

# News at random

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# The Swiss Observer

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### NEWS AT RANDOM

#### Federal

At the opening in Geneva of the spring session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which took place on March 25th and was attended by representatives of some forty countries, including Russia, Monsieur Max Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister, said that the question overshadowing all others in Europe was the need to put an end to the present tension.

The development of nuclear weapons and the gathering possibilities of annihilation made the need for an agreement more and more urgent, he said. Plans were presented, Notes were exchanged, "summit" conferences were projected. Nothing which could contribute to eliminating the menace hanging over the world ought to be neglected.

M. Petitpierre said that the Swiss policy of armed neutrality did not imply ideological or moral neutrality. Up to the end of the last war Swiss neutrality had been one of the factors of European equilibrium. To-day there was no such equilibrium. Europe was divided ideologically and politically. Switzerland belonged to western Europe, not only geographically, but because of her democratic institutions, her culture, and her economic and social systems.

The Austrian Federal President is paying an official visit to the Federal Council in Berne, from 12th to 14th May 1958.

Mr. Paul Emile Cattin, Swiss Consul in Melbourne, will shortly retire from his post on reaching retiring age.

The Federal Council has appointed as his successor. Mr. Edwin Steiner, at present Vice-Consul at the Swiss Embassy in Havana, with promotion to the rank of Consul.

Consul Steiner was born in Sumiswald (Ct. Berne) in 1906. He entered the Consular Service in 1931, and

held successively posts in Montreal, Paris, Freetown, Stuttgart and Winnipeg. In 1946 he was promoted to the rank of Vice-Consul.

The traditional dinner of members of the Consular Corps accredited to the Confederation took place in Berne under the chairmanship of the Belgian Consul, Mr. Robert Gerster. The Consular Corps numbers fifty members representing over thirty countries.

The Federal Military Department, with the agreement of the Political Department, has appointed General Staff Major Jean-Pierre Gehri, a member of the Instructors Corps, to the post of Military and Air Attaché to the Swiss Embassy in Iran and the Lebanon, with residence at Teheran, in succession to Lt.-Colonel Millioud.

General Staff Colonel Guy de Weck, a member of the Instructors Corps, has been appointed Military and Air Attaché at the Swiss Embassy in Vienna.

Customs receipts for the month of February 1958 total 66.7 million francs, of which amount the Confederation receives 50.4 million francs, or 4 million francs less than in February 1957.

For the first two months of 1958 the receipts amounted to 102.2 million francs, which is 8.3 million francs less than during the same period in 1957.

The year 1957 has been a record year for the Swiss Federal Railways. 221.4 million passengers have been carried, which exceeds the 1956 figures by 9 million.

The goods traffic also shows an increase of 840,000 tons, 26.13 million tons having been carried (1956: 25.29 million tons).

Receipts from passenger traffic amounted to 341 million francs, or 14.4 million francs more than in 1956; those for goods traffic are returned as 516.2 million francs, or 30 million francs more than in the previous year.

The 1957 1st of August collection brought in the amount of 1.511 million francs. This money will be used for cancer research work.

Owing to the election of M. René Villard as a member of the Government of the canton of Vaud, he has to relinquish his seat in the National Council, as according to the constitution not more than two members of a cantonal Government can sit in Parliament. (Present members are Charles Sollberger (Socialist) and Louis Guisan (Liberal).)

M. Villard's successor in the National Council is M. Marcel Brawand (56), Socialist, a citizen of Grindelwald and Vevey.

The successor of the late National Councillor Kurt Bucher is Fritz Malzacher (52), Trade Union Secretary, of Schaffhausen.

