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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

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur René Keller, at present 1st Counsellor of Embassy in Paris, to the post of Ambassador to the Republics of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Togo, with residence in Accra.

Ambassador Keller was born in 1914 and is a citizen of Marthalen (Ct. Zurich) and Cologny (Ct. Geneva). From 1919 to 1930 he lived at Geneva, where in 1933 he matriculated. Then followed one year at the University of Cambridge (Trinity College), where he studied Law. In 1937 he became *Licencié en droit* of the University of Geneva, and a year later (1938) he was *stagiaire* at the Dresdner Bank in Berlin, where he specialised on documentary credits, which later became the theme of his dissertation.

Monsieur Keller entered the service of the Federal Political Department in 1940, and successively held posts at Prague, Den Haag, and London, leaving London in October 1954, to take up the post of Head of the Information and Press Service at the Swiss Foreign Office. In 1957 he was appointed 1st Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy in Paris.

* * *

The Swiss Government has announced that its senior financial administrator is going to the Congo, at the United Nations' request, to supervise all financial matters. He is Dr. V. Umbricht, shortly retiring as Director of the Federal Financial Administration. Another Swiss official, Dr. K. Locher, will handle taxation questions, including problems involving Belgian firms.

* * *

The Federal Council has nominated Mr. Hans Taverna to the post of Honorary Consul-General in Monrovia, in succession to Mr. Rudolf Scheurer, who has retired.

The new Consul-General was born in 1926 at Davos; since 1949 he has occupied the post of General Manager of a Swiss concern in Monrovia.

Monsieur Ruy Teixeira Guerra, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Portugal, has presented his credentials to M. Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, at the Palais Fédéral in Berne.

* * *

Customs receipts for the month of August 1960 amounted to 107.1 million francs, of which the Confederation (Bund) receives 72.1 million francs, or 18.1 million francs more than in August 1959.

During the first eight months of the current year, the receipts earmarked for the Confederation amount to 575.6 million francs, or 107.2 million francs more than during the same period in 1959.

* * *

The two Federal Chambers (National and States Council) were represented at the 49th Interparliamentary Conference, which was held in Tokio from 29th September to 7th October by fourteen members, namely Gabriel Desplands (Vaud), President of the States Council and head of the delegation, States Councillors Lusser (Zug) and Rohner (St. Gall), and National Councillors Duft (Zurich), Boesch (St. Gall), Bringdolf (Thurgau), Chamorel (Vaud), Conzett (Zurich), Eisenring (St. Gall), Grandjean (Vaud), Grendelmeier (Zurich), Guinand (Geneva), Huber (St. Gall), and Monfrini (Vaud).

Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

Tuesday, 18th October, 1960, at 7.45 p.m.

at the Swiss Hostel for Girls,
9, Belsize Grove, N.W.3.

OPEN MEETING

Lecture (in English) by

Miss ELISABETH FELLER, President of the International Union of Professional and Business Women, on
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Refreshment service with coffee or tea (3/6d.), inclusive from 6.30 p.m. onwards.

Will members and friends intending to be present please inform the Warden of the Swiss Hostel not later than Tuesday, October 18th, between 11 a.m. and noon.

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Mr. Gaston Kappeler (52), Vice-Consul in Mexico, has been appointed Swiss Consul in Rosario de Santa Fè. Mr. Kappeler was born at Neuchâtel and is a citizen of Neuchâtel and Reckingen. He entered the Consular Service in 1929.

* * *

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Walter Hofer, at present Ambassador to the Philippines, to the post of Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand, in succession to Dr. E. Bernath.

Ambassador Hofer was born in 1901, and is a citizen of Walkringen (Ct. Berne). He entered the service of the Federal Political Department in 1932. In 1948 he was nominated Chargé d'Affaires in Bulgaria, and three years later (1951) he was transferred to Pakistan in the same capacity. In 1954 Monsieur Hofer was appointed Consul-General in Manila, where in 1957 he was promoted to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary. When the Legation was raised to the status of Embassy he received ambassadorial rank.

