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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 accounts of the Swiss Confederation for 1959 close with a credit balance of 163 million francs. The debt (Bundesschuld) which stood at 6,680 million francs at the end of 1958 has now been reduced to 6,517 million francs.

* * *

Customs receipts for the month of March 1960 total 103.4 million francs; of this amount the Confederation (Bund) receives 77.7 million francs or 18.6 million francs more than in March 1959.

During the first three months of the current year the receipts earmarked for the Confederation amount to 197 million francs, or 39.8 million francs more than during the same period in 1959.

* * *

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Guido Keel, at present Swiss Minister to the Republic of Czechoslovakia, to the post of Ambassador to the Lebanon, and Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Iraq and Jordan, with residence in Beirut, in succession to Dr. E. von Graffenried, who has been recently appointed Ambassador to Sweden.

Ambassador Keel was born in 1906 at St. Gall, and is a citizen of Rebstein and Oberbüren (Ct. St. Gall). He studied at the Universities of Vienna, Zurich, Bordeaux, Rome, and Berne. He entered the service of the Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office) in 1934, where he occupied several posts. In 1946 he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation, and Head of the Press and Information Department. Five years later (1951) Dr. Keel was transferred to the then Swiss Legation in Rome as first collaborator to the Swiss Minister. In August 1956 he was appointed Swiss Minister to the Republic of Czechoslovakia.

Cantonal

The seven members of the Government of the canton Schwyz have recently been re-elected. They are: "Landammann" Fritz Husi, Einsiedeln (Christian Socialist), 10,376 votes; Stefan Oechslin, Einsiedeln (Conservative), 10,815 votes; "Landesstatthalter" Meinrad Schuler, Rothenthurm (Independent), 10,791 votes; Dr. Rudolf Sidler, Schwyz (Liberal), 10,068 votes; Josef Diethelm, Siebnen (Socialist), 10,398 votes; Balz Feusi, Pfaeffikon (Conservative), 10,716 votes; Josef Ulrich, Küssnacht a. Rigi (Conservative), 10,598 votes. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Obwaldner Landsgemeinde" took place on the Landenberg above Sarnen. All the members of the Cantonal Government were re-elected. Mr. Hans Gasser, Lungern, was elected as "Landammann", and Mr. Christian Dillier as "Landesstatthalter". Dr. Ignaz Britschgi has succeeded Mr. Ludwig von Moos, the latter having been elected a member of the Federal Government. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The accounts of the canton of Obwalden for 1959 close with a credit balance of 14,476.— francs.

[A.T.S.]

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Dr. med. Conrad Brunner, for thirty-two years chief surgeon at the Women's Clinic at the Cantonal Hospital Winterthur, has relinquished his post for reasons of age. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The municipal council of Zurich has changed the name of the "Alpenquai" to "General Guisan Strasse." [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Hans Tschumi, veterinary surgeon (Interlaken), a member of the B.G.B. party, was elected a member of the Government of the canton of Berne with 39,500 votes. The candidate of the Separatist Movement, Mr. A. Francillon, Münster, polled 13,583 votes. Only 21 per cent of the electorate went to the poll.

Dr. Tschumi, a citizen of Wolfisberg (Canton Berne), was born in 1908 at Laufen (Jura Bernois). He studied at the Universities of Basle, Berne, and Hanover, and since 1934 has practised as a veterinary surgeon in Interlaken.

From 1946 to 1959 he was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, over which he presided in 1954/55. He has been a Member of Parliament (National Council) since 1947. In the army, he has reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

[A.T.S.]

Mr. Hans Burren (45), of Köniz, a member of the B.G.B. party and a teacher at the "Schweiz. Kaufmännischen Berufsschule" Thun, has entered the National Council in succession to Dr. med. vet. Hans Tschumi, who recently was elected a member of the Bernese Government. [A.T.S.]

Gottfried Moser, blacksmith, of Einigen nr. Spiez, has celebrated his 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

The 44th Basle Fair was opened on Saturday, 23rd April, by Dr. H. Hauswirth, Director of the Fair, with a reception to the Press. The following Tuesday, the Fair authorities gave a reception for the invited guests, amongst them M. Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the two Federal Chambers, members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, and representatives of Industry and Commerce. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Oskar Waelterlin, since 1938 director of the "Schauspielhaus" Zurich, has been elected in the same capacity to the Municipal Theatre Basle. Dr. Waelterlin, a citizen of Basle, held the position of director at the Basle theatre once before, namely from 1925 to 1933. He will assume his post on 1st July 1961. [A.T.S.]