\* \* \*

### Cantonal

A fire which broke out in the store-room of the firm Albin Hofer, A.G., cork manufacturers, in Schwyz, caused damage estimated at 150,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. Hans Ming (Sarnen) has tendered his resignation as a member of the Government of the canton of Obwalden, of which he has been a member since 1950. Dr. Ming has been a member of the National Council since 1951. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Goods valued at 18,000.—francs were stolen from the jewellery establishment of W. Deatwyler, in Gerlach, near Lucerne. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Nyon Police Court sentenced a motorist, who while driving under the influence of alcohol caused a fatal accident, to four months' imprisonment(!). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The accounts for 1957 of the canton of Lucerne close with a deficit of 1,424,512.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The champion marksman, Domenico Giambonini, who died last year, has left all his trophies which he won at various International and Swiss Shooting Competitions to the "Schützenmuseum" in Berne. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Indian Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Mohan Sinha Metha, has paid an official visit to the Government of the canton of Fribourg. He was welcomed by M. Duccotterd, President, and after a visit to the University the distinguished visitor was entertained to dinner at Gruyère. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

As a result of the elections for the "Conseil Général" of the canton of Fribourg the strength of the various parties is as follows: Conservatives 40 (42), Radicals 20 (17), Socialists 20 (20), Communists 0 (1) [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Jean-Baptiste de Weck has been elected Director of the "Musée cantonal d'art et d'histoire" Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The accounts of the canton of Fribourg for 1957 close with a deficit of 1,424,512.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Damage estimated to be about 200,000.—francs was caused by a fire which broke out at the "Motorrad- und Fahrhandlung Albert Frey" Olten. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

At the annual meeting of the Swiss Academy for Medical Science, which took place in Basle, the Robert Bing Prize (for scientific research) amounting to 15,000.—francs was handed over to Dr. Erwin Wildi (41), of Geneva, Assistant at the psychiatric clinic Bel Air. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two men attacked a taxi-driver in Basle and robbed him of an amount of 60.—francs, threatening him with a revolver. [A.T.S.]

Two locomotives collided at the railway station of Muttentz; the damage caused is estimated to be 100,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mr. Alfred Abegg (Socialist) has been elected "Stadtammann" of Kreuzlingen with 1,130 votes. His opponent, Mr. Ulrich Hangartner (Cath. Cons.), received 1,015 votes. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The accounts for 1957 of the canton of Appenzell I.Rh. show a deficit of 86,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Federal Council has elected Mr. Gottlieb Gnehm, of Fischental, to the post of Director of the Postal District St. Gall. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A woman newspaper-vendor, occupying a stall at the Rorschacher Strasse in St. Gall, was attacked by a young man and robbed of the contents of the till.

A man (27) was later arrested by the police and confessed to the robbery; he had been discharged from prison only a few days previously. [A.T.S.]

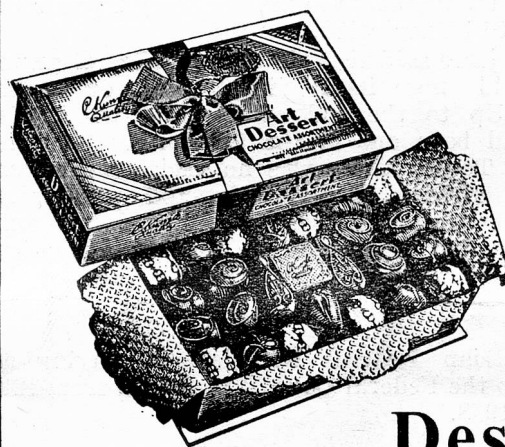
\* \* \*

The commune of Pagig (Ct. Grisons) has nominated Dr. Max Schmidheiny, of Heerbrugg, an honorary citizen, in recognition of the eminent services he has rendered to the commune. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Burglars broke into the premises of the firm Bim, A.G., Meisterschwanden (Ct. Aargau), and removed a safe which, however, contained principally account books. [A.T.S.]

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M. Alfredo Giovannini (Radical) has been elected President of the commune of Biasca (Ct. Ticino) in succession to the late National Councillor Aleardo Pini. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

In the second poll for the Governmental elections in the canton of Vaud the following have been elected: Charles Sollberger (Socialist) 33,858 votes, Arthur Maret (Socialist) 32,672 votes, René Villard (Socialist) 29,768 votes (new), Gabrile Desplands (Radical) 28,621 votes, Pierre Ogney (Radical) 28,281 votes, Louis Guisan (Liberal) 26,182 votes, and Alfred Oulevay (Radical) 25,711 votes.

