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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Minister Albert Huber, the recently appointed chief of the Swiss Diplomatic Mission to the Allied Commission in Germany, has been received in audience by the President of the Western German Republic, Professor, Dr. Heuss and by the German Chancellor, Herr Adenauer.

Monsieur Jean Merminod, of the Federal Political Department (Foreign Office) in Berne, has been appointed 1st Councillor of Legation in Paris, in succession to Dr. Clemente Rezzonico, who has been appointed Chargé d'Affaires in Pakistan.

Monsieur Merminod was born in 1903, in St. Gall. He studied jurisprudence at the Universities of Geneva and Berlin. He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1928, and eight years later (1936) was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation.

The Swiss Government has decided to give *de jure* recognition to the Chinese Communist Government.

The former Minister of the National Government, Monsieur Nan-Ju Wu, and his Counsellor of Legation, Monsieur Chia Hong Wang, have expressed their wish to remain as private persons in Switzerland. Two Secretaries and two Attachés of the former Chinese (National) Legation are leaving Switzerland for Hongkong.

The diplomatic representatives of the Chinese Communist Government in Berne and the representative of the Swiss Confederation in Peking have not yet been appointed.

Monsieur Oscar Aneto Astengo, the newly appointed Minister of the Argentine Republic, has presented his credentials to Monsieur M. Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation.

Cantonal

In the canton of Lucerne — the town of Lucerne not included — 484 Traffic accidents have occurred during the year 1949. 17 persons lost their lives, 142 persons were seriously and 212 persons slightly injured. [A.T.S.]

The population of the town of Lucerne, during 1949, has increased from 61,380 to 61,477. [A.T.S.]

Recently two robberies occurred at the Post Offices in Pratteln and Rapperswil, when the personnel of the respective offices were threatened with revolvers and made to hand over the keys of the safes. Considerable amounts of money were stolen.

The Police of the canton of Zurich has arrested a man, by the name of Schnyder, who, after a lengthy interrogation admitted to the robbery at the Post Office in Rapperswil. He gave the name of Boller as his accomplice, this man was later on found dead in a stolen motor-car between Sellenbüren and Stallikon, having committed suicide. The wife of the latter has been arrested; she admitted that she and her husband took also part in the robbery of the Post Office in Pratteln. [A.T.S.]

The town of Zurich has, during the last year increased its population by 2,336 persons, and numbered at the end of December, 1949, 385,276. (Dec. 1948: 382,940.) [A.T.S.]

During the month of December, 1949, 554 traffic accidents have been reported in the canton of Zurich. 214 persons were injured nine of whom later succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

A reception and banquet was held at the Government building in Zug, in honour of Professor Walter, Rudolf Hess, the eminent brain specialist and a citizen of the town of Zug, who was recently awarded the Medicine Prize at the Nobel Prize awards in Stockholm. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Hans Hefti of Schwanden, has been appointed President of the Board of the "Landis & Gyr, A.G." of Zug, in succession to the late Mr. Schmuziger. [A.T.S.]

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A court-martial (Divisions Gericht, 3) which sat in Berne, has sentenced Emil Steiner to 14 years' imprisonment, a fine of 2000.—frs., expulsion from the army, 10 years deprivation of citizen's right, and the costs of the action, on charges of espionage.

Steiner, who had been employed in checking telegrams, started in 1925 to supply a French agent with copies of telegrams sent by the German and Italian Legations, and later extended this work to supplying foreign agents with copies of telegrams sent by other Legations. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. F. W. Schulthess, a Director of the Swiss National Bank in Berne, has retired from his post. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mme. Maria Klingler-Reinle, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Basle, has celebrated her 103rd birthday anniversary in Basle. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the year 1949, 1,342 traffic accidents occurred in the canton of Basle. Thirteen people were killed and 903 received injuries. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Wilhelm Kilchherr, formerly a teacher at the "Kantonalen Lehrerseminar" Basle, has been elected rector of the boys primary and secondary school in Basle, in succession to Martin Stohler, who has retired from his post. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During an Ice-Hockey match on a pond, at Stein a.Rh. (Ct. Schaffhausen) the ice gave way and ten of the players fell into the ice-cold water. They were rescued by their colleagues and spectators. [A.T.S.]

* * *

"Gemeindehauptmann" Jäger, of Rehtobel (Ct. Appenzell a. Rh.) has been arrested and charged with embezzlement. This is the second case within a few months, that employees of the rural district administration have been arrested and charged with defalcation of funds. (Last autumn, the cashier of the district of Diezi, was charged with embezzling 144,000.—frs. belonging to the district administration. Thorough investigations are being made at all the administrations which were controlled by Jäger. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A bust of the late Federal Councillor Giuseppe Motta, was unveiled in the Grand Council Chamber, Bellinzona. Besides the members of his family, the following were present: Federal Councillor, Dr. Enrico Celio, Messrs. Galli, Celio, Laporì, members of the cantonal government, as well as a number of representatives of the Federal Chambers, the Law Courts and Church.