The "Landsgemeinde" of the canton of Appenzell A.Rh. took place at Trogen. The "Open Parliament" was attended by the following guests: Federal Councillor F. T. Wahlen, Federal Councillor J. Bourgeois, Federal Councillor W. Spühler, and the West German and Danish Ambassadors accredited to the Confederation.

The seven members of the Cantonal Government were re-elected, and National Councillor Jakob Langenauer (Rhetobel) was again elected to the post of "Landammann". [A.T.S.]

The "Landsgemeinde" of the canton of Appenzell I.Rh. was held at Appenzell; amongst the official guests was the British Ambassador in Berne, Sir William Montagu-Pollock.

Dr. Raymond Broger was elected a member of the Cantonal Government, in succession to Mr. Karl Müller, who has vacated his post. Mr. Beat Dörig was re-elected to the office of "Landammann". [A.T.S.]

Two skiers, traversing the Murtel Grat, near the Coaz hut on the Piz Murtel, fell into a ravine. Karl Friedlos (22), technician, of Thun, was killed, whilst his companion received serious injuries and was taken to a clinic at St. Moritz. [A.T.S.]

A night watchman of a factory in Arbon, on his inspection tour, was attacked by a man and seriously injured. A twenty-three-year-old Hungarian national employed by the same firm, was later arrested and charged by the police. He confessed that he intended to rob the safe. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the canton of Ticino for 1959 show a credit balance of 312,050.— francs [A.T.S.]

On Easter Sunday, five skiers were caught in an avalanche on the north wall of the Grand Combin (Valais). Four of them lost their lives, whilst the fifth suffered serious injuries.

Those killed were Ernst Müller (36), of Grenchen, Ernst Künzle (31), of Solothurn, Bruno Schiess (28), of Bienne, and Arnold Favre (41), of Lommiswil (Ct. Solothurn). Walter Affolter (52), of Grenchen, was taken by helicopter to the hospital at Sitten. [A.T.S.]

The commune of Münster (Ct. Valais) has bestowed honorary citizenship on the writer, Edzard Schaper. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Robert Morier, president of the "Laiterie agricole" Lausanne, and a member of the tribunal of Lavaux, at Conversion-Corsy, at the age of 66.

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A. Meyer-Hennig, at one time president of the Tinsmiths' Association and a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Basle-Town, in Basle, aged 68.

Alfred Graber, builder, in Reichenbach (Ct. Berne), at the age of 61. He was president of the commune of Reichenbach, and a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne. Graber wrote a number of novels, and published a book of poems.

Mgr. Edwin Dubler, from 1922 to 1948 "Stadtpfarrer" of Olten, in Wohlen, aged 79. On the occasion of his golden jubilee as a priest the Pope nominated him a "Ritter vom heiligen Grab". The deceased was also a well-known writer.

Alban Müller, in Olten, at the age of 65. The deceased was from 1929 to 1957 a member of the "Solothurner Kantonsrat". In 1943 Müller was elected a member of the National Council, from which he retired in 1959. From 1946 to 1956 he was president of the "Schweiz. Katholischen Bauernvereinigung".

Edwin Lüthy, from 1919 to 1930 director of the "Allgemeinen Plakatgesellschaft" Basle, and from 1931 to 1952 director of the Zurich office of the company, in Zurich, aged 79. The deceased was at one time editor of the "Basler Volksblatt", and secretary of the "Kunstgesellschaft" Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

ANNIVERSARIES.

Karl Hürlimann-Fassbind (80), of Brunnen, senior partner of the "Zementfabrik Hürlimann" Brunnen, president of the commune of Brunnen, "Ratsherr des alten Landes Schwyz", and a member of the "Kantonsrat" Schwyz. In the army he reached the rank of an artillery Colonel.

Max Bally (80), of Schoenenwerd, president of the board of the "Bally Holding Company" Schoenenwerd.

Raoul Privat (80), of Geneva, journalist, and a former parliamentary debates reporter of the Journal de Genève.

Dr. Max Rohr (70), of Maegenwil (Ct. Aargau). He studied Law at the Universities of Zurich, Munich, Berne, and Leipzig, and afterwards established himself as a lawyer in St. Gall. In 1925 Dr. Rohr moved to Baden. He was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Aargau, over which he presided in 1941/42. He was from 1933 to 1959 a member of the National Council. Dr. Rohr was for five years president of the Swiss Conservative party. [A.T.S.]

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LEGACIES AND DONATIONS.

A member of the commune of Doerflingen (Ct. Schaffhausen) has donated the amount of 100,000.—francs to the commune, the interest on the capital to be used for the education of talented students without means.

