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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has retired Monsieur Clemente Rezzonico, Swiss Ambassador to India, and Minister to Ceylon and Nepal, for reasons of health, expressing to him on this occasion thanks for the services he has rendered.

Ambassador Rezzonico was born at St. Imier in 1897, and is a citizen of Pedrinato (Ct. Ticino). He received his schooling at St. Imier and Basle, and afterwards studied economics and political science at the University of Berne, where he obtained his doctorate.

Dr. Rezzonico entered the diplomatic service in 1916, and was subsequently sent to London and Rome. In 1937, whilst in London, he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. Two years later (1939) he returned to Berne where he was put in charge of the Press section of the Swiss Foreign Office. From 1946 to 1949 he held the post of 1st Counsellor at the then Swiss Legation in Paris. In 1949, Dr. Rezzonico was appointed *Chargé d'Affaires* in Pakistan, and the following year Swiss Minister in Peking.

In the year 1954 the Federal Council appointed him Minister to India and Thailand, and in the same capacity to Ceylon and Nepal. When *en poste* in New Delhi he received ambassadorial rank.

Minister Dr. Jacques-Albert Cuttat has been appointed Ambassador to India, and Minister to Ceylon and Nepal, in succession to Dr. Rezzonico.

Ambassador Cuttat was born in 1909 in Delsberg, and is a citizen of Rossemaison and Berne. He studied law and philosophy at the Universities of Berne and Paris, obtaining at the latter the degrees of Lic. phil. and Lic. jur. He is also a doctor of law of the University of Berne.

Dr. Cuttat entered the diplomatic service in 1935. Three years later, he was transferred to the Swiss Legation in Buenos Aires. On his return to Berne in 1946, he was nominated *Chef du Protocole*, and later on Assistant to the chief of the Division for political affairs, followed by the appointment as Swiss Minister to Colombia and Ecuador.

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Robert Maurice, at present Swiss Ambassador to Brazil, to the post of Ambassador to Belgium and Minister to Luxembourg, with residence at Brussels.

Ambassador Maurice was born in 1906 at Geneva, and is a citizen of that town. He studied chemistry and geology at the University of his home town, where he obtained his doctorate. From 1930 to 1940, he held an appointment in the Belgian Congo. On his return to Switzerland he entered the service of the Federal Political Department, and was from 1947 to 1951 at the Swiss Legation in Lisbon, where he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. Returning to Berne in 1951, he became *Chef du Protocole*. Three years later (1954) Monsieur Maurice was sent to Brazil as Minister and afterwards to Argentina where he received ambassadorial rank.

Monsieur André Dominicié, at present Counsellor of Embassy in Moscow has been nominated to the post of Ambassador to Brazil.

Ambassador Dominicié was born in 1911 at Geneva of which town he is a citizen. He studied law at the Universities of Geneva and Vienna after which he established himself as an advocate in his home town. In 1941, Monsieur Dominicié entered the service of the Federal Political Department, and successively was sent to London and Buenos-Aires. From 1955 to 1958, he was *Chef du Protocole* at the Swiss Foreign Office. In January 1959, Monsieur Dominicié went to the Swiss Embassy in Moscow.

Monsieur Edmond Rock, the newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of the Kingdom of Jordan, has presented his credentials to Dr. M. Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation and Federal Councillor Paul Chaudet at the Palais Fédéral in Berne.

Customs receipts for the month of December 1959 amounted to 97.0 million francs, of which the Confederation (Bund) receives 70.8 million francs, or 17.4 million francs more than in December 1958.

For the whole year of 1959, customs receipts totalled 1,038 million francs (1958: 954 million francs) of which the Confederation receives 727.1 million francs or 42.4 million francs more than in 1958.

Cantonal

Two members of the Government of the canton of Schwyz have declared that they will not be candidates at the approaching governmental elections. They are: Dr. Vital Schwander (Galgen), and Mr. Clemens Dober (Kuessnacht), both are members of conservative party. Dr. Schwander (76) entered the cantonal government in 1932, and Clemens Dober (68) in 1944. [A.T.S.]

