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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has decided to be represented in South Africa by a Minister instead as hitherto by a Chargé d'Affaires, with residence in Pretoria.

Monsieur Jean de Rham, at present Chargé d'Affaires in South Africa, has been promoted to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary.

Minister de Rham was born in 1907 at Geneva, and is a citizen of Giez (Ct. Vaud). After having studied *juris prudencia* at the Universities of Lausanne and Munich he entered the Diplomatic Service in 1934, and was sent to London in 1937, where he remained until 1946, in which year he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. From 1946-1947, he held the post of Consul General in Hamburg, and afterwards was transferred to the Foreign Office in Berne. In 1950, he went to Rome as 1st Counsellor of Legation, and in December, 1951, he represented the Confederation at Pretoria in the capacity of Chargé d'Affaires. (M. de Rham was well-known to the Swiss Colony during his nine years *séjour* in London.)

* * *

Minister Dr. Karl Stucki has been appointed chief of the Swiss delegation of the Neutral International Commission for the exchange of prisoners of war in Korea.

* * *

Communist China has rejected a proposal by the Swiss Government to disband the four power neutral armistice commission in Korea, but has approved an alternative Swiss proposal to reduce the number of the commission.

* * *

Customs duties for the month of January, 1955, totalled 53.5 million francs, or 6.4 million francs more than in January, 1954.

Cantonal

The accounts for the year of 1954 of the canton of Zurich close with a *credit* balance of 14,210,222.—frs.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The balance-sheet for the year 1954, of the canton of Zug shows a *credit* balance of 970.—frs.

[A.T.S.]

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During the month of January, 1955, 277 traffic accidents were reported in the canton of Berne. 143 were injured of whom three succumbed to their injuries.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The French Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Etienne Dennerly, has been officially received by the Government of the canton Fribourg, he also paid a visit to the University of Fribourg.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

A collection made in the R.C. churches of Switzerland for the benefit of the University of Fribourg, brought in 541,000.—frs., or 30,000.—frs. more than last year.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The elections for the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino show the following strength of the parties: Socialists: 10 seats (one gain); Catholic-Conservatives: 25 seats (no change); Peasant, Trade and Bourgeois Party: 2 seats (no change); Radicals 28 seats (one loss); Communists: 0 (0).

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The town of Lausanne is competing for the honour of holding the Olympic Games which will take place in 1960. A decision will be taken on the 12th of June in Paris. Other competitors are the towns of Rome, Budapest and Brussels.

[A.T.S.]

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A serious collision of two tramway cars occurred in Geneva on the route de Florissant near Conches. A school-boy, René Matringe and the driver of one car, Jean Droux, were killed, and several passengers were injured. [A.T.S.]

* * *

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. med. Hans Bärlocher, a well-known medical practitioner, in St. Gall, at the age of 80.

Carl Hartmann-Kaufmann, since 1938, President of the "Schweiz. Einkaufs- und Rabattvereinigung, Liga", Basle, in Basle aged 69.

Abbé Louis Clerc, Professor at the "Collège St. Michel", Fribourg, in Fribourg at the age of 64.

Dr. Robert Flatt, from 1903-1924 rector at the "Oberer Realschule", Basle, in Basle, aged 91.

Army-corps Commander Fritz Prisi, in Berne at the age of 64. The deceased held the following commands in the Swiss army: Chief of Staff of the 3rd Division and the 2nd Army-corps respectively. In 1932, Colonel Prisi was in command of the 2nd Army-corps.

Josef Dubach, for 26 years a teacher at the municipal schools, Lucerne, and afterwards Manager of the "Allgemeinen Konsumverein", Lucerne. The deceased was for some time a member of the "Grossen Stadtrat" and the "Ortsbügerrates", Lucerne, in Lucerne aged 77.

Dr. André Chaix, a teacher of Geography at the commercial school, and a lecturer at the University of Geneva, in Geneva, aged 67.

J. G. Müller, a member of the editorial staff of the newspaper "Tat", in Zurich, at the age of 65.

Dr. Werner Lüthi, "Bundesanwalt" in Berne, aged 63. The deceased had occupied the post of "Bundesanwalt" since 1949. He had been since 1931 a lecturer (Privatdozent) at the University of Berne.

Henry Juillard, Director of the watch-manufacturing firm "Cortébert Watch S.A.", La Chaux-de-Fonds, owing to a ski-ing accident at the age of 56.

Ernst Flückiger in Solothurn, owing to a road accident, in Niederbipp, aged 66. The deceased was a member of the "Kantonsrat", Solothurn from 1921-1941, he sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1931-1943, and again for a short while in 1947.

Joseph Rebetez, from 1921-1926, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, and Manager of the "Parquéterie" Bassecourt, in Bassecourt, at the age of 80. [A.T.S.]

* * *

ANNIVERSARIES.

Professor, Dr. phil. Karl Weber (75) of Berne, from 1921-1923, President of the Swiss Press Association. In 1928, he was "Privat Dozent" at the University of Zurich, and later on Professor for "Zeitungskunde" at the Universities of Zurich and Berne.

Hans Lavater (70) of Zurich, well-known conductor and composer. [A.T.S.]

* * *

LEGACIES.