The late Frau Emma Klara Eichenberger-Stoll, of Beinwil (Ct. Aargau), has left the amount of 10,000.—francs to the "Fürsorgestelle pro Infirmis" Aarau.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Spalinger-Baumann of Zurich, Mr. and Mrs. P. Peter-Trachsler of Rüti (Ct. Zurich), Mr. and Mrs. F. Schelling-Dierauer of Kobel bei Au (Ct. St. Gall), Mr. and Mrs. Gassmann-Brun of Vitznau.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Baumgartner-Hartmann of Küsnacht (Zurich) have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65).

[A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

Traffic accidents in Switzerland are still alarmingly on the increase.

A motor-car driven by Gualtiero Santoni (34), of Avegnio (Maggia Valley), crashed near Pontebrolla. The driver and his wife, Carmen, were killed.

Mrs. Louise Landenberger (40), of Altstätten, was run over by a car on the road between Altstätten and Oberriet and received fatal injuries.

Two persons were killed near the Stalvedro tunnel (Ct. Ticino) when two motor-cars were involved in a head-on collision. Those killed were Alfredo Meuli (64) and Luigi Arena (86), living in Brussels.

One person was killed and six were seriously injured when a motor-car, on overtaking, collided with an oncoming vehicle near Flums. The man killed was Robert Bammert (77), of Mels (Ct. St. Gall).

Bruno Zehnder (26), of Ettenhausen, was killed when, between Ifwil and Eschlikon (Ct. Thurgau), his car collided with a signpost. His passenger received serious injuries and was taken to hospital.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

VARIOUS.

Switzerland exported in March 1960 3,761,900 watches, to the value of 104,500,000.—francs

[A.T.S.]

* * *

At the beginning of December 1959 the "Schweiz. Kaufmännische Verein" numbered 129 sections, including those of Brussels, London, Milan, and New York. The total membership is given as 60,110, including 15,580 female and 8,448 youth members.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The famous William Tell Pastoral Plays at Altdorf, which take place on Saturdays and Sundays throughout July, August and September, are of special interest this year. Apart from the 200th birthday of Friedrich Schiller, the immortal author of "William Tell", Altdorf celebrates the 60th anniversary of its Tell Playhouse.

At the 13th International Film Festival, at Locarno, 21st to 31st July 1960, an international jury will award gold and silver "Veils" for the best films, many of which will be shown in premières. Gala evenings in the magnificent park of the open-air theatre, seating 2,500 people, will be attended by film stars and famous producers, etc. At an international congress the problems of films for the young will be discussed.

* * *

The Swiss National Costume Festival at Sion is to be held on 11th and 12th June 1960. An International Folk-lore festival, which will include the best Swiss and foreign groups, will appear on the stage of the hotel "La Matze".

* * *

Neuchâtel: This year's vintage festival, a traditional event of the season, will once again enrapture the local inhabitants and guests of this light-hearted city of Neuchâtel. On the afternoon of 2nd October a colourful procession consisting of more than fifty groups and twelve hundred participants and bearing the motto "Jouez avec nous" will make their way through the streets of Neuchâtel. The focal point of this happy festival will be the "parade and battle" of flowers and the showering of confetti.

* * *

Geneva: The Jaques-Dalcroze Institute in Geneva will be conducting a holiday course from 1st to 13th August 1960. During the introductory courses for pedagogues, musicians, artistes and other interested people, the Dalcroze Method will be presented, including physical development, ear-training, improvisation, relaxation and eurhythmics. Advanced courses for teachers, etc., will cover the physical aspect of the Method with stress on improvisation. Teachers at the holiday course include Rosalia Chladek, Gerda Alexander, and Jeanne Braun. The course for improvisation will be directed by Nathalie Tingey.

* * *

The Swiss Manufacturers of meat processing machinery and utensils etc. will have their own first trade fair at Zurich's Hallenstadion from 10th to 21st June 1960. Installations and the full range of equipment used from the slaughter-house to the retail shop will be shown.

* * *

Neuchâtel — This gay French-speaking city on the sunny side of Lake Neuchâtel will be the site of an annual Swiss Gastronomy Fair which is to be held for the first time from June 3rd to 12th, 1960. The fair will differ somewhat from the usual pattern of exhibitions dealing with human nourishment. Situated a little over a mile from the centre of the town, it will also cover related fields such as the arts of laying tables and decorating dining rooms, culinary literature, tourism, outdoor cooking and barbecuing and as one of the most gratifying subjects, table wines. The gastronomic show proper will consist of an old Neuchâtel village with three speciality restaurants, three foreign pavilions to be taken over by France, Denmark and Yugoslavia, and one pavilion each dedicated to the culinary art of the Swiss cantons of Vaud, Tessin and Grisons.

