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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

The Swiss Parliament (present: 163 from the National and 42 from the States Council) re-elected all the seven Federal Councillors. The voting was not quite the formal business anticipated as a socialist member after a short peroration dwelling upon the fact that his party was not represented on the highest magistracy proposed to fresh candidates in the persons of National Councillor Johannes Huber and States Councillor Dr. Kloti. They found, however, little favour. The voting showed the following figures: Motta 140, Pilet-Golaz 145, Minger 130, Baumann 132, Etter 144, Obrecht 166 and Wetter 153. Dr. Marcel Pilet-Golaz is for the second time President of the Confederation; he is from Châteaud'Oex (Vaud) and enters upon his new duties exactly on his fiftieth anniversary. Hermann Obrecht, born in 1882 in Grenchen (Solothurn) will be Vice-President; originally a teacher he occupied many positions in local government and the business world. He was first elected to the Federal Council in 1935 when he severed his many business connections which included a seat on the board of the Swiss Bank Corporation. Georges Bovet, aged 65, from Neuchâtel and a former distinguished journalist, continues to act as Federal Chancellor, an office he has held for the last five years. — At the subsequent swearing-in of the new magistrates Councillors Motta and Obrecht were absent on account of illness.

It is anticipated that the accounts of the Federal Railways for the current year will close without showing the traditional deficit. The goods and passenger traffic since the outbreak of the war has been exceptionally heavy chiefly due to the contraction of road competition.

The revenue from customs duties shows an increase of 10.7 million francs or 50% more than the figure for November 1938. The total revenue for the eleven months is 273.1 million, compared with 239.6 million francs for the same period last year.

The first somewhat short session of the new parliament came to an end on Wednesday, December 13th. The two houses will meet again on February 19th.

The Conseil d'Etat of Vaud has issued an order forbidding National Councillor Leon Nicole, the well-known Geneva communist, to deliver public speeches within the canton.

The budget for 1940 of Baselstadt forecasts a deficit of 14 million francs; the extraordinary expenses caused by the present emergency are of course mainly responsible for this unsatisfactory state.

National Councillor Pfändler (St. Gall) has lodged an appeal against the decision of the St. Gall Board of Education forcing him to resign his position at the local state school should he prefer to occupy his seat in the National Council.

Thanks to government control wholesale prices to end of November show an increase of only 11.82% (or 15.6% on November 1938 prices), the percentage for other neutral countries being 18% for Belgium, 16% for Holland and 19% for Denmark.

Buchs (St. Gall) enjoys the distinction of having constructed a new road at half the amount for which a credit had been previously obtained.

The age limit of 65 for civil servants is being extended where it is found that replacement under present conditions is difficult.

About 14 million letters, papers and parcels have been handled by the army post office during November.

The number of totally unemployed registered in November was 21,110 which is about the same as for the previous month but about 62% less than a year ago. The catering trade is the chief sufferer; an improvement is recorded in the watch industry.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 2 Janvier à 5.30 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

Thanks to ample coal imports the domestic ration has been increased by 50%; so far only half of the previous year's consumption was allowed.

* * *

A well-intentioned revolver shot brought a deplorable accident when the officer-son of a Solothurn factory owner unexpectedly returned home on short leave. He attended to business in the office while his brother was engaged unknown to him somewhere in the factory. In the evening the officer noticed his brother taking the car out to drive home; wishing to join him he called out and even ran after the car without arresting his attention. As a last resort he pulled out his army revolver and still running fired a couple of shots "in the air." The car still drove on but stopped after about 1,000 yards to pick up a milkman who had collapsed in pain at the side of the road; when examined at the Spitalhof a bullet was found in the abdomen with fatal consequences.

* * *

A greengrocer in Zurich has been ordered to close his shop for two months and is being prosecuted for contravening the Federal decree regulating retail prices.

* * *

The communist newspaper "Freiheit" appearing in Basle, has been confiscated on the strength of the existing press restrictions, for publishing two articles belittling the League of Nations.

* * *

A grave accident is reported from Oerlikon where an extension of the Werkzeugmaschinenfabrik is under construction. For so far unexplained reasons a scaffolding suddenly gave way burying ten workmen; four of them were killed and the remainder badly injured.

* * *

The Farewell Banquet to our departing Minister filled the large hall at Monicos to the furthest corner. The prevailing uncertainties forced a large number of participants to delay their reservation to the last moment which increased the task and anxieties of the Committee but the proceedings moved with clock-like precision and "with a swing." The usual vote of thanks and appreciation was modestly omitted from the official business of the evening and we wish to pay

here a sincere tribute to Mr. Henry Bingguely, the organising secretary, who under exceptional and adverse circumstances succeeded to make this memorable manifestation a perfect success.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Irrespective of the very black outlook caused by the war which has been considerably darkened by the black-out, the City Swiss Club has fortunately once more taken the initiative in trying to create a fair amount of happiness and interest amongst its members.

The November meeting which was exceedingly well attended, was honoured by our esteemed Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, and members were delighted to have this opportunity of welcoming their Minister in their midst once more before his retirement. The guest of honour of the evening was Professor Denis Saurat, who gave a most interesting lecture on "The International Situation and Neutrality." His conference proved of absorbing interest to all those who were fortunate enough to be present, and one had to admire the feelings as well as the theories displayed by M. Saurat, as a worthy representative of our sister Republic, France.

The December monthly meeting, the last one of 1939, was again very well attended, and this must be due to the great popularity enjoyed by our famous friend, Mr. Maurice Thiéry. He kept his audience thoroughly entertained, interested and amused for well over an hour in giving not only historic, but also amusing facts connected with the life in Paris during the French Revolution, and comparing some of those episodes with present day life. The conference was unfortunately all too short, and members were eager to exact a promise from M. Thiéry that he would soon come among us once more. M. Thiéry will be pleased to do so, and we are grateful to him for that. We had the pleasure then of welcoming among us guests from Switzerland, members of the Swiss delegation now in London, namely Dr. A. Kock, Colonel Zürcher, and members of the Swiss Legation special division including Mr. Preiswerk. It was a great honour for the Club to have the opportunity of welcoming these distinguished guests, and we take this opportunity of extending our thanks to Mr. Girardet who accompanied them and represented the Legation who have supported the Club so faithfully of late.

It is hoped that the members of the special division will not fail to follow the lead of their colleagues of Montagu Place, and come as regularly as possible to the monthly meetings.

The end of the year has come, and nothing now remains for the committee but to wish a peaceful and happy Christmas, and as bright as possible a New Year, to every member.

May I suggest that amongst his 1st January resolutions every member faithfully decides to attend every monthly meeting of the City Swiss Club, thus enabling all our compatriots to get to know each other better, and to stand together during the difficult period we are unfortunately going through.

The next meeting is January 2nd, and let's hope we all start in full strength, and with new enthusiasm and confidence in the future.

Bec.

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