Representation in the cantonal Government is now: 3 Socialists (2), 3 Radicals (3), 1 Liberal (2).

The new member, M. René Villard, is a citizen of Dailens and was born at Bienne in 1902. He was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud from 1944 to 1957, and since 1955 has been a member of the National Council. By profession he is a chief mechanic. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Vaudois writer, Virgile Rossel, a service was held at his grave. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

M. Jean Maurer (59), manager of a firm manufacturing measuring appliances in Petit-Lancy, near Geneva, was killed when his car collided with a lorry on the road between Geneva and Lausanne. His wife received serious injuries and was taken to hospital, where she died shortly afterwards. [A.T.S.]

The head of a Geneva taxi firm has been arrested for embezzlement. The amount of the alleged defalcation, so far as can be ascertained at present, amounts to 120,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

#### DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. med. Robert von Muralt, medical practitioner in Muri, near Berne, owing to a ski-ing accident at the Arlberg, at the age of 44.

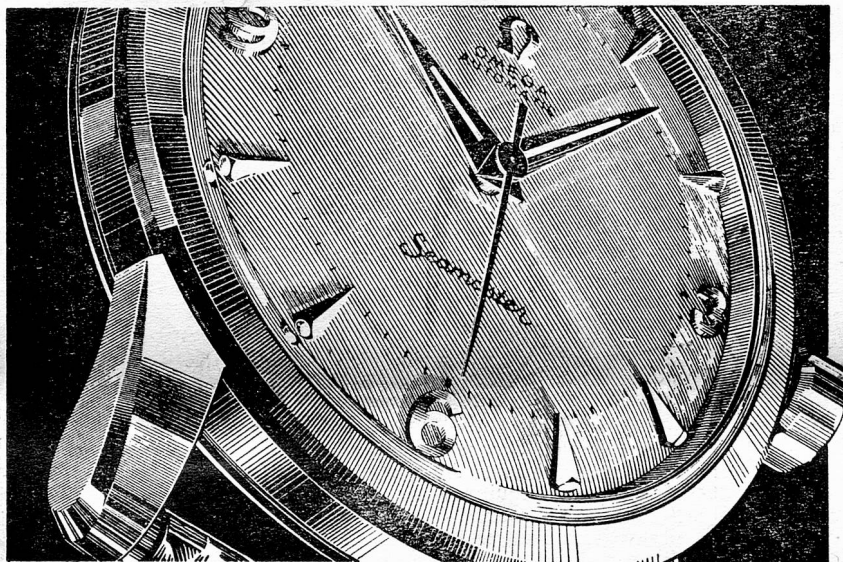
Robert Grimm, a former President of the Bernese Government, and a member of the National Council from 1911 to 1955, in Berne, aged 76.

The deceased was born in Wald (Ct. Zurich) in 1881. After receiving secondary school education he entered at the age of fourteen the printing trade. In 1906 he became "Arbeitersekretär" (trade union official) in Basle, and was elected a member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town. Three years later (1909) he took up the post as chief editor of the Socialist paper "Berner Tagwacht", and became a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, over which he presided in 1922/23.

In 1911 Grimm was elected a member of the National Council, of which he became Vice-President in 1925/26. When his turn came to preside over the Council strong opposition was aroused, especially in the western French-speaking cantons, due to the role which he played during the General Strike in 1918, and he was defeated.

In 1938 he was elected a member of the Bernese Government, from which he retired in 1946 in order to

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become Director of the "Berner Alpenbahngesellschaft".

Grimm was a personal friend of Lenin. In his writings he, in the main, confined himself to historical treatises; he wrote a History of Switzerland in her Class Struggles, a History of the Socialist Idea in Switzerland (1931) and a treatise on Revolution and Mass Action.

Eugen Weilenmann, editor and publisher of the paper "Anzeiger von Uster", in Uster, at the age of 70.

Hans Kammermann, President of the Commune of Zell, and Director of the "Bürgerheim" Zell (Ct. Lucerne), in Willisau, aged 70. He was for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne.

