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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The first railway to be constructed on Swiss soil, that from Zurich to Baden, a distance of 14½ miles, was opened on August 9th, 1847.

In commemoration, both of this event, and of subsequent railway development in Switzerland, various celebrations have been taking place during the present year. These reached their Culmination on August 9th, the hundredth anniversary of the opening.

On Friday (August 8th), a large number of representatives of foreign railways administrations, specially invited for this occasion, were the guests of the Municipality of Zurich. Dr. Luchinger, the Mayor of the town of Zurich, extended a hearty welcome to the delegates and in his address paid a tribute to the late Alfred Escher of Zurich, who, when a Member of Parliament, sponsored and was responsible for the passing of the Bill to bring the principal railway companies in Switzerland under the administration of the state.

The next day (August 9th) on the centenary, Dr. W. Meile, President of the Management of the Swiss Federal Railways, during the official celebration ceremony at the "Kongresshaus" in Zurich, gave an interesting and concise *exposé* of the history of Swiss Railways during the last hundred years.

Federal-Councillor Celio, Chief of the Federal Post and Railway Department, in his speech congratulated the Swiss people on the sacrifices they had made at one time to bring their railway net under State control, an undertaking, although much opposed at the beginning, has since proved to have been a wise undertaking.

In the afternoon the official guests arrived at Baden, where they witnessed a procession depicting the first journey of what was then called the "Spanischbrötlibahn." Amongst the spectators were Federal-Councillor Celio, General Guisan, late Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz, members of the General-Management of the Swiss Federal Railways and high Federal and Cantonal officials.

At the conclusion of the festivities in Baden, the original train, which was boarded by the official guests, left amidst the cheers of the population, and to the thunder of guns, and the music of bands playing on its triumphant journey to Zurich, being greeted at each station by large crowds of cheering spectators; on its arrival in Zurich the participants were received by the Mayor of the town of Zurich.

Dealing briefly with the history of the development of the railways in Switzerland it may be mentioned that after the inauguration of the Zürich-Baden line no other railway was opened for more than seven years. In 1850, however, Robert Stephenson submitted plans for the construction of 400 miles of lines. These comprised an east-to-west trunk route from Lindau to Geneva which followed the main river valleys. The scheme was eventually carried out with some modifications, the Cantons having been given powers in 1852 to grant concessions for that purpose. One consequence of this policy was that development tended to be local rather than national. Amalgamations, however, took place as early as 1853 and continued until about 1890, when five large "area" companies were in existence. During this period a nationally-owned railway was built from Zofingen to Constance via Winterthur, but was absorbed by the North-Eastern private system after only a few years of troubled financial existence. In 1887, the Federal Council took the first steps towards the purchase of all the Swiss railways by the State, and after lengthy negotiations, this was finally sanctioned in 1898. Some 760 route miles of line were taken over on January 1st, 1902, and between then and May, 1903, 770 further route miles were acquired. The Gotthard railway, with a route mileage of 170, was purchased in 1909, since when only 85 route miles have been added. A large mileage of secondary lines has, however, been left in private ownership, as

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LE COMITE.

has the important Berner-Alpenbahn and the 245-mile long metre-gauge Rhaetian Railway. At the present time, the total railway route mileage amounted to 3,625, of which 1,822 miles belong to the Federal Railways.

The most notable feature of the Swiss Railways is the extent to which electric traction is used. This is shown by the fact that of the 1,822 route miles owned by the Federal Railways 1,700 miles are operated electrically, and that 97.6 per cent. of the 10,107 million ton-kilometres worked in 1945 were worked by electric traction. The first line to be operated electrically was that between Brigue and Iselle, which was opened in 1906 and used the three-phase system. As a result of successful experiments on the Seebach-Wettingen line, the single-phase system was, however, adopted as standard and the Spiez-Frutigen section of the Lötschberg line was equipped on this system in 1910. The electrification of the Gotthard line, which had been decided upon in 1913, was delayed by the war, but was subsequently undertaken as part of a national scheme of conversion in which lines embodying steep gradients were dealt with first. The first stage of this scheme was completed in 1930. It is hoped that conversion will be finished next year.

Another notable feature is that there are 15 purely rack railways in the country and 13 on which steep sections are operated in that way. Although a number of these are used for tourist purposes only, the majority carry general traffic. All but two employ electric traction.

On the occasion of the 1st of August, Monsieur Flückiger, Swiss Minister in Moscow, wearing the uniform of a colonel of division, received members of the Swiss Colony, and also representatives of the Russian Foreign Office at the Legation.

Visas between Norway and Switzerland have been abolished since the 15th of this month.

All Switzerland's war-time controls — except those on coal and soap — will be lifted shortly.

The Governor of the National Bank of Egypt is going to Berne to discuss the question of converting Egyptian pound balances into Swiss francs.

Madame Bechara el Khoury, the wife of the President of the Lybian Republic, has arrived in Switzerland on a short holiday. The Federal Council has entertained her to dinner at the "v. Wattenwyl Haus" in Berne.

