

# News at random

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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 19.8 million passengers during January 1959, or 500,000 more than in January 1958. Receipts: 24.5 million francs (January 1958: 23.9 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 1.64 million tons, or 80,000 less than in January 1958. Receipts: 32.7 million francs (January 1958: 35.1 million francs).

\* \* \*

Monsieur Carl Adalbert Constantin Brun, from 1953 to 1957 Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary, and since 1957 Danish Ambassador in Berne, has died in Monte Carlo whilst on holiday.

\* \* \*

A dinner of the Foreign Consular Corps, presided over by the Belgian Consul, M. R. Gerster, took place in Berne; there were 40 Consuls and Consular employees present. The President of the Bernese Government, Mr. Siegenthaler, and the Mayor of the town of Berne were the guests of the Consular Corps.

\* \* \*

### Cantonal

Twenty-eight members of the Basle section of the Swiss Alpine Club made a skiing excursion to the "Blumberg" in the Muota Valley Alps (Ct. Schwyz). Near the summit, Mr. Hans Zemp (30), a fitter residing in Basle, fell into a ravine and was killed. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two boys, Adriano and Ivo Beeler, three and six years old, lost their lives in a fire which broke out in an old house in Lachen (Ct. Schwyz). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The 35 million loan, at 3½ per cent, of the "Blenio Kraftwerke A.G." was heavily over-subscribed, and allocations had to be considerable reduced. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

An unsuccessful attempt at robbery occurred at the "Ersparniskasse" Rueggisberg (Ct. Berne). Two individuals entered the bank premises and without warning one of the men threw a heavy stone, wrapped

in a handkerchief, at the cashier, without, however, hitting him; his accomplice then brandished a revolver at the cashier, who was able to take shelter. At that moment, the gangsters were interrupted by a workman, and took flight in a motor car which had been reported as having been stolen. The police have been able to make three arrests; one of the men taken into custody is a certain Werner Lehmann (25) who had recently escaped from prison. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A taxi-driver in Berne was attacked by his passenger, who knocked him down with a piece of heavy cable. Being armed, the taxi-driver fired several shots at his attacker who, however, managed to get away. The passenger, and an accomplice who had followed the taxi on a motor-cycle, were later arrested by the police; they were of French nationality. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A private aircraft piloted by Ulrich Zellweger, of Steffisburg (Ct. Berne), carrying two passengers, crashed on landing near the Blausee (Bernese Oberland), owing to engine trouble.

The two passengers, Ernst Bickel (20), of Thierachern, and Gerold Faessler (20), of Frutigen, and the pilot were killed. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

While on leave from the "Rekrutenschule" in Lausanne, recruit René Caloz (20), of Siders, was run over and killed by a train near the Siders railway station. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The accounts for 1958 of the canton of Zug show a credit balance of 11,540.— francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A robbery attempt was made at a chemist shop in the Thunstrasse in Berne. A man (about 30 years of age) entered the shop, and producing a revolver asked the proprietor's wife, who was in attendance, to hand over the contents of the till. The woman, in her turn, took aim with a revolver at the gangster, who took to his heels. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The oldest inhabitant of the town of Basle, Frau Witwe Caroline Fiechter-Singer, has celebrated her 103rd birthday. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The accounts of the canton of St. Gall for 1958 close with a deficit of 1,678,606.— francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. Jur. Stefan Sonder (Conservative), of Salouf (Ct. Grisons), entered the National Council in succession to the late Dr. Rudolf Toggenburg. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Arno Theus (Dem.) and Dr. Gion Darms (Cons.) have been re-elected as representatives of the canton of Grisons in the States Council. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Burglars entered a jeweller's establishment at St. Moritz and got away with goods valued at about 500,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

In the Governmental elections of the canton of Thurgau, which took place recently, the following were elected: Dr. Jak. Müller (Lib.) 20,674 votes, Dr. Ernst Reiber (Lib.) 20,603 votes, Rud. Schümperli (Soc.) 20,548 votes, Dr. Willy Staehelin (Cons.) 19,913 votes, and Walter Ballmoos (Peasant Party) 17,721 votes. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Five houses were totally destroyed by fire in the village of Belmont-sur-Lausanne (Ct. Vaud). The damage caused is estimated to be between 150,000 and 200,000.—francs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The landslide above Herbriggen in the Zermatt valley having made no progress during the past 14 days the authorities have allowed the inhabitants to return to their homes in the northern part of the village. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The American Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Henry J. Taylor, presented the University of Geneva with the entire collection of works — consisting of nine volumes (letters and speeches) — of Abraham Lincoln, on the occasion of the 150th birthday anniversary of the great statesman. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A book-keeper (aged 50) of a metallurgical concern in Geneva has been arrested and charged with embezzling 200,000.—francs, which he admitted had been lost through gambling. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Royal Academy of Music in London has nominated Dr. h.c. Henri Gagnebin, Honorary Director of the Geneva Conservatoire, as an Honorary Member. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mme. Louise Pay, of Nyon, has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

#### DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Edmond Gagnebin-Nicolet, industrialist, in Tramelan, at the age of 80.