Ernest Decombaz, civil engineer, in Lausanne, aged 80. The deceased was closely connected with the building of the Lötschberg railway.

André Joray, Sub-Manager of the Banque d'Etat Fribourg, in Fribourg.

Ignaz Burri, in Malters, at the age of 86. The deceased was one of the leading personalities in the Peasant Party, and an expert on agricultural matters. He was from 1919 to 1947 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne, and from 1928 to 1947 he sat in Parliament (National Council).

Arnold Bloch-Frey, a member of the Board of the "Aluminium-Industrie, A.G." Neuhausen, in Neuhausen, aged 78.

Bernardin Reichmuth-Kubli, President of the commune of Oberiberg (Ct. Schwyz), aged 96.

National Councillor Kurt Bucher, in Berne, at the age of 60. The deceased, a lawyer by profession, was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne from 1921 to 1951. He sat in the National Council from 1941 to 1943, and again from 1947 until his death. He held the rank of Colonel (Artillery) in the army, and was for several years "Platzkommandant" of Lucerne.

Eugen Preisig, from 1919 to 1941 a member of the "Kantonsrat" Appenzell A.Rh., and from 1941 to 1953 a member of the cantonal Government. He died at a clinic in St. Gall, aged 70.

Werner Riniker, industrialist, in Rapperswil (Ct. Aargau), at the age of 60. He was from 1947 to 1949 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Aargau.

Mrs. Ottilie Rohr-Brändli, the oldest inhabitant of the canton of Schaffhausen, in Schaffhausen, aged 103.

Julien Dubois, for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, and the founder and President of the "Salon Suisse de l'horlogerie" in La Chaux-de-Fonds, at the age of 73.

Oscar Porges, publisher, in Zurich, aged 65.

Gustave-Adolphe Ulrich, Director and a member of the Board of the "Fabrique Nationale de Ressorts", in La Chaux-de-Fonds, at the age of 66. [A.T.S.]

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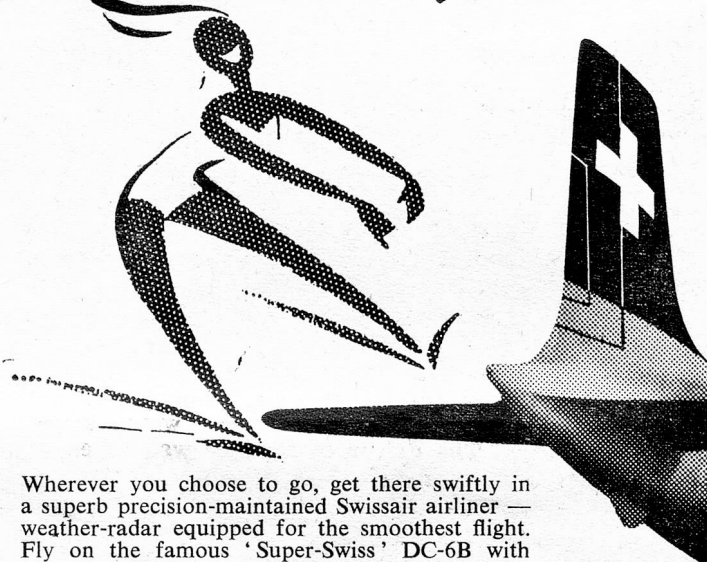
#### ANNIVERSARIES.

M. Albert Rais (70), of La Chaux-de-Fonds, from 1933 to 1942 President of the Swiss Watch Chamber (Uhrenkammer), and for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel. He sat in the National Council from 1928 to 1942. For thirty years he practised as a lawyer in La Chaux-de-Fonds. In 1942 M. Rais was elected a member of the Supreme Federal Court, from which he retired in 1957 to become President of the Board of the Printing Works Courvoisier, S.A., and the paper "l'Impartial" La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Dr. med. Hugo Remund (70), of Lenzburg, for thirty years "Bezirksarzt" of Zurich, and a lecturer at the University Zurich. He was from 1941 to 1950 chief medical adviser to the Swiss Red Cross.