Speeches were made by Federal Councillor, Dr. Celio, Professor Michele Grossi, Brenno Galli, Vice-President of the cantonal government and Plinio Verda, President of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Paul Chavan, who has been Manager of the cantonal agricultural school of Marcelin, near Morges since 1921, is vacating his post on reaching retiring age. [A.T.S.]

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A former cashier of the Bank in Brigue, Ad. Mischlig, has been arrested and charged with embezzling amounts exceeding 100,000.—frs. belonging to the Bank. Mischlig was at one time President of the Parish Ried, near Brigue. [A.T.S.]

* * *

National Councillor, Perret, Director of the Technical School in La Chaux-de-Fonds, will retire from his post, at the end of the year, on reaching the age limit. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The population of the canton of Neuchâtel, at the end of December 1949, numbered 127,277 persons, or 734 less than at the same period in 1948. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The town of Le Locle has at present a population of 12,100; $\frac{2}{3}$ of the inhabitants are working in the watch industry. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A reception was held by the government of the canton of Neuchâtel in honour of Colonel Brunner, the newly appointed commander of the 2nd division, which unit includes the troops of the canton of Neuchâtel. A luncheon followed the reception at which the following high ranking officers were present: Army-Corps Commander Louis de Montmollin, Marius Corbat, Jules Borel, and Colonels of division Brunner and Gonard. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mme. Anna Stotzer-Stauffer, has celebrated her 102nd birthday anniversary at Colombier (Ct. Neuchâtel). [A.T.S.]

Economics

The following Swiss Banks have declared their dividends for the year 1949: Gewerbekasse, Bern: 6.75 per cent. (1948: 6.75%); Solothurnische Handelsbank, Solothurn; 5 per cent.; Schweizerische Spar und Kreditbank, St. Gall: 4½ per cent. (1948: 4½%); Solothurnische Leihkasse, Solothurn: 5 per cent. (1948: 5%); Aargauische Hypothekenbank: 5 per cent. (1948: 5%); Bank in Burgdorf, Burgdorf: 6 per cent. (1948: 6%); Gewerbebank Zurich: 5 per cent. (1948: 5%); Schweizerische Hypothekenbank, Solothurn: 5 per cent. (1948: 5%). [A.T.S.]

* * *

Customs receipts during the month of December 1949, amounted to 45.2 million francs, or 0.5 million francs more than in December 1948. Total amount during the year is 486.3 million francs or 51.5 million francs less than in the previous year. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Swiss Federal Council has decided to redeem, on May 31 and June 15th, respectively, the two Three and a-Half per Cent. Loans of the Swiss Confederation of 1941 amounting to Frs.280m. and of 1940 amounting to Frs.125m.

It is probable that a partial conversion will be arranged in which event the new issues are unlikely to bear a rate of interest exceeding 3 per cent.

* * *

The Four per Cent. issue of the Société Nationale de Crédit à l'Industrie, Bruxelles, amounting to Swiss Fr.50 millions, was favourably received by Swiss investors.

The loan, provided with a Belgian State guarantee and free from any Belgian taxes, was heavily over-subscribed.

A group of Swiss banks, headed by the Swiss Bank Corporation and the Crédit Suisse, has taken over the loan firm and offered it in turn to the Swiss public.

* * *

The Swiss wholesale price index for December (based on August 1939 equalling 100) declined to 198.7 from 199.7 in November. The index based on July 1914 equalling 100 was also down in December to 213.4 from 214.5 in November.

Despite Switzerland's adverse foreign trade balance, an influx of gold is again recorded by the latest Swiss National Bank's return for the week to January 14th.

During that period, gold stocks rose by Frs.6.8m. to Frs.6,253m. A like increase is shown by foreign exchange holdings which advanced to Frs. 267m.

The fiduciary issue dropped by Frs.117m. to Frs. 4,274m., a decline of Frs.176m. having already been recorded during the previous week, thus completely offsetting the sharp rise immediately before and after Christmas.

* * *

British exports to Switzerland in December reached the record total of £2,700,000, compared with £1,950,000 in November, it was announced. British imports from this country fell from £1,500,000 to £1,200,000, the lowest for the year.