* * *

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 18.9 million passengers in the month of August 1960, or 100,000 fewer than in August 1959.

Goods traffic is returned as 2.67 million tons, or 450,000 tons more than during the same period in 1959. Receipts: 52.5 million francs (August 1959: 44.2 million francs).

* * *

Cantonal The Papal Nunzio in Berne, Mgr. Alfredo Pacini, paid an official visit to the Government of the canton of Obwalden on the occasion of the "Bruder Klaus" celebration. He was received at the Town Hall in Sarnen by "Landammann" Hans Gasser and members of the cantonal Government. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Two passenger trains of the Jura Railway collided between the stations Noirmont and Creux-des-Biches. Twenty-four persons, among them one of the drivers, were taken to hospital at Sainlégier, twelve of them being subsequently discharged. One of the passengers, Albert Voisard (52), watchmaker, of Les Bois, has since died. The accident was caused through one of the engine drivers not observing the signal to stop. The material damage is estimated to be 300,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The commune of Kestenholz (Ct. Solothurn) has bestowed upon Josef Graf, "Chorherr" in Bero-münster, and thirty-four years a priest, honorary citizenship. [A.T.S.]

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Lorenzo Vivaldo, the last postillion of the San Bernardino Pass, a post which he held for thirty years, has died. He made his last journey with the postal coach in 1931. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Jacques Beglinger, chief editor of the periodical of the Swiss Automobile Club, has been elected as head of the information service of the Swiss National Exhibition, which is taking place in 1964 at Lausanne, and M. Frédéric Dubois, advertising manager of the Vacheron & Constantin concern, has been appointed chief of the propaganda service.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The newspapers "Le Rhone" (Independent), published in Martigny, and the "Nouvelliste Valaisan" (Conservative Christian Socialist) will amalgamate at the end of the current year. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mlle. Raymonde Schweizer, head of the "Frauenarbeitsschule" La Chaux-de-Fonds, has been elected a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel; she is the first woman to be elected to the Council. [A.T.S.]



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The Mayor of the town of Geneva has presented M. Gilbert Albert, head craftsman at a Geneva jewellers establishment, with the "Prix de la montre" and the "Prix de joaillerie" of 5,000.— francs each. The recipient has insisted that 5,000.— francs should be divided amongst his co-workers. [A.T.S.]

Maurice Traffer, the oldest inhabitant of the canton of Valais, has celebrated his 103rd birthday, at Graechen. [A.T.S.]

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first crossing of the Alps by aeroplane (23rd September 1910), by the Peruvian airman, Geo Chavez, who started his flight at Ried-Brig, and was killed in landing at Domodossola, commemoration services were held at Brig and Domodossola, and a monument to the memory of Chavez was unveiled in Brig. [A.T.S.]

The C. F. Ramuz prize, amounting to 10,000.— francs, has been for the second time awarded to the author, C. F. Landry, of Riva. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Max Werner, architect, of Feuerthalen and Greifensee, has been elected to the post of "Kantonsbaumeister" of the canton of St. Gall, in succession to Mr. Karl Breyer, who has retired. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Aime Binz (Brig) has been appointed Director of the Visp-Zermatt Railway in succession to Mr. Paul Schuller. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland :

Dr. Jean-Pierre Perret, editor of the "Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne", in Lausanne, at the age of 44.

Rodolphe-Théophile Bosshard, landscape and portrait painter, in Chardonne, aged 71.

Dr. ing. chem. Alfred Winterstein, Vice-Director of the firm "Hoffmann-La-Roche & Co.", Basle, and "Dozent" at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, in Japan, whilst on a lecturing tour, at the age of 62.

Paul Billieux, from 1913 to 1954 State Prosecutor of the Jura District, from 1939 to 1950 Mayor of Porrentruy, and from 1922 to 1943 a member of the National Council, in Porrentruy, aged 76.

