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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

M. Obrecht was present last Tuesday at a meeting of the Federal Council to take leave of his colleagues. The President, M. Pilet-Golaz, expressed the gratitude of the Federal Council, both Chambers of Parliament and of the whole country for his services during the last few years. The new Federal Councillor was then introduced and a discussion concerning the distribution of the various Federal Departments followed. The new Federal Councillor succeeds M. Obrecht in the Département Fédéral de l'Economie Publique. He will act at the same time as Vice-Chief of the Department of Finance and Customs.

The Federal Council has elected Director Cottier as chief of the Federal Department for Tourist Traffic; he was up till now in charge of the second district of the Swiss Federal Railways.

Last Thursday afternoon Solothurn gave a hearty welcome to the new Federal Councillor, Dr. Walter Stämpfli. The train on which Dr. Stämpfli travelled to the capital of his home canton stopped in Gerlafingen, where he has lived for nearly twenty years as Director of the von Roll Iron and Steel Works, and also at Büren, his native village. Deputations greeted him in both places as well as, of course, later on and with due pride in Solothurn.

About 100 members of foreign legations from Holland and Belgium passed through Basle last Wednesday week in a special diplomatic train.

With the diplomats were ecclesiastical dignitaries from the United States and South America and a number of members of the International Court at The Hague.

The Government of the Canton Aargau has submitted proposals to the Federal Council for the construction of a double track on the line between Rapperswil and Goldau. They hope that the Federal Council will agree to incorporate this construction in their new scheme for the creation of work for the unemployed.

The Government of the Canton of St. Gall has decided that in future all disputes regarding rents are to be submitted to the authorities. Cases where both land-lords and tenants are satisfied are, of course, exempted.

The Government of the Canton Uri has declared itself in favour of the construction of a road along the left shore of the Lake of Uri instead of the projected Titlis road.

The Swiss Radio announced that another train carrying food is about to leave for France. The first train left Geneva on July 8th and the second a week later. The food is distributed under the auspices of the Red Cross authorities to refugees in France.

With the help of the Society for the Preservation of Castles and Historical Ruins, Castle Ehrenfels in the Grisons has been restored. University students participated actively some time ago in this work and Ehrenfels is to be used for the housing of refugees for the time being.

German-Swiss trade negotiations have begun in Berlin. The Swiss delegation is headed by Dr. Hotz of the Département Fédéral de l'Economie Publique.

On July 22nd a collision occurred between Erstfeld and Amsteg on the Gotthard line. An express and a goods train were involved and some passengers were slightly injured. The line was blocked for some hours.

A land-slide blocked the Great St. Bernhard Pass some days ago.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

### L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 6 Août à 7.0 h. précises au Restaurant PAGANI 42, Great Portland Street, W.1.

#### ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal. | Démissions.  
Admissions. | Divers.

Le souper est facultatif et les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).  
Le Comité

The Association of Swiss Non-Commissioned Officers met in conference recently and passed a resolution stipulating that liberties of conscience and religion must be defended.

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The Communal by-elections in Schwyz resulted in the election of four Liberal candidates against their Catholic Conservative opponents. The Liberal party is now in the majority in the Municipal Council.

\* \* \*

The by-election in Graubunden has resulted in the nomination of Dr. J. Regi of Zernez to the Cantonal Government. The new member up till now practised as a lawyer in Schulz.

\* \* \*

The Hoch und Tiefbau A.-G. at Interlaken which formerly housed a parquet-flooring factory, was destroyed by fire yesterday. The factory employed 160 persons.

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It is just a hundred years since the Swiss flag in its present form was given to the Army as its standard. This event was commemorated in the Roman Theatre Vindonissa in the presence of many high Army officers.

(“*The Times*,” 19.7.1940):— It is reported from an Italian source that the armistice dispositions prohibiting navigation between France and oversea territories may soon be suspended and free navigation allowed. It is said that the Italo-Swiss negotiations now taking place in Italy are almost terminated and Italy is ready to allow the ships which Switzerland has chartered for her revictualling to discharge their cargoes at certain French ports.

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(“*The Times*,” 19.7.1940):— On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Matterhorn tragedy wreaths were yesterday deposited in the Zermatt cemetery on the graves of Robert Hadow, Lord Francis Douglas, the Rev. Charles Hudson, and the guide Michel Croz, who lost their lives during the first ascent of this peak, when they were accompanied by Edward Whymper, who escaped by the breaking of the rope.

\* \* \*

(“*Sunday Times*,” 21.7.1940):— Large consignments of food are being dispatched to France by the

Swiss Red Cross Society to help French refugees, large numbers of whom are stated to be threatened with famine, according to the Swiss wireless.

A train carrying fifty-three tons of foodstuffs to the districts of Laon, Cambrai, and St. Quentin left Basle on July 6th, while seventy-one tons of food were sent from Geneva to unoccupied French territory.

A relief train sent to Paris from Switzerland by the American Red Cross also carried contributions from the Swiss Red Cross Society which so far has dispatched foodstuffs to a total value of about £5,600.

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(“*Evening Standard*,” 22.7.1940):— River traffic down the Rhine, which means a lot to Switzerland and still more to the city of Basle, is expected to be resumed this week.

Since September, the Rhine has been a no-man's-land, and not one ton of cargo has been added to the 2,110,000 tons the river fleet carried into Switzerland during the three years preceding the war.

In preparation for the opening day, the Swiss Rhine Fleet of 241 boats totalling 126,000 tons has been repainted and fitted out for service again.

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(“*Evening Standard*,” 22.7.1940):— So few people are paying their dentists' bills in wartime in Switzerland that dentists in future will ask cash down before beginning treatment.

\* \* \*

(“*Daily Express*,” 23.7.1940):— Swiss summer holiday-makers are getting winter sports six months early. Snow has fallen heavily throughout the Engadine, covering mountains and valleys and snapping telegraph lines.

Twenty-five sleighs made their appearance at St. Moritz yesterday, and 200 holiday-makers had a snow-ball fight. This has been one of the coldest summers Switzerland has known for forty years.

## MAILS TO SWITZERLAND.

Several subscribers have complained to us that no mails have been received from Switzerland though it is now more than a fortnight since the official notification of the resumption of the service has been published. It would appear that there has been a tremendous accumulation and before recent mail is released or distributed, some of these arrears are being cleared out; this would explain that papers are now being delivered dated June 14th to June 18th. Under the circumstances we would again recommend the use of the Radio for urgent communications. Messages sent by this “Night Letter Telegram” service are delivered the following morning and the minimum charge is 2/7½d. for 25 words incl. address. The special forms issued by the British post offices contain the necessary instructions.

At the time of going to press the following wire received by the Swiss Legation has been handed to us for the information of our readers; it was sent by the “Office Fédéral de Guerre pour les Transports” and reads:—

*Paquets postaux Suisse Angleterre sont acceptés dès 20 juillet via Lisbonne — envois marchandises exportation suisses en wagons groupage Cerbere Lisbonne possible.*

## SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

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