Mr. Joseph Cron (70), of Basle, a well-known concert singer (tenor), for the last forty years a teacher at the "Konservatorium" Basle, and for forty-four years music critic of the "Basler Volksblatt".

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Dr. Otto Schuepp (70), of Basle, Professor of Botany, and for many years a teacher at the "Missionshaus" Basle.

Carl Stucki (80), of St. Gall. In 1934 he was appointed head of the "Sekretariat der Schweiz. Zwirnereigenossenschaft", St. Gall, and from 1918 to 1958 he was a member of the Commercial Tribunal, St. Gall. During the last two wars the "Jubilar" rendered great services to the Confederation as head of the textile section of the "Kriegs-Industrie und Arbeitamtes". [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

#### LEGACY.

The late Jean Moser, Patissier of Zurich, has left the amount of 11,000.—francs to the "Krankenhaus" Altstätten. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

#### AVALANCHE ACCIDENTS.

In spite of warnings issued by the Meteorological Institute on the Weissfluhjoch-Davos, a number of avalanche accidents have recently occurred in Switzerland.

Five German skiers — three women and two men — lost their lives when an avalanche buried a party numbering nine at the "Samnaun" (Ct. Grisons). Four of the party were rescued.

Gregor Keiser (21), a student, of Zug, was surprised by an avalanche on the Rigi near the Dossen and killed.

A group of four skiers, on an excursion from the Brueggerhorn in Arosa to the Weissshornsattel Hütte, were overtaken by an avalanche. Three of the men escaped, whilst the fourth, Josef Portmann (40), commercial traveller, of Horw (Ct. Lucerne), lost his life. He was a married man with three children.

In the region of Piz Centrale near Airolo a military patrol was surprised by an avalanche. Its leader, Lieutenant Theodor Bill (39), a teacher in Köniz, near Berne, lost his life. [A.T.S.]

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#### TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

Various serious traffic accidents are reported from Switzerland:

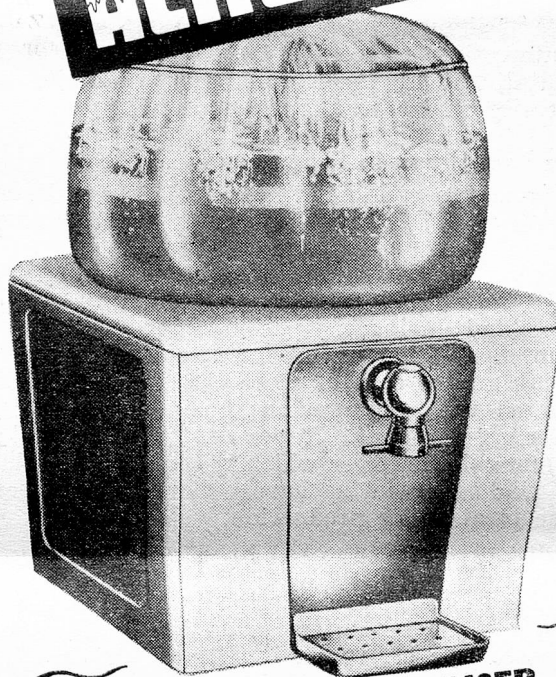
A motor-car driven by Erwin Fardel, fitter, of St. Leonard, crashed — owing to a skid — into a group of young girls near La Prise in the commune of Evionnaz (Ct. Valais); two of them, Françoise Coquet (14) and Lea Gex (10), both of La Prise, were killed instantaneously. The driver of the car was taken to hospital with serious injuries.

Five persons received serious injuries when a five-ton piece of machinery being transported on a lorry became loose and fell on to a passing motor-car which was occupied by a family of four from Altstätten and their maid, all of whom had to be taken to the hospital at Rorschach.

A motor-car, owing to a burst tyre, collided with a lorry on the road between Zurich and Berne near Herzogenbuchsee. The car overturned and the seven passengers were thrown out. They were all taken to hospital, where two of them died; the victims were: Eugen Erne (55), merchant, of Zurich, and Paul Schwegler (46), upholsterer, of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

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