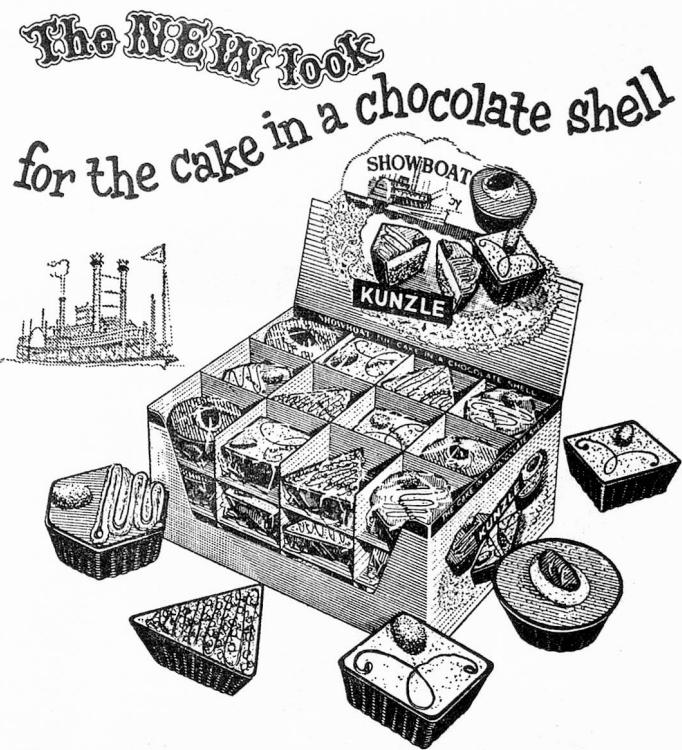
Frantz Fulpices, architect, a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva, and for 25 years president of the "Caisse hypothécaire" Geneva, in Geneva, at the age of 91.

Dr. H. Waser, from 1939 to 1942 in the service of the Central Library of Zurich, and since 1942 Head of the "Zürcherischen Stadtarchivs", in Zurich, aged 54.

Mrs. Rosa Bratteler, well-known Basle sculptor, in Basle, at the age of 74.

Abbé Marcel Chamonin, a former preacher at La Chaux-de-Fonds and Presinge, and from 1936 to 1945 chief editor of the "Courrier de Genève", in Geneva, aged 60.

Robert Blaser, a former rector of the "Städtischen Primarschulen" Lucerne, and afterwards "Bezirksinspektor", in Lucerne, at the age of 65. The deceased sat at one time in the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne. He was for twenty years editor of the "Schweizerischer Blasmusikzeitung".



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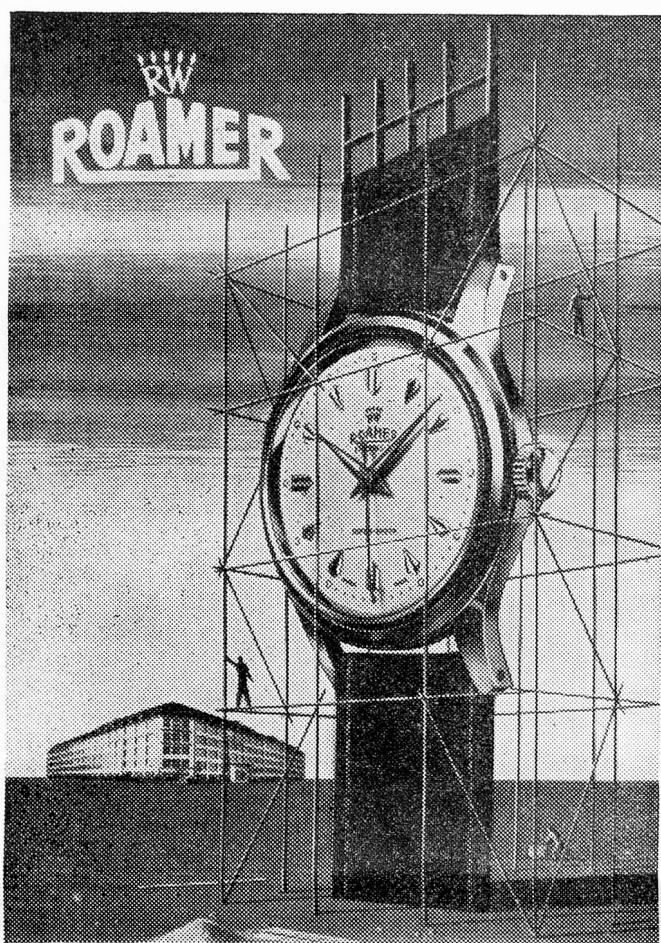
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Frl. Dr. Marie-Louise Herking, for many years a lecturer of French at the University of Berne, and author, in Berne, aged 77.