Bellinzona — In government circles of southern Switzerland's Canton Ticino large-scale improvements of the St. Gotthard road, the historic North-South thoroughfare in the heart of Europe, are strongly advocated, as is significance not only as an international motor-road but also as the main link between northern Switzerland and the "sunshine" terrace south of the Alps, seems to be prejudiced by several new Alpine highway projects. Although the section of the road leading over the St. Gotthard Pass, from Andermatt to Airolo, has been modernized in its full length and last summer has seen the heaviest motor-traffic of all trans-Alpine highways, it is felt here that something should be done to keep the road open also during the winter months. It is expected that a tunnel will be available by 1980 to secure safe driving all year round, independent of snow and ice which now block the pass in winter. It has to be pointed out, however, that thanks to the Swiss Federal Railways which run special motor-car trains through the St. Gotthard rail tunnel, this problem has already been solved to a certain extent. With the new auto-shipping ramps now nearing completion at Göschenen and Airolo, the two tunnel entrances, it will be possible to reduce the intervals between motor-car trains to 20 minutes. It is hoped at Bellinzona that Switzerland's national road-building programme will provide for a new four-lane highway along the southern approaches of the St Gotthard.

* * *

An eight-million Swiss franc aerial cableway is to be built as a new way of access to Mürren, the lofty summer and winter resort in the Bernese Oberland so far reached only by funicular. The building costs will include the construction of an up-to-date hotel at Mürren and of a mountain-top restaurant on the 10,000 ft. high Schilthorn which is to be the terminal point of the new teleferique. Starting from Stechelberg in the Lauterbrunnen Valley, the aerial tramway is expected to open up to tourism this village at the end of the valley road as well as the hamlet of Grimmelwald, halfway between the valley and Mürren.

* * *

The first televising command post of the traffic police has recently been put to work in the centre of the city of Zurich. Sitting in his glass tower in front of a traffic-light switchboard, the police officer who literally can "look around the corners" by means of a TV screen, has complete long-distance control over approaching traffic. Some 30,000 vehicles daily roll past the command tower which also can be operated automatically.

* * *

Furka-Oberalp railway, one of the most scenic rail lines in the Swiss Alps, is to continue to be operated instead of being replaced by a bus service, it was announced by a study committee of the Swiss Federal Department of Transports. Some 7 million Swiss francs will be required for technical improvements on this narrow-gauge mountain railway with its many cog-wheel sections.

Approximately 5 miles east of the summit of the Bruenig Pass, which connects the Bernese Oberland with Central Switzerland, the new funicular railway Hasliberg — Kaserstatt has recently been opened.

A 17-minute journey will take travellers to a height of 5,985 feet above sea-level to a sun terrace offering a magnificent view of the Aare valley and the mountains of the Bernese Oberland.

* * *

Zweisimmen: Zweisimmen, the northern terminal point of the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway, last year recorded a total of 27,781 visitors' nights, compared with 19,200 in 1958. The 45% increase, according to local opinion, is mainly due to Europe's longest aerial cableway which was put into service about a year ago, linking the village (3,000 ft.a.s.l.) with the vast skiing grounds of the Rinderberg (6,600 ft.). Thanks to the ever growing popularity of this skiers' playground several ski-hoists and ski-lifts will be added to those already existing in the Rinderberg area. Also by next winter the accommodating capacity of Zweisimmen will be increased by some 60%. Blueprints for new structures include an 84-unit "Sport Motel" and the complete renovation of the 60-bed Hotel Sternen. Zweisimmen also affords all amenities of an up-to-date mountain resort to summer visitors travelling by rail or road.

* * *

Zurich: A "Keep Clean" week was conducted by the city of Zurich last year. This must have surprised the many holiday guests from abroad as the streets of the largest city in Switzerland are always spick and span in any case! Most of them would hardly have dared to throw an empty matchbox on the ground. For quite a time a certain member of the municipal council had been telling the city councillor that a street subway was constantly being fouled by pigeons and suggested that a remedy should be found. Soon afterwards the councillor engaged the services of a special pigeon-catcher, whose duty it is to reduce the number of wild pigeons by capturing the birds and the seizure of their eggs.