The late Mlle. Berta Rietmann of Rorschach has left various legacies, totalling 58,000.—frs. to a number of charitable institutions in the cantons of St. Gall and Appenzell, A.Rh.

Mr. August Stocker, a citizen of Baar, residing in Salt Lake City (Utah, U.S.A.) has made a donation amounting to 214,300.—frs. to the Government of the canton of Zug for the "Gewerbeschule Fonds". [A.T.S.]

* * *

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS.

The number of traffic accidents in Switzerland are still on the increase.

According to figures just published by the Federal Statistical Office in Berne, 43,400 (1953: 39,400) accidents were reported by the cantonal police authorities. 26,400 persons received injuries (1953: 24,000) and 956 (1953: 911) persons were killed. [A.T.S.]

* * *

BANK DIVIDENDS.

Schweizerische Volksbank, Berne: 5 per cent (1953: 5%); Handwerkerbank, Basle: 6 per cent (1953: 6%). Neue Guyerzeller Bank, A.G., Zurich: 6 per cent (1953: 5%). [A.T.S.]



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Mr. and Mrs. Edouard Reber of Payerne, and
Mr. and Mrs. E. Hauser-Heer of Hallau, Schaffhausen.
[A.T.S.]

* * *

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, NATO deputy supreme commander, said in Gstaad, that after two world wars Switzerland remained the most important strategic point in Europe.

"But she can continue in this position only if she is willing and able to defend herself", he added. "This I know she can do".

The Field Marshal was opening a new cable-cabin lift from Gstaad to the top of the 5,900-foot Eggli mountain. He said: "It is our job to keep the peace so that people can come to Switzerland to enjoy themselves without the fear of war".

* * *

The Swiss Army is experimenting with a self-propelled anti-tank vehicle, mounting a nine-centimetre cannon, which looks rather like a coffin on four wheels.

The Swiss-made Mowag 55 can be driven as easily as a car. It has controls at both ends, carrying two drivers and two gunners. It weighs six tons and stands only 5ft. 3in. off the ground when the cannon is retracted below the "lid" of the vehicle.

Raised hydraulically into firing position, the cannon can swivel in any direction and is effective against tanks up to 860 yards.

The Mowag is armoured on the sides, but has no protection against air attack. When its tractor-like

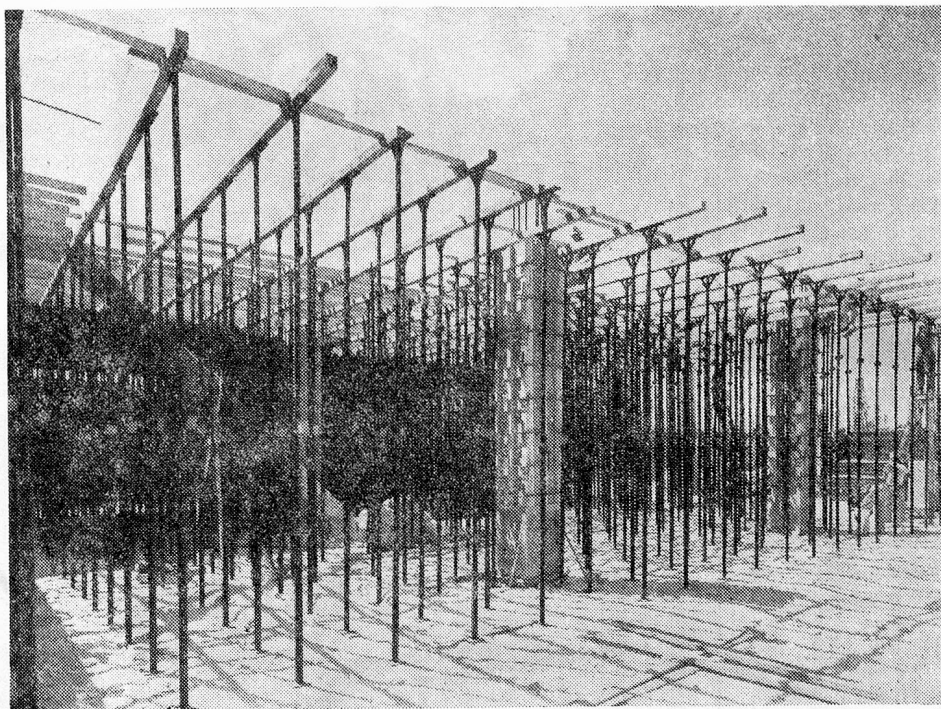
tyres are fitted with special chains it rivals a real tank in climbing ability.

* * *
At the invitation of both Houses of the Swiss Parliament, eight British Parliamentarians will visit Switzerland from March 9 to 18.

Lord Burden will lead the delegation and the other members are Lord Sempill, Wing-Commander E. E. Bullus (C., Wembley North), Mr. F. F. A. Burden (C., Gillingham), Dr. Somerville Hastings (Lib., Barking), Mrs. Jean Mann (Lab., Coatbridge and Airdrie), Sir Frank Markham (C., Buckingham), and Mr. Frank McLeavy (Lab., Bradford, East). The visit is a normal inter-Parliamentary Union one to promote personal contact between Parliamentarians in developing democratic institutions and advancing peace and co-operation.

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