Professor Paul Haeberlin, from 1914 to 1922 Professor of Philosophy, Philology and Pedagogy at the University of Berne, and from 1922 to 1947 at the University of Basle in the same capacity, in Basle, at the age of 83.

Arthur Studer, consulting engineer, in Neuchâtel, aged 76. The deceased was at one time President of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, President of the "Ecole mécanique" Neuchâtel, co-founder, and for many years President, of the "Schweiz. Rhone-Rheinschiffahrtverband".

Dr. Robert Keller, for ten years States Prosecutor of the canton of Thurgau, from 1923 to 1932 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Thurgau, and from 1935 to 1954 President of the "Thurgauischen Evangelischen Kirchenrates", in Frauenfeld, at the age of 75.

[A.T.S.]

ANNIVERSARIES

Frank Martin (70), of Geneva, eminent composer; among his many well-known works are "Le vin herbe", and "Nativité". In 1951 he was awarded the "Prix de Genève". On the occasion of his 70th birthday the University of Lausanne has honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

J. R. Gerstenhauer (60), of Lausanne, President of the General Direction of the "Publicitas S.A." since 1951.

Vladislas Kunz (80), of Geneva, for many years President of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce, and of the Geneva Association of Metal Industrialists, he is also a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva.

Professor Ferdinand Gonseth (70), of Sonvilier (Ct. Berne), from 1929 to 1960 Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich. He is the author of many scientific works.

Dr. h.c. Max Schiesser (80), of Linthal (Ct. Glarus), from 1925 to 1937 Director of the firm of Brown Boveri, of Baden. In 1937 he was appointed a member of the Board, and nine years later (1946) occupied the post of Vice-President. The "Jubilar" was from 1935 to 1941 President of the "Schweiz. Elektrotechnischen Verein", and for fifteen years President of the "Schweiz. Elektrotechnischen Komitee". From 1950 to 1952 Dr. Schiesser presided over the "Commission electrotechnique Internationale" (C.E.I.). He is a *doctor honoris causa* of the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, and an honorary citizen of the commune of Baden.

Alphonse Blanc (80), of La Chaux-de-Fonds, President of the Notary Association of the canton of Neuchâtel and President of the "Information Horlogère".

[A.T.S.]

ARMY

During a route march of the 3rd "Fliegerfunker-kompanie" on the Rotzberg near Stans, wireless operator Roland Waldburger (34), teacher in Lucerne, lost his life when he fell from a cliff.

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Lieutenant Peter Tanner (25), of the 11th "Fliegerstaffel", whilst piloting a Venom machine, crashed at Churwalden and was killed.

