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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

During the month of February, 1950, the Swiss Federal Railways have carried 15.47 million passengers, or 433,000 less than during February 1949. The receipts from passengers service amount to 17.64 million francs, which is less than half a million francs during the same period in 1949.

Goods traffic registered a reduction of 47,000 tons and amounted to 1.08 million tons. The receipts reached the amount of 21.18 million francs which is 1.20 million francs less than in February, 1949.

Customs receipts during the month of March 1950, amounted to 43 million francs, or 4.5 million francs more than in March of the previous year.

During the first quarter of the current year, altogether 112 million francs have been collected against 107.4 million francs during the same period in the previous year.

The accounts of the Federal Post, Telegraph and Telephone administration for the year 1949, close with a credit balance of 40.9 million francs.

The Federal Council has conferred the title of Consul General on Mr. Walter Schmid, Consul in Los Angeles (U.S.A.)

Cantonal

The Council of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain has awarded the Society's 38th Progress medal to Professor, Dr. John Eggert of the Federal Technical University in Zurich, in recognition of his classical work in latent image theory, particularly on the quantum efficiency carried out with Noddack; for his work on the effect of X-rays in photographic emulsion and in evolving methods of standardization of photographic speed and graininess. [A.T.S.]

Lina and Walter Feusi-Schad, a young married couple of Küsnacht (Zurich), were drowned when their canoe turned over during a heavy gale which swept over the lake of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Professor Edouard Stiefel, painter and for many years a teacher at the cantonal "Gymnasium" in Zurich, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

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Paul Steinmann (Socialist) born in 1893 in Zurich, has entered Parliament (National Council) in succession to the late Jakob Kägi, President of the government of the canton Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Erwin Hürlimann, President of the Board of the "Schweizerischen Rückversicherungsgesellschaft" of Zurich, and a member of the "Bankrat" of the Swiss National Bank, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Max Hamburger, from Buchs (Ct. Zurich), has been elected Manager of the Bellvue Palace Hotel in Berne, in succession to the late Hermann Schmid.

The new Manager had held for nine years a leading position at Shepherds' and the Continental Savoy Hotel, in Cairo, and for the last twelve years had been General Manager of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. [A.T.S.]

During the month of March, 1950, 286 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne. 203 persons were injured of whom 10 succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Hans Lauterburg, head of the section RND of the "Schweizerischen Depeschen Agentur", has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary in Berne. Mr. Lauterburg is one of the pioneers of Swiss Radio. From 1929-1938 he was in charge of "Radio Bern" and from 1931-1937 he was a member of the Central Committee of the "Schweizerischen Rundspruch Gesellschaft" over which he presided in 1935/37. [A.T.S.]

Walter Stünzi (Socialist), "Armenverwalter" of Thun, has been elected a member of Parliament (National Council) in succession to the late Ernst Jakob. [A.T.S.]

Colonel Fritz Indermühle has been nominated an honorary citizen of the community of Thierachern (Ct.

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Berne). Colonel Indermühle, was for 50 years a teacher at the "Oberschule" and a founder of the "Darlehenskasse" Thierachern-Uebischi. He was, at one time, in command of the mountain-infantry regiment 17, and the "Landwehrbrigade" 21. [A.T.S.]

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Walter Fischer (Zurich), chief of the commercial service at the General Management of the Swiss Federal Railways, to the post of Director of the 3rd District of the Swiss Federal Railways. [A.T.S.]

The well-known Swiss painter Maria La Roche, a former pupil of Hans Thomas, has celebrated her 80th birthday in Basle. [A.T.S.]

Three people were killed when on a skiing excursion in the Bernina district. On crossing a glacier they fell into a crevasse. The names of the victims are: Georg Weber, district engineer in Samaden and his wife, and P. Davoli, office clerk and father of three small children. [A.T.S.]

Mme. Marie Hortense Besson-Hediguer has celebrated her 102nd birthday anniversary in Nyon (Ct. Vaud). [A.T.S.]