A fire which broke out in the warehouse of the "Micafil, A.G." at the Badener Strasse in Zurich has caused damage estimated to be between 300,000.— and 400,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Ewald Zimmermann, editor of the Christian— Socialist organ "Hochwacht", published in Winterthur, has celebrated his 40th service jubilee. He is a member of the "Kantonsrat" Zurich over which he presided at one time. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Max Aebischer (Cons.) has been elected Mayor of the town of Fribourg, in succession to M. Jean Bourgnknecht who has entered the Federal Government.

The new Mayor was born in 1914 at Rechthalten, and is a citizen of Heitenried and St. Ursen. He was educated at the Collège St. Michel and the Universities of Fribourg and Rome. In 1941, he entered the service of the Christian-Socialist Organisation of the canton of Fribourg, of which he has been since 1945 its general secretary. In 1946, he was elected a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg, and in 1951, a member of the National Council. [A.T.S.]

The cashier of the "Ersparnisanstalt" Unterwasser (Ct. St. Gall) has been arrested for the embezzlement of an amount of 40,000.— francs [A.T.S.]

The premises of the Hotel Glas in Baden suffered serious damage by fire. [A.T.S.]

A vineyard worker from Gilly (Ct. Vaud) was found robbed of his wallet and seriously injured in the entrance of a house in Lausanne. A man was later detained by the police and charged with the assault; the wallet was found in his possession. [A.T.S.]

M. Jean Nicollier, editor of the "Gazette de Lausanne" has celebrated his 40th service jubilee. [A.T.S.]

Markus Imboden (33), a foreman of the Grande Dixence, when ski-ing near Zermatt, collided with a telephone pole, receiving fatal injuries. [A.T.S.]

Three postal "plis" containing banknotes to the value of 110,000.— francs disappeared from the General Post Office at Geneva. The thief, a twenty-two-year-old employee at the Geneva General Post Office, and his fiancée, a bar maid from Malleray, were later on arrested at Mulhouse by the French police. About 100,000.— francs of the stolen money was recovered. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. h.c. Edwin Fischer, in Zurich at the age of 74. The deceased was an eminent pianist and conductor. Born at Basle, he studied at its conservatoire,

and later at the Sternschen conservatoire in Berlin under Martin Kraus, where he held the post later on as a teacher. From 1928 to 1935, Fischer was a member of the "Staatlichen Hochschule für Musik" in Berlin. During the second world war he returned to Switzerland after having been for a number of years a conductor of orchestras and choirs. Edwin Fischer was honoured by the University of Cologne with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*, and on the occasion of his 70th birthday, the commune of Weggis, where he lived in retirement, made him an honorary citizen.

Dr. h.c. Ernst Schürch, from 1925 to 1941, chief editor of the paper "Der Bund" published in Berne. In 1944 the University of Berne bestowed on him an honorary doctorate. He died in Berne aged 85.

Dr. phil. Wilhelm Brenner, from 1925 to 1941, Director of the Cantonal Teachers' Seminary, Basle, in Basle at the age of 85.

Conrad Hew-Schenker, consulting engineer, and Head of one of the biggest builders concerns of the canton of Grisons, in Chur aged 67.

Henri-Alexandre Godet, wine merchant and for many years President of the Neuchâtel section of the Swiss Wine Merchants Association, in Auvernier at the age of 54.

Dr. phil. Karl Jost, for many years a teacher (Dozent) of English grammar and literature at the University of Basle, in Basle aged 78.

Ernst Josi, from 1938 to 1948, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, and from 1951 to 1959 a Member of Parliament (National Council) in Vevey at the age of 64.

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Hans Rüttimann, Director of the "Thurgauischen Kantonalbank" in Weinfelden aged 56.