A lorry of the 70th Fusilier Detachment left the road and fell 750 feet from a rock, between Amden and Wesen. Corporal Guido Meili, of Faellanden, and the driver of the lorry, Fus. Walter Müller, of Zollikon, were killed.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

LEGACY

The late Dr. Martin Mauli, a teacher at the "Bündner Kantonsschule", has left to the "Landschaft" Rheinwald 110,000.— francs for cultural and educational purposes. [A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. and Mrs. J. Doerig-Solenthaler of Herisau, Mr. and Mrs. R. Winkler-Bachmann of Zurich.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Kernen-Lelesch of Reutigen (Ct. Berne), have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65). [A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

One person was killed and three were injured when a motor-car driven by Mr. O. Joris, of Le Levron, whilst on the road to Vollèges, swerved and fell 900 feet, at Cric. The person killed was Miss Gisele Pellaud (17), of Levron.

Renato Ballmelli (40), of Lugano, was killed when his car collided with the road railway, Ponte-Tresa — Lugano. He was overtaking two other cars. [A.T.S.]

* * *

VARIOUS

The Swiss Red Cross has made a donation of 50,000.— francs to the Indian Red Cross for the victims of the inundations which occurred in August and September 1960.

* * *

On 30th August 1960 the number of television subscribers in Switzerland attained the figure of 110,915.

* * *

The "Jugendbuchpreis" for 1960, amounting to 1,000.— francs, of the "Schweizerischen Lehrer und Lehrerinnen" has been awarded to Mr. Toni Halter, author, teacher and president of the commune of Villa (Ct. Grisons), for his book, "Culan de Crestaulta".

An agreement between the interested parties in a dispute in the Swiss printing trade has been reached, and thus the threatened strike has been avoided.

* * * [A.T.S.]

More than 12 million overnight stays were registered in Swiss hotels, pensions, sanatoria and health resorts in the first six months of 1960; foreign visitors accounted for 6.6 million and Swiss guests for 5.4 million nights, which means increases of 9% and 3% over the respective figures for last year. Topping the list of visitors from abroad, with over 3 million hotel nights, are the Germans, followed by the British 1.25 millions — an increase of 13½%, the French (927,000), the Americans (557,000), the Italians (376,000), and the Dutch (353,000).

* * *

The picturesque Italian-speaking village of Airolo in northern Canton Ticino, some 4,000 feet above sea-level, is well known to railway travellers and motorists as the southern gateway to the St. Gotthard tunnel and trans-Alpine pass. It may soon be put on the map of sophisticated winter resorts. A large-scale construction project sponsored by the cantonal government provides for a five-acre winter playground complete with an ice-stadium, a Swiss ski school and a 100-bed resort hotel.

* * *

A new chair hoist, starting near the Sport-Hotel-Savoy and ending on the plateau de Solacyre, will be ready for the winter season 1960/61. A new downhill run towards Prafandaz will thus be opened up. In addition, the region of Lac d'Aï will receive a small ski-lift to facilitate access to the 3-mile long "piste bleue".

* * *

The Engelberg-Brunni aerial cableway has been re-built and will be able to carry 450 passengers per hour instead of 120 as previously. Four new downhill runs will be possible through the extension of the Brunni ski-lift to a height of 6,900 feet above sea-level. On Gerschnialp a trainer ski-lift will permit the Engelberg Ski School to give tuition until the middle of April.

* * *

2,864 excursionists recently "climbed" the Jungfraujoch (11,111 feet above sea-level), one of Switzerland's show places, on a single midsummer day. This was the absolute record in the annals of the Jungfrau Railway, the world's most dramatic rail line, since its completion in 1912. The highest per-day passenger rate hitherto had been 2,609.

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THE WORLD

The Lake Constance area and the region around Lake Lucerne, in the centre of the country, are now linked by a new type of express train which has made its inaugural trip on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Bodensee-Toggenburg Railway. Consisting of an electric 2,800 h.p. engine-car, a cockpit-carriage and several regular passenger cars which form the central part of the train, it "shuttles" between the two terminal points, Romanshorn on Lake Constance, and Lucerne, without the help of turntables. Stops of the new direct shuttle train are at St. Gall, Wattwil, Rapperswil and Arth-Goldau.

