, Carlton and Commerce.

Progress in electrification and engineering has claimed another victim. The picturesque Brienz-Rothorn steam railway, one of the two last cog-wheel mountain railways operated by steam, will soon disappear. The shareholders of the company have decided that the old steam horses are no longer economical and should be replaced by a more modern and efficient cable-car. Many mountain-lovers, and especially children, will regret the disappearance of the faithful old "puff-puff".

The ideal holiday and excursion centre of Interlaken is all set for a summer season affording an extraordinary choice of cultural events. The most popular attraction will again be the traditional open-air performances of "William Tell", the Swiss national drama, which will take place on a giant natural stage before a sheltered auditorium seating more than two thousand persons. The "Casino-Kursaal" boasts an extremely varied "Special Programme" which includes several symphony concerts with famous soloists, an International Championship for Amateur Dancers, a big jazz concert, and performances of the Netherlands State Ballet and the "Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas". Swordsman de Cuevas will be co-operating with his conciliated friend, Serge Lifar, with whom he duelled in Paris recently.

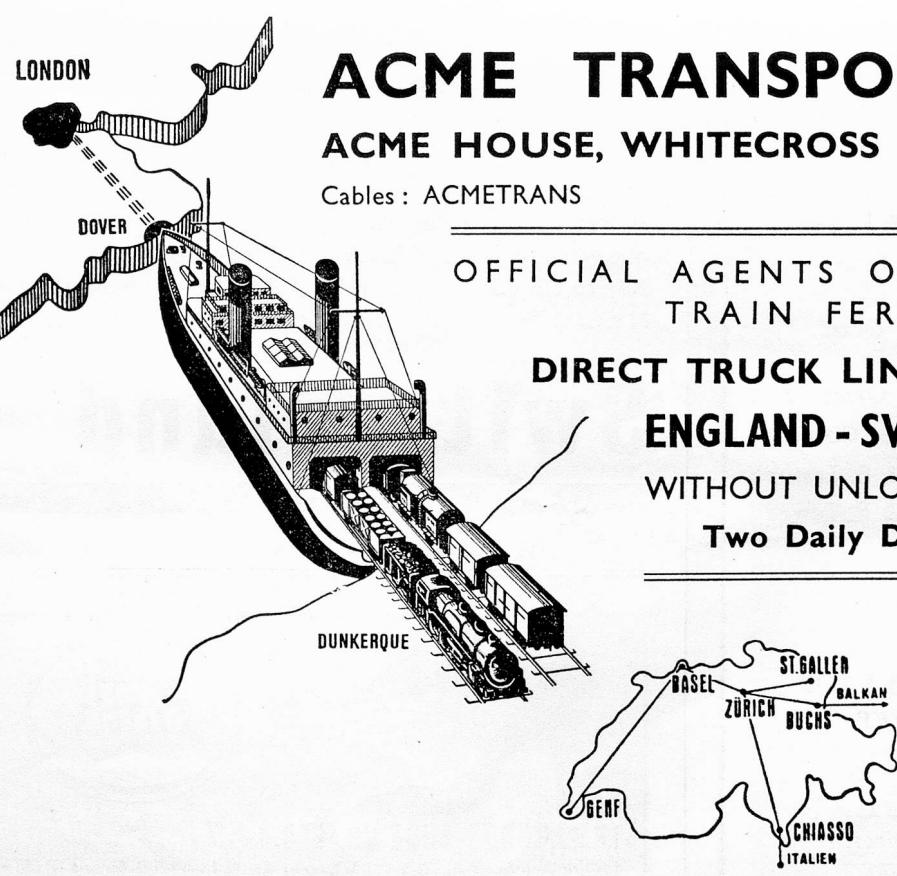
* * *

The 2nd International Exhibition of the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy will be held in Geneva from 1st to 14th September 1958.

Thirteen countries will put on show their latest achievements in the field of nuclear energy. The Exhibition will have 200 exhibitors and will cover an area of 19,000 square metres — twice as great as that covered by the first Exhibition in 1955.

* * *

Switzerland's largest hotel, the Victoria-Jungfrau Grand at Interlaken, Bernese Oberland, was reopened recently after a thorough renovation and modernization.



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A new swimming pool was opened recently at the resort of Leysin (Canton of Vaud).

* * * *

A committee has been formed for the purpose of organising an annual concert in the beautiful Baroque Cathedral of St. Gall. The first such concert will be held on 5th October 1958. Works by Anton Bruckner will be performed by the Cathedral Choir of St. Gall and the Chamber Music Choir of Zurich, conducted by Johannes Fuchs, the Choirmaster of the Cathedral.

* * * *

Although visitors to Switzerland were already exempt from paying the luxury tax levied in the past on such articles as gold watches, etc., the formalities which allowed the tax to be refunded at the frontier before leaving the country were rather complicated. With the complete abolition of the luxury tax, this procedure is no longer necessary.

* * * *

The Swiss Railways have again published their useful booklet containing time-tables, charges and fares for motorists wishing to avoid the drive over the Alpine passes by having their vehicles transported through Alpine tunnels. Tickets for the passengers and prepaid vouchers for the conveyance of motor-cars with a maximum seating capacity of 8 persons can be obtained from the Swiss National Tourist Office, 458 Strand, London, W.C.2. Freight charges for any other vehicles, such as coaches, trailers, motor-cycles, etc., can only be paid for locally.

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