Dr. med. Georges Porte, well known eye specialist, and President of the Medical Society Geneva, in Geneva at the age of 80.

Jakob Meili, for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Thurgau, and from 1919 to 1942, a member of the National Council, in Pfyn aged 88.

Dr. jur. Rudolf Leupold, advocate and notary in Basle at the age of 73.

Colonel Hermann Schwyter, from 1927 to 1937, "Oberpferdearzt" of the Swiss army, in Berne aged 82.

Mme. A. Derupaz, the oldest inhabitant of the canton of Geneva, in Geneva at the age of 101.

Professor Gebhard Uttinger, artist and architect. From 1934 to 1939, he was Direktor of the "Kunstgewerbeschule" Lucerne, in Zurich aged 81.

Dr. med. E. Woelfflin, for many years Professor at the University of Basle, and eminent eye specialist, in Basle at the age of 87.

Dr. h.c. Heinrich Nussbaum, notary in Wettingen aged 67. He was for over 40 years in the service of the canton of Aargau. In 1949, the University of Berne honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

Professor Otto Volkart, author of many biographies and books of poetry, and from 1925 to 1931, Professor of German literature in Moscow, in Zurich at the age of 80. [A.T.S.]

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DONATION.

An anonymous patron of the blind has made a donation of three million francs to the Home for the Blind in Lausanne for a further building of a home for elderly blind people. [A.T.S.]

* * *

BANK DIVIDEND.

The following Swiss Banks have declared their dividends for 1959: Gewerbekasse, Baden: 6 per cent (1958: 5½%), Sparkasse der Amtei, Kriegstetten: 6 per cent (1958: 6%), Bank in Burgdorf: 6 per cent (1958: 6%). Gewerbekasse, Bern: 8 per cent (1958: 8%), Volksbank Willisau A.G.: 5½ per cent (1958: 5½%). [A.T.S.]

* * *

CENTENARIANS.

The following have recently celebrated their birthday anniversary: Fräulein Magdaline Seiler (Bönigen) 102, Frau Susanne Haegni-Pletscher (Stäfa) 100, Mlle. F. Pescia (Manno nr. Lugano) 101, and Georg Frei (Hemberg, Ct. St. Gall) 101. [A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

The traffic accidents during 1959 in the various cantons show the following figures: Canton Zug: 385 accidents, 14 killed and 284 injured, Canton Schwyz: 617 accidents, 24 killed and 384 injured, Canton Lucerne: 2,116 accidents, 59 killed and 1,417 injured, Canton Fribourg: 860 accidents, 39 killed and 690 injured, Canton Basle-Country: 913 accidents, 29 killed and 759 injured, Canton Thurgau: 819 accidents, 37 killed and 215 injured, Canton Zurich: 9,098 accidents, 132 killed and 4,938 injured, Canton Uri: 423 accidents, 6 killed and 275 injured, Canton Schaffhausen: 273 accidents, none killed, 292 injured. [A.T.S.]