Cantonal

It is reported that all of the thirty people, who were injured on the occasion of the railway accident at the Biberbrücke near Einsiedeln are now out of danger. [A.T.S.]

The Station Building at Arth-Goldau (Schwyz) has partly been destroyed by fire. The damage caused is estimated to be heavy. [A.T.S.]

Emil Häusermann, for many years Managing-Director of the Société de la Viscose Suisse, S.A., in Heerbrugg, has died. In the army Häusermann reached the rank of colonel. [A.T.S.]

Level-crossing accidents in Switzerland are on the increase, and the authorities are urged to take preventive measures. A motor-lorry was caught near Eschholzmatte by a goods train. The lorry was smashed to pieces, and the driver received serious head injuries. [A.T.S.]

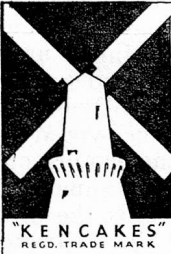
The death occurred in Zurich at the age of 59 of Guido v. Salis-Seewis.

The deceased studied architecture at the Universities of Zurich, Berne and Vienna, and later on joined the Board of Directors of the "Zurich Unfallversicherungsgesellschaft." He is the author of a number of historical works. In the army he obtained the rank of a colonel of artillery. [A.T.S.]

Professor, Dr. E. J. Ott, who since 1907 has been a teacher at the Federal Technical University in Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The Federal Council has asked the Federal Chambers for a credit amounting to 1,100,000.— frs. for the erection of a new telephone exchange in Zurich-Albisrieden. [A.T.S.]

The well-known Schwendlen Bad near Konolfingen (Berne) was burnt to the ground. Most of the belongings of the 46 visitors were lost. [A.T.S.]




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During the month of July 1947, 428 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne; 332 people were injured and nine people were killed. [A.T.S.]

* * *

As a result of a movement begun at Pax Romana's regional conference in London in 1945, a post-graduate school of Social and Political Science has been opened at the Fribourg University. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A head-on collision between two motor cars, near Schweizerhall, (Basle) caused the death of three people, whilst six people were badly injured and had to be taken to hospital. [A.T.S.]

* * *

After lengthy negotiations, in which the former Swiss Minister in London, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, has rendered helpful services, the famous "Darmstädter Madonna" from Hans Holbein d.J. has been lent by the owners, Prince and Princess von Hessen, for six months to the Picture Gallery in Basle.

Holbein has painted the Madonna for the Mayor of Basle, Jakob Meyer zum Hasen. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death is reported from Davos of Walter Buss-Hofsetter, member of the Board of the Buss A.G., Basel-Pratteln, at the age of 57. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Edgar Refardt, administrator of the "Basler Orchester Gesellschaft" has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. He is known as an expert on Swiss Musical history. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The deaths are reported from Basle of Dr. Hans Kappeler, teacher of chemistry at the "Humanistischen Gymnasium" in Basle, at the age of 64; and of Arnold Gysin, a former Manager of the Birsigtal railway and for 35 years Manager of the Municipal tramways in Basle, at the age of 78. [A.T.S.]

* * *

One of the biggest benefactors of the town of Basle died at the age of 88 in the person of Frau Jenny von Speyr-Boelger. Nearly sixty years ago she founded a home for children, at her own expense, where thousands of sick children were cared for. [A.T.S.]

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A. SCHMIDT-NYFF NEGGER

Im Winter g'leiches Haus in Arosa Sporthotel Valsana

During a holiday stay at Dussnang, Dr. Josef Müller, head of the famous "Stifts" library at St. Gall, died at the age of 76. The deceased was author of a large number of publications dealing with Swiss Church history. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Alfred Rutz, President of the cantonal tribunal, has died in St. Gall at the age of 48. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The senior of the Journalists of the canton of St. Gall, and former editor of the "St. Galler Stadt Anzeiger" and "Ostschweiz," has retired at the age of 76. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The medical practitioners of the canton of Grisons are threatening to strike, as their increase of fees for attending patients belonging to the "Krankenkassen" have not been accepted. The Federal authorities have been asked to intervene. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Felice Mendini, Roman-catholic priest in Poschiavo, lost his life during a climbing excursion on the Corno di Campo. He was well-known in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland as an author. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Heinrich Schuler-Braschler, manufacturer in Wetzikon, during a holiday in Sils-Baseglia, undertook an excursion into the Fextal district. Failing to return, a search was made, and he was found dead at

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the bottom of a rock; it is assumed that he must have slipped and fallen. The deceased was 61 years of age. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Sunrays piercing through a shop window of a grocer's shop in Meisterschwanden set light to a quantity of fireworks exhibited. A fire, which was started caused damage amounting to 20,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Première of the Swiss dramatist Arnold Schwengeler's comedy "Die Hexenwiese" took place at the "Kurtheater" in Baden, and was well received. [A.T.S.]