Dr. Guy Plattet, a lecturer at the Universities of Lausanne and Paris, has been appointed Professor of French Civil Law at the University of Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

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Seven fire brigades and villagers from the mountain valley of Sierre (Ct. Valais) fought to check Switzerland's worst forest fire for 30 years. Witnesses said the entire Gorbetsch mountain was "mass of flames."
[A.T.S.]

Traffic

In order to relieve the traffic congestion in Zurich, which has 3,200 tramcars for a population of 383,000, a 68-mile underground railway is contemplated. The new railway will originate at the Enge Station. There will be two circle lines. The first section to be constructed will link the Enge Railway Station (crossed by the Paris-Zurich-Vienna Express), with the international airport of Kloten.

The Zurich underground railway will not be similar to foreign "tubes," as it will have normal rails, at a depth of 82ft. below ground. The tunnel will consist of two concrete "one-way" galleries, 13ft. wide each. The carriages, of cylindrical section, will be 10ft. wide and will carry 210 passengers. Trains 131ft. long will consist of two carriages, of which one will be motorised. The balancing speed of the trains will be 31 m.p.h. Platforms will have the same length as the trains.

It is hoped that works will progress at a rate of 50-65ft. per day. The Enge Station-Kloten line, will cost some 15 million Swiss francs, while the cost of the whole scheme will amount to 1000 million Swiss francs (£78 million). A company will be formed and the city and the canton of Zurich will subscribe 30 per cent. of shares.

Economics

Answering a question in the First Chamber of the Swiss Parliament, M. Rubattel, chief of the Federal Department of Public Economy, stated that the Government was aware of the necessity of building up reserves of food and raw materials in case it should be called upon to set up, for the third time, an emergency economic régime. Not only had Government departments built up certain stocks but economic organizations were co-operating and families had been asked to establish their own private stocks. At present Switzerland had accumulated one year's supply of cereals, nine months' supply of sugar and rice, and nine months' supply of coal, while stocks of other raw materials were sufficient for many months. The Government was continuing its efforts to increase these reserves as far as finances allowed.

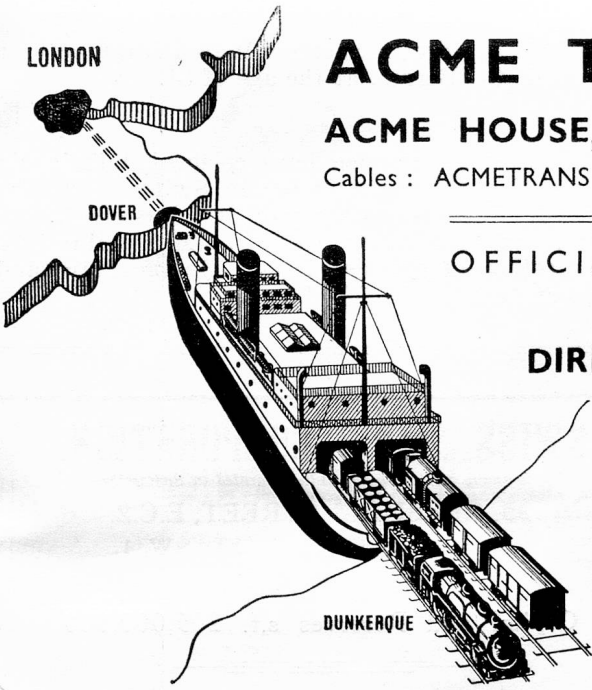
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The administration of Swissair has decided to reduce the number of its aircraft in operation and make cuts in the staff. The deficit for 1949, mainly caused by the reduction in fares, amounted to 5m. Swiss francs, and is likely to be somewhat higher in 1950. The company has decided to ask the Government for State aid.

* * *

The Swiss textile machinery industry was able to expand its exports further during the first two months of this year, with February's shipments abroad rising to a value of 18,020,000 francs, compared with 16,050,000 francs in the preceding month and 16,250,000 francs in February 1949.