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Zurich: Dr. Linus Birchler, chairman of the Swiss government committee for the preservation of monuments, in an article for the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" lists several examples of successfully restored, or still to be renovated, ecclesiastical buildings in Zurich. This city, a stronghold of the Reformation in the early 16th century, then "gave a disastrous treatment to its inherited churches and chapels". One of the medieval places of worship which have now been restored in their original architectural beauty is the early-Gothic St. Augustine Church. Another forgotten gem of Zurich's "Old Town" is the great cloister of the former Bare-Footed Friars' Convent now under reconstruction. A particularly imposing historic building which Dr. Birchler describes as the artistically most precious structure of Old Zurich and the outstanding achievement of the high-Gothic era in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, is the 75ft high choir of the Blackfriars' Church which will soon be restored in its old glory. This "proudest choir on the upper Rhine", according to Dr. Birchler, can only be compared to such famous architectural creations as the Franciscan Church at Salzburg and Normandy's Mont St. Michel church. He suggests that it be made available for festive occasions of the University of Zurich since it is the dominating building at the foot of the city's "Acropolis".

* * *

British television personnel were recently at Oberiberg (Caton Schwyz) to film the everyday life of a Swiss mountain community. The British Broadcasting Corporation makes such documentaries in various countries in order to provide English school-children with lessons on various aspects of foreign countries.

* * *

6,000 foreign students matriculated at the nine Swiss universities during 1959. The greater part of these students came from Germany, the others coming from North America, South America, Asia, Hungary, France, Africa, Greece, Italy, Norway, Holland, Luxembourg, Great Britain, Israel, and Turkey.

* * *

The American journalist, authoress of fifty-three gastronomic books, Dr. Ida Bailey Allen, visited Switzerland for three weeks in the company of Charles Premac, who made his name on American television as the "singing cook". The object of the visit was to learn about the regional culinary specialities and wines. A covering article written by Dr. Ida Bailey Allen will be published by about 900 American papers and magazines, thus reaching 35 million people.

Seven kilometres east of the height of the pass of Brunigstrasse, which connects the Bernese Oberland with Central Switzerland, the new funicular railway Hasliberg-Kaserstatt has recently been opened. After a 17-minute journey the travelling guest will reach a height of 5,985 feet above sea-level and will arrive at a sun terrace offering a magnificent view of the Aare valley and the mountains of the Bernese Oberland.

Altogether 25 new residential buildings were constructed during the last year in the holiday resort of Adelboden. It is expected that by 1961 Adelboden's hotels, pensions, children's homes and holiday camps will offer accommodation for approximately 7,000 visitors, while the resort's permanent population numbers only 3,000. In the field of sports this Alpine resort offers many facilities, and possesses seven tennis courts. The Nevada-Sporthotel Tennis Competition will take place in Adelboden from 8th to 10th July 1960, and will be followed in the first half of August by the International Adelboden Championships. An added attraction to the programme in 1961 will be skating events which will take place on the new artificial ice-rink now under construction.

* * *

The Official Enquiry Office at Bienne, the watch-making centre, is organising courses in photography during July and August 1960. Under the guidance of an expert, participants will be taken on excursions to Magglingen, the lake, St. Peter's Island, the Jura, old and modern Bienne, and a factory. In this way practical experience will be gained and lectures will deal with the theoretical side of the art of photography.

* * *

Willisau. "It's a Raffael!", scenographer and restorer Adolf Engel recently affirmed to beaming town officials at Willisau, Central Switzerland, after visiting the ancient town hall when he thoroughly examined a badly neglected little painting. He claimed that this must be an original sketch of the Italian renaissance artist's planned painting, "The Battle of Constantin", which had been ordered by Pope Leo X but was actually painted by Raffael's pupil Giulio Romano. To prove his sensational theory Engel travelled to Rome to confront the Willisau sketch with Giulio Romano's picture in the Vatican's Constantin Hall. Although challenged by some other Swiss experts, Engel maintains that tiny Willisau (pop. 2,100) is harbouring a unique and priceless art treasure. He only failed to explain one thing: How would a "genuine Raffael" have come from glorious navel-of-the-world Rome of the Renaissance to a small country spot in Switzerland — and have remained there undiscovered for more than five centuries?

SWISSAIR RECEIVES FIRST DC-8

Swissair's first Douglas DC-8 jet liner arrived in Zurich on 24th April. It had flown from New York in 7 hours 26 minutes, covering the distance of over 4,000 miles at an average speed of 535 m.p.h.

It will start scheduled operations between Switzerland and New York on 30th May. Initially three DC-8 flights weekly are scheduled in each direction, with frequencies being stepped up in the course of the summer as Swissair's other two DC-8 jet liners are delivered and DC-7C services are phased out.

From 11th September all Swissair's North Atlantic services will be operated by DC-8s, totalling 12 return flights weekly.