Traffic

As a result of the decision of the Swiss Federal Railways in December, 1947, to undertake working tests with two rubber-tyre coaches in service conditions, orders for two prototypes were placed with two Swiss wagon-building works. One was to have a lightweight all-steel body, the other an all-aluminium body, as mentioned in *The Railway Gazette* of June 18th, 1948.

The body of an ordinary fast-train lightweight steel carriage of the Swiss Federal Railways weighs 22,880 lb., and the steel body of the rubber-tyre coach will weigh only 10,780 lb. As with the Micheline-type coaches forming the three rubber-tyre *rapides* now in service between Paris and Strasbourg, this saving in weight is imperative because the weight of the complete vehicle must not exceed 15 tonnes so as to avoid an excessive load on the rubber tyres, and with the same object each bogie has ten wheels.

Although the three French trains consist exclusively of rubber-tyre coaches, the two Swiss prototypes are to be included in fast trains composed of coaches with ordinary steel-tyre wheels.

These considerations, together with the fact that the coaches are the first with rubber-tyres to be built in Switzerland, prompted the decision of one of the

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builders, Schweizerische Wagons-und Aufzügefabrik, Zurich-Schlieren, to undertake the extensive tests and measurements of the steel body. These tests, relating to vertical and longitudinal stresses, were again carried out and demonstrated in January, when a special American electrical measuring instrument was placed in operation.

All the tests have been supervised by Monsieur Gaspard, a French engineer and rubber-tyred coach expert of the French National Railways, working in co-operation with Monsieur Robert Guignard of the traction and workshop section of the Swiss Federal Railways.

All the experts consulted agreed that the tests carried out have been entirely successful. Considerably higher stress values than obtaining in normal service conditions were reached without exposing the steel body to any harmful consequences.

: o :

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Pastor Samuel Dieterle, from 1929-1948, Pastor at the St. Peters Church Basle, in Basle, at the age of 68.

Emil Pfeiffer-Zwicky, late President of the parish of Mollis, in Mollis, aged 81.

Clovis Pignat, for 25 years Editor of the paper "L'Ouvrier", in Monthey, aged 66.

Dr. Fritz Burri, formerly "Seminardirektor" in Berne, aged 74.

Emil Ryser, from 1909-1921, "Arbeiter Sekretär" in Bienne and from 1914-1922, a member of Parliament (National Council) and Grand Council of the canton of Berne, in Geneva, at the age of 84.

Alexander Berner-Wyss, formerly Customs Director, in Berne, aged 73.

Pastor Albert Wild, for 15 years Pastor in Mönchaldorf, and later on central secretary of the "Schweizerischen Gemeinnützigen Gesellschaft" for 25 years, in Zurich, at the age of 80.

Dr. Hans Hollet, since 1922 a teacher at the District School in Biberist (Ct. Solothurn), at the age of 62.

Joseph Wyss-Meyer, a former member of the "Grossen Stadtrat" of Lucerne and from 1928-1947, secretary of the "Verkehrsvereins der Zentralschweiz", aged 82.

Robert Stierlin-Krähenbühl, since 1918, Swiss Consul in Sevilla, and Manager of the "Compania Espanola Brown-Boveri in Sevilla, at the age of 68.

Dr. Albert Meyer, a lawyer in Zug, at the age of 66. The deceased was for many years President of the Liberal Party of the canton of Zug. From 1921-1946, he was a member of the government of the canton of Zug and from 1921-1943 sat in Parliament (National Council).

Casimir Nussbaumer, from 1908-1933, central secretary of the Swiss "Textilarbeiterverband", in Zurich, aged 78.

Dr. August Hug, for many years a teacher at the "Gymnasium" of Schwyz, in Fischingen (Ct. Thurgau), at the age of 75.

Roger Marcuard-Stettler, a former Banker in Berne, and from 1934-1941, President of the "Bürgergemeinde" and "Burgerrates" of the town of Berne, in Muri by Berne, aged 80.

[A.T.S.]

During the year 1949, the Geneva-Cointrin Air Port registered 27,951 Flights. 182,300 passengers were carried or 15,978 more than in the previous year.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following have celebrated their 100th birthday anniversary in Switzerland: Jean Pillamet, formerly a farmer, at Bulle (Ct. Fribourg), and Mme. Henriette Ebinger-Penel in Eysins (Ct. Vaud). [A.T.S.]

* * *

General Henry Guisan, Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army during the last war, has left for Egypt on a three weeks trip, on the invitation of the Swiss Colony. [A.T.S.]

* * *

According to a statement published by the Federal Statistical Department in Berne, there were, at the end of September, 1949, 219,234 motor vehicles registered, comprising 162,000 motor-cars (1948: 140,000), and 58,000 motor bicycles (1948: 49,000). Army motor vehicles and 16,000 agricultural tractors are not included in these figures. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A Lucerne night club, famous for its yodelling entertainers, is featuring a girl in Tyrolean costume singing "I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts."