Otto Laubscher, managing director of the firm "Gebr. Laubscher & Cie" Täufelen, aged 82. The

deceased was at one time a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, and president of the board of the "Biel-Täufelen-Ins" railway.

Emil Lohner, in Berne, at the age of 94. He was from 1909 to 1928 a member of the Government of the canton of Berne, and he sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1902 to 1927. From 1929 to 1935 the deceased held the post of director of the "Zentral Amtes für Internationale Eisenbahntransporte". Lohner was also president of the board of the Berne-Lötschberg-Simplon railway. In the army he held the rank of Colonel of Artillery.

Dr. med. Ferdinand Hoefliger, a member of the "Kantonsrat" of Schwyz, and president of the commune of Wollerau, in Wollerau, aged 89.

Jacques Barbey, "Forstinspektor" of the commune of Lausanne, and since 1953 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud, in Lausanne, at the age of 56.

Otto Kofmehl, president of the board of the "Solothurner Metall A.G." Solothurn, in Solothurn, aged 72.

Frau Sophie Meyer-Kaiser, in Eppenberg (Ct. Solothurn), at the age of 103.

Walter Schürch-Zünti, printer and publisher of the paper "Unter-Emmentaler", in Huttwil, aged 74.



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Ernst Christen, for 25 years director of the "Kantonal-Bernischen Landwirtschaftsschule" Zollikofen, in Münsigen, at the age of 75.

Alois Camenzind-Camenzind, at one time "Bezirksammann" of the district Gersau, and until his death vice-president of the cantonal tribunal, and "Bankrat" of the Cantonal Bank Schwyz, in Gersau, aged 71. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

**ANNIVERSARIES.**

Federal Councillor Dr. Max Petitpierre (60), of Neuchâtel. The "Jubilar" was born on 26th February 1899, in Neuchâtel. He studied Law at the Universities of Neuchâtel, Zurich and Munich. His thesis for the doctorate in Law dealt with the recognition and execution of foreign judgments.

After the conclusion of his studies he established himself as an advocate and notary in Neuchâtel, and from 1938 to 1944 he was Professor of International Law at the University of Neuchâtel.

In 1937 Dr. Petitpierre was elected a member of the Grand Council of his native canton, and five years later (1942) he entered Parliament (States Council) as a Liberal.

On 14th December 1944 Monsieur Petitpierre was elected a member of the Federal Government in succession to M. Pilet-Golaz, and since then he has been in charge of the Federal Political Department (Swiss Foreign Office). M. Petitpierre was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1950 and 1955.

Rudolf Laemmel (90), of Zurich, author and pedagogue.

F. J. Voltz-Sprüngli (90), of Kilchberg-Zurich. In the first half of this century he was one of the most important personalities in the Swiss Chocolate Industry. He entered the chocolate concern "Lindt & Sprüngli" in 1905, and became Manager in 1928, and later on President of the Board. He retired from his post in 1958, having been connected with the firm for fifty-five years.

\* \* \*

Dr. h.c. Emanuel Stichelberger (75), of St. Gall, the eminent author. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

**LEGACIES AND DONATIONS.**

The heirs of the late Dr. Johannes Hohl-Schmutziger, of Wolfhalden (Ct. Appenzell a. Rh.), have made a donation of 25,000.— francs to the "Kantonsschule" Trogen.

The late Mme. Veuve Ignace Peyraud-Plancherel has made bequests amounting to 20,000.— francs to various charitable institutions in Bulle and Estavayer.

The recently deceased Mlle. Marguerite Ponnaz, of Villeneuve, has left the amount of 31,000.— francs to charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

**SWISS BANK DIVIDENDS.**

Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft, Zurich, 10% (1957: 10%); Schweizerische Kredit Anstalt, Zurich, 9% (1957: 9%); Schweizerische Volksbank, Berne, 7% (1957: 6%); A. G. Leu, Zurich, 8% (1957: 8%); Genossenschaftliche Zentralbank, Basel, 4½% (1957: 4½%); Crédit Foncier Neuchâtelois, Neuchâtel, 5% (1957: 5%). [A.T.S.]

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### TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

A motor-cyclist with a pillion rider crashed into a concrete post at Trubschachen. The driver escaped injury, but his passenger, Walter Zürcher (44), of Trub, was killed. The motor-cyclist later committed suicide.

Mr. Vogt-Hefti (78), industrialist, of Rapperswil (Ct. St. Gall), when crossing the Pfäffikon-Rapperswil road, was run over and killed by a motor-car. He was president of the board of the "Leih- und Sparkasse vom Lintgebiet", and formerly director of the "Spinnerei A.G." Uznaberg.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

### VARIOUS.

A national committee has been formed to start a collection of 300,000.— francs for two monuments to be erected to the memory of Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross.

