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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss Legation in Baghdad has been raised to the rank of embassy, and Mr. Guido Keel has been appointed Swiss Ambassador to Iraq.

Former South African Minister of finance, Mr. J. E. Holloway, has just been visiting our country as head of a commercial and economic mission.

More than 8,000 drivers in Switzerland were disqualified last year, almost 60 per cent of them for drunkenness. There were 8,321 disqualifications (1,290 more than in 1959), more than half of which involved accidents. Most of the disqualifications were for periods of up to three months, but more than 100 drivers were disqualified for periods exceeding five years.

A group of English journalists have been visiting our country's cheese industry farms and factories. The tour ended with a delightful excursion to Grindelwald.

The first men to conquer the Eiger Mountain in winter via the dreaded North Wall, and live to tell the tale, did so after climbing only three-quarters of the total route. They denied another mountaineer's accusation that they cheated — by taking the train up the first stage of the ascent.

Several Swiss citizens have lately been the victims of the terrorist war raging in Algeria, and the three Swiss citizens kidnapped by the F.L.N. in 1957 and 1958 are still missing, despite numerous measures taken to trace them.

Switzerland exported 23,348 tons of cheese last year.

Michael Mermot, 24, a Swiss student, said in Lima, Peru, that he will sail alone 4,000 miles across the Pacific in a 26-foot raft.

Switzerland's tobacco growing industry is declining, due to common tobacco disease, floods and hailstones.

Several people gathered with the official delegation of Pully at the local memorial to Général Guisan on 8th April to commemorate the first anniversary of his death.

Mr. Lyndon Johnson, Vice-President of United States, was recently in Geneva attending the three-nations nuclear conference. The conference continues.

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Cantonal

The "Punch" Exhibition of British Humour on the fourth floor of a Lausanne department store is meeting with great success. Every day, it is full of visitors who chuckle appreciatively. On the same floor there is an exhibition of British furniture. Residents of Neuchâtel may have the opportunity of seeing the Exhibition in May, as negotiations are proceeding to show it at the Neuchâtel Gastronomic Fair from 10th to 22nd May.

A Tibetan house, which will receive twenty children from that unhappy country, has been opened in the Pestalozzi Village at Trogen, Canton Aargau. The founder of the Village, Mr. Corti, Professor Carl J. Burckhardt, and world-famous alpinist Heinrich Harrer, author of "Seven Years in Tibet", were present at the inauguration, where Mr. Rakra read a message from the Dalai Lama.

A popular petition launched by the Communist Parti du Travail has received the required 10,000 signatures. It asks for three thousand low-rented apartments.

Switzerland's first nudist colony has just been founded in Bern. Its aim is to promote a healthy way of life with the prohibition of meat, alcohol and tobacco.

A disastrous fire has entirely destroyed the Luederenalp hotel, above Wasen, in the Emmental region. The blaze was apparently started by a cigarette.

The Grandson Castle, largest in Switzerland after the Château de Chillon, which was bought by Geneva's Minister Filipinetti last year, has now been restored with great care and enriched by numerous precious documents. It is now open to the public.

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A new police regulation in Ticino now forbids young people under sixteen to enter dance halls and cinemas.

* * *

Young people in Zurich have founded an organisation to fight for the country's moral defence. Their headquarters will be an ancient military fort located at Mont Vully.

* * *

An enthusiastic fisherman caught a trout weighing no less than 8 kilos in the river Suze, at Bienne.

* * *

The trial of a German citizen, Rudolf Rupe, has just opened before the Criminal Court of Lugano. 24-year-old Rupe is accused of murder, attempted murder and robbery. It is the most sensational case to come before Lugano's Criminal Court for fifteen years.

* * *

Nicknamed the king of the farmers, Mr. Ernest Laur, of Effingen, Aargau, has just celebrated his 90th anniversary. Mr. Laur has spent a lifetime fighting the farmer's cause, first as Secretary of the Swiss Farmers Union and later as the founder of the Farmers Political Party. A University teacher of international reputation, Mr. Laur is still very active.

* * *

The 100th anniversary of the famous Conservatoire de Lausanne will be marked this year by several special events.

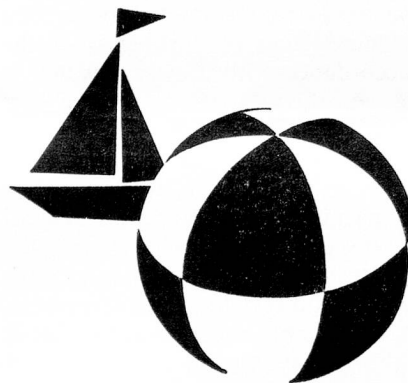
(Most of the above items were received from the A.T.S. News Service.)

Switzerland's Population

According to the recent census the population of Switzerland on 1st December 1960 numbered 5,411,000 compared with 4,714,992 on 1st December 1950. Here are the provisional figures:

CANTONS	POPULATION 1ST DEC. 1950	POPULATION 1ST DEC. 1960	INCREASE DECREASE
Zurich	777,002	941,800	21%
Bern	801,943	889,400	11%
Luzern	223,249	253,100	13%
Uri	28,556	32,300	13%
Schwyz	71,082	78,200	10%
Unterwalden	19,389	22,200	14%
Obwalden	22,125	23,200	5%
Glarus	37,663	40,500	8%
Zug	42,239	52,500	24%
Fribourg	158,695	159,800	1%
Solothurn	170,508	201,500	18%
Basel-Stadt	196,498	226,500	15%
Basel-Land	107,549	148,300	38%
Schaffhausen	57,515	66,100	15%
Appenzell A.Rh.	47,938	49,400	3%
Appenzell I.Rh.	13,427	13,100	-2%
St. Gallen	309,106	338,100	9%
Graubunden	137,100	145,600	6%
Aargau	300,782	359,800	20%
Thurgau	149,738	166,100	11%
Tessin	175,055	195,700	12%
Vaud	377,585	430,200	14%
Valais	159,178	178,900	12%
Neuchâtel	128,152	147,500	15%
Geneve	202,918	251,200	24%
	4,714,992	5,411,000	14.8%

Switzerland



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