The boost was due mainly to larger deliveries to foreign customers of spinning and twisting machines,



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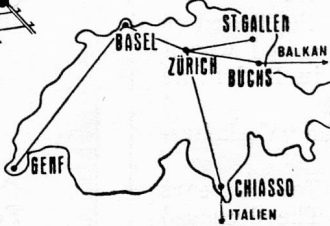
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which were up from 4,120,000 francs-worth in February of last year to 5,200,000 francs in February 1950. Exports of weaving machinery at the same time rose from 8,360,000 to 9,170,000 francs and those of knitting, hosiery and stranding machines from 1,520,000 to 2,040,000 francs. Exports of sewing machines, on the other hand, declined from 1,850,000 francs-worth to 1,300,000 francs-worth.

Italy was the best customer for Swiss spinning and twisting machinery in February, having taken such equipment to a value of 956,000 francs, followed by Argentina with 847,300 francs-worth, Egypt with 581,700 francs. Germany with 483,000 francs, the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union 469,000 francs, and Uruguay with 445,000 francs. The remainder went to 22 different countries, among them France, with takings to the value of 212,000 francs; Czechoslovakia with 186,200 francs, Spain with 177,700 francs, India with 171,300 francs.

February shipments of weaving equipment went to 40 countries, leading among them Italy, with takings of 1,800,000 francs-worth, and Britain with 1,400,000 francs. Substantial deliveries were also made to Czechoslovakia 622,700 francs-worth, Turkey 518,300 francs, France 483,200 francs, Germany 450,000 francs, Belgium/Luxembourg 447,000 francs, Argentina 393,000 francs, Mexico 389,600 francs, and Holland 348,000 francs.

* * *

The 34th Swiss Industries Fair was opened on Saturday, April 15th, in Basle by Dr. Th. Brogle, National Councillor. This Fair provides a complete picture of Swiss life from the foodstuffs section to the machine hall.

When this annual display was initiated in 1917, its export possibilities were not realised. Since 1945, however, it has become the centre of the Swiss export drive. On the opening day there were 600 visitors from Europe, compared with 450 last year.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Alexander Acatos, formerly a chief engineer of the Swiss Federal Railways, in Baden, at the age of 77.

Pastor Henri Nusslé, a preacher in Corsier and Corseaux, owing to an accident, aged 56.

Theodor Frey, a member of the Board of the "Crédit Suisse" Zurich, in Zurich at the age of 59.

Professor Jules Jeanjaquet, Honorary Professor of philology at the University of Neuchâtel and Basle, and editor of the paper "Glossaire", in Neuchâtel aged 84.

Dr. Hermann Gurtner, an expert on the Swiss Hotel industry, and founder of the Academic Ski-Club, in Interlaken, at the age of 57.

Lieutenant-Colonel Kurt Lindt, for many years general representative of the "Zürcher Unfall Versicherungsgesellschaft" in Zurich, aged 76.

Jean Ehrensperger, Vice-President of the Board of "Motor Columbus" in Baden. The deceased was a pioneer of the Swiss electrical industry, in Baden, at the age of 74.

Paul Trachsel, formerly Director of the "Verkehrs-Verein" Geneva, in Geneva, aged 75.

Albert Massy, Wine Merchant, and for 14 years President of the rural council Epesse. The deceased was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of

Vaud. In the army he reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel (Infantry).

Albert Delaloye, a cantonal judge and a member of the Grand Council of Valais, over which he presided at one time, in Chamoson, at the age of 60.

Emil Emery, for 42 years cashier of the canton of Fribourg, in Fribourg, aged 86.

Lieutenant-Colonel Karl Gysin, a high official at the Swiss Federal Railways, and President of the "Verbandes Schweiz. Schützen Veteranen," in Berne at the age of 75.

Jakob Kägi, a member of the government of the canton of Zurich since 1939. In 1919, he was elected a member of Parliament (National Council), in Zurich, aged 64.

Paul de Sury, writer, in Villars sur Glâne, at the age of 75.