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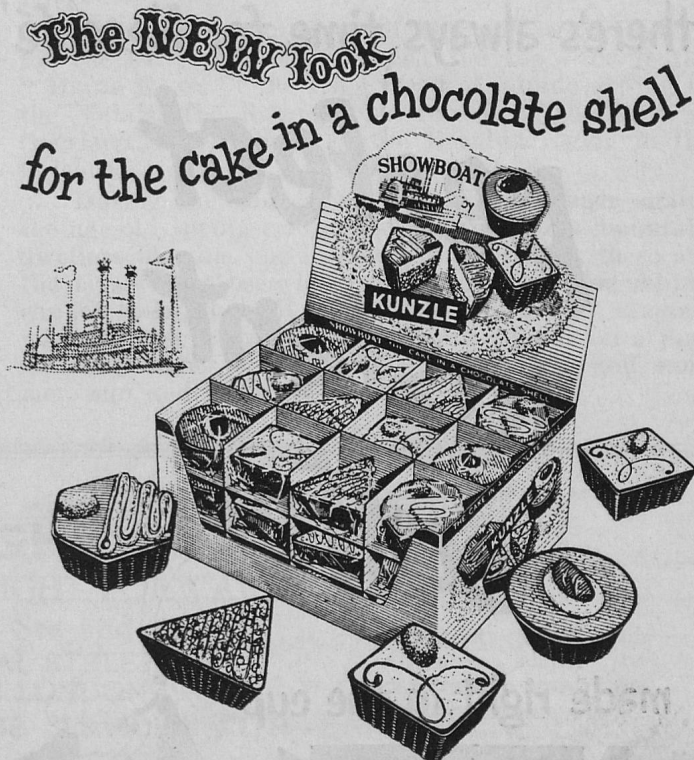
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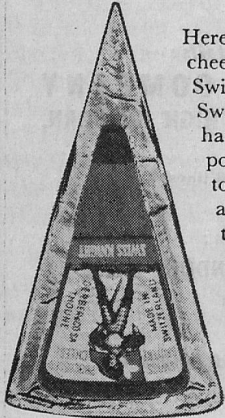
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VARIOUS.

Switzerland exported in December 1959, 4,499,200 watches to the value of 129.6 million francs (Dec. 1958: 3,252,200 watches to the value of 104.5 million francs).

* * *

The number of inhabitants at the end of 1959, of the following towns are given as follows: *Fribourg*: 33,758, *Lausanne*: 123,328, *Neuchâtel*: 143,439, *Sitten*: 15,017. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The 50 million francs loan at 4 per cent, issued by Swissair, has been heavily oversubscribed and allocations had to be considerably reduced [A.T.S.]

* * *

Zurich: Due to the fact that a weatherproof ice-rink offers far more than a frozen lake the first Swiss artificial ice-rink was constructed in 1930 at the Dolder in *Zurich*. Very soon afterwards a succession of similar rinks were built and proved to be a contributing factor in the formation of the ever-popular Swiss Ice-Hockey teams, a sport generally agreed to be the fastest where teams are competing. Today in Switzerland there are 26 artificial ice-rinks available to the public offering a floor space of 77,500 sq. yards and accommodation for 175,000 spectators. Apart from ice skating the rinks cater for those interested in figure skating and curling. The Swiss Curling Association was formed in 1942 and nowadays administers 75 clubs and has a total membership of approx. 2,000. It is thought that the present number of ice-rinks will be doubled within a few years. During the autumn of 1960 Arosa and Chur will celebrate the opening of the first artificial ice-rink in the Grisons. Simultaneously, St. Gall and Adelboden announce the opening of their own rinks. Artificial ice-rink projects are now in hand at St. Moritz, Davos, Wetzikon, Villars-sur-Ollon and Lucerne.

* * *

Zweisimmen: For the first time in Switzerland the 9th International Snow-Rally is to be held at Zweisimmen from 25th February until 3rd March under the patronage of the "Auto Camping et Caravaning Club de France". Participants from France, Holland, England, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland will spend a few carefree days at the "sunshine village" at the foot of Rinderberg engaging in all kinds of winter sports. Approx. 300 visitors will arrive at this caravan site which is situated at the lower end of the Zweisimmen railway station, and the management are busily preparing a fine comprehensive programme of sporting events and evening entertainments.

* * *

Berne: All drivers who wish to have their cars transported through the Gotthard Tunnel this year will realise how much time has been gained through the efficiency of the latest innovations. A highly efficient loading ramp has been constructed at Göschenen and after almost two year's work there is now a second tunnel entrance into the Gotthard granite. These improvements will enable all car trains to travel on a separate railway line from the one used by passenger trains and only inside the mountain will the two tracks meet again. The new Simplon loading platforms are now in use. Motor coaches and commercial vehicles will still be consigned from Brig to Domodossola and vice versa but smaller

vehicles are only transported to and from Iselle. For both directions tickets are purchased at Iselle. Car passengers may remain in the cars throughout the journey.