* * *

The 14th attempt to film the story of Switzerland's legendary national hero, William Tell, on whom the cameras are now focused in his native country around Lake Lucerne, has been described by the press as "a milestone in the history of Swiss cinema art". After a long lull the Swiss film industry is once again to turn out a film which is not only for local consumption but which is expected, above all, to prove suitable for export. At an estimated cost of £125,000, the Urs Film Company will endeavour to present a spectacular wide-screen picture in colour, under the artistic direction of Karl Hartl. Gale machines driven by aeroplane engines recently had to be put to action to give the lake of Lucerne sufficient dramatic roughness for the shooting of Tell's escape from Gessler's prison barge. Since Altdorf, the historic site of the apple-shooting incident, has lost some of its medieval varnish through the centuries, the location of this highlight of the film story was switched to the quaint mountain village of Hospental, north of the St. Gotthard Pass. The cast of internationally-known Swiss actors includes Robert Freitag as William Tell and Maria Becker as Gertrude Stauffacher.

* * *

Baden, the oldest medicinal and recreational spa in Switzerland, has become one of the country's most important traffic centres. North-south and east-west railway trunk lines intersect at Baden on the river Limmat. It so happened that the road traffic which, until now, went right through the historical part of the small town, got blocked far too often at the closed railway barriers. Through a large-scale rerouting project, traffic conditions will now be radically improved. The railway tracks which pass through the centre of the town will be replaced by a motor thoroughfare, and the new tracks will be relocated on the outskirts of the town. For the railway as well as road traffic expensive tunnel construction will be necessary. The new Baden motorway, freed of all railway crossings, is expected to be completed by the end of next year.

The Swiss glacier pilot, Hermann Geiger, Europe's most successful lifesaver, made the first landing in a newly opened "airport" — the roof of a hospital in Zermatt, the mountain health resort. The small "airfield", specially designed for helicopters, will enable rescue pilots to fly injured alpinists direct to the hospital.

* * *

In Lucerne the "Lucerna Foundation" is preparing its 34th holiday course to be held from 17th to 21st October. The subject will be "Language and Culture". Only one of the courses will be in French; all the other lessons and lectures will be in German. Lecturers are eminent teachers of university level.

* * *

The most heavily travelled Alpine road in the summer of 1960 is the St. Gotthard Pass in the central part of Switzerland. As not all drivers like to rush past the beautiful mountain scenery, the Swiss Automobile Club has put up signs indicating "lay-bys" ahead. In order to avoid congestion the slower drivers are invited in four languages to let the faster drivers pass by using the "lay-bys".

* * *

The painter, Albert Anker, died on 16th July 1910, at Ins. The Berne Art Museum (Kunstmuseum) has now organized in his memory a large exhibition comprising 350 pictures, studies in oils and water-colours. After years of searching for his scattered works, a large number of pictures and water-colours have been found, which were scarcely known and are now to be shown to the public for the first time. Anker's art, which frequently had a moral aim — he first of all studied theology — is intended to depict the simple healthy life of the country. His portraits of children and young people are among the most beautiful creations which Swiss art of the 19th century has produced.

* * *

On 23rd September 1910 a young Peruvian named Geo Chavez succeeded in performing the then unheard-of exploit of traversing the Alps by air. The courageous flyer was killed when his plane crashed a few moments before reaching its destination. At Brig, the Swiss town which saw Chavez's sensational take-off, and in several Italian towns, there were memorial celebrations on 23rd September.

The first important exploit by a Swiss flyer occurred on 28th August 1910, when a young man from Geneva, Armand Dufaux, crossed Lake Geneva lengthwise in his "pre-historic" flying-machine which was the first to be constructed by a Swiss. The brothers Armand and Henry Dufaux, who designed it, were also the manufacturers of the internationally famed "Mot-sacoche" motor-cycles.



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