Yves de Weck, a lawyer of Fribourg, owing to an accident, in Fribourg, aged 38.

Msgr. Ulisse Tamò, priest at the Chur Cathedral, in Chur, at the age of 76.

Colonel Rufener, a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, in Langenthal, aged 88.

Emil Fritz, President of the Board of the "Buchdruckerei Wochenblatt, A.G." in Pfäffikon (Ct. Zurich), at the age of 79.

Ernst Jakob, from 1918-1946, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, and a former member of Parliament (National Council) in Port near Bienne, aged 71.

Dr. Robert Christen, head of the "Kantonalen Lungenheilstätte Allerheiligenberg" Olten, in Olten, at the age of 71.

Emil Walder, Manager of the "Bank A.G." Zurich, aged 61. The deceased was from 1917-1928, Manager of the cantonal bank in Schaffhausen.

Adolf Charpilloz, formerly a Watch Manufacturer, in Bévillard (Ct. Berne), at the age of 84.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. A. Kessler-Spillmann of Zurich-Seebach. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Marchand of Geneva. (Mr. P. Marchand is the brother of our compatriot George Marchand, Glendower Hotel, S.W.7.) [A.T.S.]

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Here are further balances of the accounts for 1949 of the following cantons:—

Schaffhausen	<i>Debit Balance</i> :	481,500.—	frs.
Nidwalden	<i>Credit Balance</i> :	35,750.—	frs.
Appenzell J. Rh.	<i>Credit Balance</i> :	8,113.—	frs.
Obwalden	<i>Credit Balance</i> :	512.—	frs.
Ticino	<i>Credit Balance</i> :	103,186.—	frs.
			[A.T.S.]

* * *

The next Federal Singing Competition (Eidg. Sängerfest) will take place at St. Gall in 1954.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The 25th Comptoir of Neuchâtel will be held from May 24th-June 5th, in Neuchâtel. [A.T.S.]

—oOo—

The special foreign exchange allowance for British children to attend schools in certain European countries during the school year ending July, 1951, will be £320 for each child, compared with £305 at present. The sum will cover the whole year and will be available in Austria, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey.

* * *

British European Airways and Swissair will start cheap midnight flights to Switzerland next month. Return fares from Northolt: To Geneva, £21; to Zurich, £22.

ZURICH "SECHSELAEUTEN".

The traditional "Sechseläuten" has taken place on April 23rd and 24th, 1950, in Zurich.

This celebration dates back more than 600 years and has maintained its popular appeal over the long years to become one of the most unique in Europe.

At one time Zurich's craftsmen and tradesmen were organised in guilds and these governed the town from 1336 onwards. Every year, on the Monday following the spring equinox, the bells of the "Grossmünster" pealed out for the first time after the winter months, to tell the craftsmen that at 6 p.m. the days' work was over. It was customary on that day for the members of the guilds to meet round the festive board at their respective guild house, and, at the first stroke of the bell, to drink a toast to the prosperity of the town and district of Zurich and thus to celebrate the return of spring. The craftsmen's guilds are still flourishing societies, some of them owning old and venerable guild houses.

On Sunday, the 23rd a long procession of children, of all ages, dressed up in historical and traditional folk costumes, was winding its way through the streets of the town gay with flags and bunting. Included in the procession was a cart bearing the figure symbolising the past winter, the "Böögg", an effigy several feet high and covered with cotton wool, which was burned on Monday when the grown-ups held their celebration. On that day a great historic procession was held. The members of the guilds in their traditional and elaborate costumes, some on foot and some on horseback, made their way with their guild emblems, flags and lanterns, their carts, carriages and bands, through the streets hung with blue and white flags. The entire population, together with thousands of spectators from outside the city lined the route. The procession finally gathered round the large lawn in the centre of the city where the "Böögg", stuffed with fireworks, and perched on a high pole over a gigantic pile of brushwood, was burnt amidst the pealing of bells of all the churches and the galloping round of picturesque horsemen round the blazing fire.

Swiss Reporter.

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C. E. SEINET,
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