* * *

The station building at Davos-Platz, health resort and sporting centre in the Grisons on the Rhaetian Railways, has been entirely rebuilt at a cost of frs.1,900,000. The work was begun in April, 1949, and completed shortly before Christmas.

* * *

By a recent decree the Federal Council has issued new provisions governing the military railway organisation of the country. A military railway director is to be appointed; by the old regulations this appointment was not made until the moment of mobilisation. He is to be assisted by three working zone directors in personal touch with the head of the construction and working department of the general management of the Federal Railways and with the three divisional managers of the Federal Railways.

The military railway director will have the task of ensuring the efficient and continuous working of all the railways in the interest of the armed forces and the civil population. If required by defence reasons, the director issues instructions for the limitations or discontinuance of the civilian traffic. He has unlimited power over the staff of all transport undertakings.

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The Military Railway Commission which hitherto has handled in peace-time all matters relating to military railway traffic has been abolished.

The 20th International Car, Motor-cycle and Bicycle Exhibition in Geneva will be held from March 16th to 26th, 1950. A total of 3,000 exhibitors have booked space at the fair including 75 private car stands, 45 omnibus and utility van stands, 15 body maker stands, 45 motor and bicycle stands, and about 100 exhibitors of the spare part and accessory industries.

The authorities of the canton Wallis have granted a concession to an industrialist from Monthey for the mining of gold in Gondo. Mining of Gold in Gondo near the Simplon was suspended in the last century as costs were too high. During the years 1894 to 1896 a French company mined 5,800 tons of ore in Gondo which produced 33kg. of gold.

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" Semaine Suisse " (Service de Presse).

Le bariton suisse Matthias Vogel a donné des soirées à Breda et Oosterhout (Pays-Bas). Il a chanté des lieder de Schubert, Mozart, Fauré et Wolff qui ont été très goûtés.

Le 13 décembre, le ténor Ernest Häfliger a remporté un grand succès à Groningen où il a chanté des œuvres de Schumann et du compositeur suisse W. Schulthess.

Le pianiste Paul Baumgartner a de nouveau été très applaudi à La Haye où il a joué le concerto en do dièse pour piano de Beethoven, accompagné par le " Residentie-Orkest ", ceci dans le cadre des concerts d'abonnements de la Haye. Un artiste étranger a rarement été autant loué que Paul Baumgartner par le public et par la presse néerlandais.

L' " American Theatre Group " s'est assuré le droit de représentation du drame " Le Faussaire " de A. H. Schwengeler. L'œuvre sera traduite en anglais par Albert W. Barker, sous le titre " The bridge between. "

Une traduction due à C. A. M. Sym de l'étude " Goethe et la littérature mondiale " vient de paraître à Londres; il s'agit là de l'œuvre capitale de Fritz

Strich, professeur ordinaire de littérature allemande à l'Université de Berne.

Jacques Ferrier et Aldo Dani sont les premiers bénéficiaires du prix de journalisme de St. Vincent d'Aoste.

THE SWISS TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND THE SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR.

The 34th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, from the 15th-25th April, 1950, will once again provide an all-embracing picture of the care with which the Swiss textile industry builds up its production according to material and form. The number of exhibitors will be equal to that of the previous years and, in point of the equipment of the stands, these exhibitors will form one of the most impressive exhibitor groups.

The management of the Fair is again making great efforts to devote increased attention to a concentrated display calculated to reveal the large number of goods exhibited in most attractive surroundings. Fashion will be shown in the special group styled " Création ", a display which has already been described by experts as the acme of the art of demonstrating goods, and the show at the forthcoming Fair will certainly leave nothing to be desired. Textile machinery will be displayed as usual in a united group in Hall IX.

Excellent means of access by land and air will facilitate a visit to the Fair for visitors from foreign countries. The representative of the Swiss Industries Fair, Swiss Legations, Consulates and Chambers of Commerce in foreign countries will be happy to give advice and assistance to those interested. The Swiss Industries Fair in Basle extends, even at this early period, a most hearty welcome to its visitors from abroad.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, February 24th, 1950.

We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations, over and above, their subscriptions: O. Roethlisberger, A. Renou, A. B. Chilvers, U. A. Keyser, H. Bieri, P. H. Conrad, H. Hofstetter, E. Widmer, E. Rietzmann, P. H. Aubaret, P. Isacco, E. Fankhauser, E. Rietmann, F. Egger, M. Lienhard, Peter Conrad, F. M. Gamper.

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