One of the monuments is to be erected at Heiden (Ct. Appenzell), where Dunant spent the last twenty-three years of his life, and the other at Geneva.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Association of Suffragettes of Zurich canton has resolved that as the referendum of 1st February refusing votes to women deprived them of their political rights, Swiss women should henceforward refrain from joining national defence organizations.

\* \* \*

Zurich's 129th Hotel, the "Zuercherhof" at the edge of the "Old Town", was recently inaugurated. It has fifty beds and rates range from 10 to 20 Swiss francs per night. All rooms have telephone and radio, bath or shower and private toilet. A special attraction of the new hotel is its wine and speciality restaurant "Walliser Keller".

\* \* \*

A new tunnel, 4,300 feet long, Switzerland's longest underground road, was recently inaugurated in the Blenio Valley, Ticino. It will be of great assistance in the construction of additional power-plants in the area. The tunnel will allow traffic all the year round, unaffected by avalanches and snowdrifts. One interesting feature of this new road tunnel is its ventilation, which works automatically according to the contents of waste gases. If the ventilation failed, two traffic lights would immediately stop all vehicles at both entrances.

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Will the famous Swiss mountain resort of Zermatt remain among the "proud few" which banish all motor traffic from their confines, or will it be made accessible for motor cars by a new road? This question is now being violently discussed after some 300 inhabitants of the Matterhorn village, *i.e.*, more than half of the population entitled to vote, submitted a petition to the local authorities requesting the immediate construction of an up-to-date road leading from St. Niklaus up to Zermatt. This road, however, is to end on a plateau somewhat outside the village, where car parks, garages and repair shops would be installed. The resort itself would still be kept free from motor traffic.

\* \* \*

The only reindeer in the Alpine area may be found at the mountain village of Les Marécottes, in the Trient Valley of the Valais. This holiday resort and winter sports centre, discovered only recently by Swiss ski fans, has established a zoo as a special attraction. The park shelters wolves, foxes, marmots, beavers, etc., and seven reindeer which arrived recently from Lapland. These northern animals seem to enjoy the pure mountain air of the Valais.

\* \* \*

In connection with "G/59" — First Swiss Horticultural Exhibition — 25th April to 11th October, 1959, the City of Zurich will boast an aerial cableway this summer, as was the case last year on the occasion of the memorable "SAFFA 1958" Exhibition. Construction work for the 3,300-foot cableway connecting the two shores of Lake Zurich is now in full swing. The cableway will be equipped with 52 cabins, spanning the lake at a height of 115 feet; a one-way ride will take 7½ minutes. Thanks to a novel kind of installation, no supports are required for the whole span of the lake. There are justified prospects that this new aerial cableway may become a permanent feature of Switzerland's Lakeside Garden City.

\* \* \*

A preliminary programme for the Lucerne International Music Festival (15th August to 10th September) has recently been issued. The Philharmonia Orchestra of England, the Festival Strings, Lucerne, the Swiss Festival Orchestra, and the Collegium Musicum, Zurich, are listed as the performing orchestras.

\* \* \*

25th April will not only mark the opening day of the unique 1st Swiss Horticultural Exhibition in Zurich, but also the revival of a riverboat service on the river Limmat. Three so-called "grachten" boats as operated in Amsterdam and Venice have already been ordered at a Dutch dockyard, and at least one of them will be available in April. These very flat motor boats will operate a direct connection between Zurich Main Station and the two shores of the lake where the exhibition will be displayed. One of the boats will be named "Stapi", which is the nickname Zurich's youngsters have given their well-liked Mayor, Dr. Emil Landolt. Riverboat lines on the Limmat, leading as far as the mineral spa of Baden, were very popular before the construction of the first railways more than a hundred years ago.

A happy crowd cheered recently at the spa of Baden, after a detonation announced the successful piercing of a new road tunnel. The joy was not only due to the fact that a big step forward had been made in solving the city's acute traffic problems, but also to the appearance of promising traces of mineral oil in the tunnel's strata of sand-stone. Experts will now have to find out whether Baden, which is known the world over for its warm fountains of health, will also be able to boast of a black fountain of wealth.

\* \* \*

Two-thirds of the entire railway traffic of both passengers and goods between Northern and Southern Europe pass through the two Swiss Alpine tunnels, St. Gotthard and Simplon, leaving only one-third to the respective lines in Austria and France, a Swiss Federal Railways' official declared recently. The St. Gotthard line, which is by far the most important, hauls an average of 4.5 million passengers plus 4.5 million tons of goods per year. In the peak season, 216 trains carrying some 55,000 tons of goods may pass through the tunnel per day. It is obvious that the Swiss Federal Railways will strive hard to keep this line going as efficiently as possible. Some of the main headaches, namely the lack of shunting facilities at the frontier stations of Basel and Chiasso and at Göschenen and Airolo, the two entrances of the 10-mile-long tunnel, either have been or will soon be solved.

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