* * *

25 aerial cableways and ski-lifts have been constructed in the various winter sport resorts since November 1958. The new ski-lift traversing the permanent snow field in the Diavolezza district of the Grisons operates throughout the year carrying many a weary skier upwards, and at the peak of the summer months completes the magic spell of the world of snow.

* * *

Earth to the Moon and back was roughly the distance that one postal messenger in Switzerland travelled during his working life. Arnold Javet from St. Immer is now 76 years old and retired but in earlier years he had obtained permission from the Swiss postal authorities to deliver unstamped letters and packets to all the remote houses between St. Immer and La Chaux-de-Fonds.

* * *

Dry-clean containers very similar to a letter box are something completely new for the Zurich housewife. These "clean boxes", the first on the Continent, were constructed in Switzerland and are saving the housewife that long walk to the dry cleaners. The articles requiring a clean or a dye are simply placed in the container, collected by the cleaning firm and later returned to the customer's door. You can state your own delivery time too.

WINTER IN SWITZERLAND

One hundred and twenty winter resorts with two thousand hotels and boarding houses and fifty thousand beds — ski slopes of all imaginable degrees of challenge, for the beginner as well as for the competition skier, rendered accessible by 127 railway lines and 350 ski lifts, aerial cableways and chair lifts — this is what the Swiss Alps offers to all comers in the winter of 1959/60.

This impressive array of facilities, which was used to the extent of 4.1 million guest nights, or 16 per cent of Switzerland's annual volume of tourism, was not built in one day. It is the result of close to a century of experience in tourism, steady investment, and, above all, the dividend of recognizing at an early date the touristic possibilities of winter sports.

Winter tourism in Switzerland dates back to the

year 1865, when Davos in the Grisons had its first holiday guests, mostly patients seeking convalescence in its mountain climate. St. Moritz followed suit in 1883, and Arosa and Grindelwald in 1888. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, winter tourism really snow-balled, to use an appropriate figure of speech. Cableways and chair lifts have recently brought a last addition to Swiss winter sports haunts: the southern canton of Ticino, where skiers can leave valleys of Mediterranean climate to ski on snowy peaks and come back again, all within a few hours. Winter tourism as we know it today is essentially the result of one sport: ski-ing. The slogan "Every Swiss a Skier" is one that is coming nearer and nearer to representing a fact. The Swiss Ski-ing Association has over 60,000 members, but the number of people who know how to ski is estimated at around half a million.

The winter season starts just before Christmas, with its peak between February and April; it ends with spring ski-ing, which is still possible on some glaciers in June. One little-known month is January; it offers rest and attentive, personal service, as well as tracking in virgin snow and on quite slopes to the skier who seeks relaxation.

The 100 Swiss ski-ing schools gave 862,813 half-day lessons last winter. The number of pupils is growing year after year, thanks also to the standard Swiss ski-ing method which is taught the same way all over the country. Thus a guest can register in Central Switzerland as a beginner one winter, and go on in following years developing his skill in the same technique, moving from class to class, whether he spends his holidays in the Grisons or in the Bernese Oberland. In six classes, teaching goes from A to Z, starting with a beginner and turning out an all-round skier.

Spring ski-ing in the high Alps will be the reward for the skier who has reached the top — be it the "Haute Route", the High Road of Alpine ski-ing in the Valais, the long glacier routes of the Bernese Oberland, or the tours of the Bernina region in the Grisons.

During the months when days get longer again, the age-old spring customs of Switzerland's mountain dwellers blossom out in colourful festivals; these are the days when those who love the mountains and ski-ing cannot resist the call of peaks and glaciers. Anyone who has ever "conquered" a peak on skis on a June morning knows what this blend of winter and summer, sun and snow, really means.

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