* * *

One person was killed, and four people injured when a motor car near Claro (Ticino) tried to overtake another car. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Signora Luigia Carloni-Groppi, a school teacher for 36 years, and authoress of a large number of school-books, has died in Lugano at the age of 75. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Tomato growers at Mendrisiotto (Ticino) have stopped picking tomatoes, as owing to a glut they are unable to dispose of their goods. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. August Weith, a former lecturer at the Medical Faculty of the University of Lausanne, was run over by a train and killed, he was 89 years of age. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Emil Gétaz, who has been since 1896, editor, and from 1901, Director of the "*Feuille d'Avis de Vevey*" has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. Gétaz has been a member of the Swiss Press Association since 1896. [A.T.S.]

* * *

For the first time since 1942, the accounts of the canton of Vaud show a credit-balance. The accounts for the year of 1946 close with 212,749.— frs. on the "right side." [A.T.S.]

* * *

Eduard Stettler, from Berne, lost his life on an excursion to the Täschhorn (Valais).

* * *

The well-known mountain guide, Karl Jäger, from Turtmann, collided, when motor cycling, with a car. He was taken to hospital in a serious condition. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. André Mercier, for over 40 years Professor of International Law at the University of Lausanne, has died at the age of 73. The deceased was a member of the International Tribunal at the Hague, and the author of many works on subjects of law. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A party of five mountaineers from Geneva, on an excursion to the Brunegghorn met with an accident. Two of them, S. Bonnet, and B. Fluckiger, were killed after a fall down a rock wall. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Four tourists from Adelboden on a mountaineering excursion to the "Bietschhorn" (Valais) were caught in a snow avalanche. One of the party, by the name of Paul Wäber (24) was killed, whilst another, William Burn, received injuries and had to be taken to hospital. [A.T.S.]

The well-known Neuchâtelois pianist and composer, Adolphe Veuve, has died at Lausanne at the age of 75. Veuve was for many years a collaborator of the Radio, and the author of numerous compositions for pianoforte. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Thirty countries, with 428 candidates, will take part in the 3rd International Music Competition which is taking place at Geneva from September 22nd until October 5th, 1947. [A.T.S.]

Army

The death is reported from Berne of Colonel of Division, Hans Frey, at the age of 74. The deceased, who was born in 1873, studied at the Technical Universities in Zurich and Stuttgart. During the first world war Colonel Frey occupied the post of Chief-of-Staff of the 3rd Division. In 1924, after having seen service with the General Staff, he was promoted to the command of the 6th Division, from which post he retired in 1932. [A.T.S.]

Traffic

Even before the war, the traffic over the Gotthard line had necessitated block sections in the 10-mile length of the double-track Gotthard Tunnel. Since fully-automatic signalling was considered too expensive at the time, the solution adopted in 1938 was to have a mid-tunnel block post controlled remotely from the signal

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box at Göschenen, at the northern end of the tunnel. The tunnel signals were connected with Göschenen by a 50-line cable.

Further expansion of traffic during and after the war has made it increasingly difficult to maintain the tracks and over-head wires during intervals between trains, so that frequent night possessions and single-line working have been required. In order to avoid single-line working over the whole section, crossovers were installed in mid-tunnel.

The mid-tunnel signalling, though still controlled remotely from Göschenen, now provides home and starting signals for both directions. The starters are over half a mile from the crossovers, so that between crossover and signal there is standing room for a complete train enabling a train to vacate a single-line section without having to wait until the preceding train has cleared the tunnel. The starting signals return automatically to "off" when the tunnel section ahead has been cleared. Home signals are controlled by a king lever, at Göschenen, which permits automatic operation during normal double-line working.

Single-line working in the southern half of the tunnel depends on the consent of the signalman at Airolo, by means of electric interlocking with Göschenen. Provision has been made, also, for emergency operation of the mid-tunnel points and signals from a small signal box on the spot.

* * *

The "Swissair" has recently undertaken the first passenger flight Zurich-Johannesburg with a Douglas HB-ILO machine.

On landing at the Air Port in Johannesburg, the crew was greeted by the Swiss Consul-General Diethelm and Consul Berchtold.

The distance flown was 10,320 km. and took 31 hours and 15 minutes at an average speed of 330 km. p.m.

* * *

British shipyards are building two 6,000 ton ships, as yet unnamed, for the Swiss Shipping Co., Ltd. They are due to be delivered some time next spring.

* * *

Flight-Captain Otto Heitmanek, who has seen service with the "Swissair" since 1933, has, on completion of the return flight from South Africa, flown his 2 millionth kilometer.

Humanitarian

The Swiss Red Cross has invited 150 children from Brest (France), who through the recent explosion have become homeless, to an eight weeks stay in Switzerland. The children will be sent to families principally in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

According to figures given at a Press Conference by Dr. Max Troendle, one of the Swiss delegates at the Paris Conference; Switzerland has up to date given an amount of 1 milliard francs for humanitarian purposes to foreign countries. [A.T.S.]

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