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The Swiss Observer

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The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Monsieur Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, has sent a congratulatory telegram to H.M. the Queen on the occasion of the birth of her third child.

* * *

Customs receipts for the month of January 1960 total 92.7 million francs. Of this amount the Confederation (Bund) receives 56.3 million francs, or 5.5 million francs more than in January 1959.

* * *

The Federal Council has elected Dr. phil. Hans Oprecht, National Councillor and Publisher of Zurich, to the post of Central President of the "Schweizerische Rundspruchgesellschaft" in succession to Dr. Willy Spühler who has entered the Federal Government.

* * *

Colonel Hans Meuli "Oberfeldarzt" of the Swiss army has resigned from his post for reasons of health.

* * *

Cantonal

The well-known summer "Pension Unterstaffel" on the Bannalp in the Engelberger valley was completely destroyed by fire. The damage caused is estimated to be about 250,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. Anton Ettlin (70), since 1946 a member of the Government of the canton of Obwalden is shortly vacating his office. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. Reginald Maudling, President of the Board of Trade, who paid a visit to Zurich on the occasion of the "British Fortnight", gave an address on "Economic Co-operation in Europe" at the Zurich University. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The second-oldest woman inhabitant of the town of Zurich, Frau Witwe Elisabeth Stahel-Graf died in her 100th year. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The municipal police force of Berne has celebrated its 150th jubilee. An official celebration was held at the police barracks at which the following personali-

ties were present: Federal Councillor L. von Moos, Dr. E. Freimüller, Mayor of Berne, and former Federal Councillor E. von Steiger. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A festival for the benefit of the hospital at Saanen (Bernese Oberland) was held at one of the hotels in Gstad. Visitors and guests at the various hotels in Gstad contributed the amount of 50,000.— francs.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Edmund Wyss (Socialist) has been elected a member of the Government of the canton Basle-Town, in succession to Professor H. P. Tschudi now a member of the Federal Council.

Dr. Wyss was born in 1916. He studied national economy at the University of Basle after which he was appointed secretary of the "Schweizerischen Gewerkschaftsbund". He was in 1947 elected a member of the Grand Council of the canton Basle-Town. Since 1959 he has been a member of the National Council. [A.T.S.]

* * *

In the recent re-elections of the Government of the canton of St. Gall for 1960/64, the following have been elected: Paul Müller (Cons.) with 39,097 votes, Dr. Simon Frick (Liberal) 37,874 votes, Mathias

Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

and

ANNUAL DINNER

on Tuesday, 15th March, 1960,
at the "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club)

74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

6.15 p.m. Annual General Meeting

7.15 p.m. Reception

7.30 p.m. Dinner (dress informal)

Members wishing to take part at the dinner are requested to notify the Management, "Schweizerbund" (now M. & Mme. Vuistiner), by letter reaching the Club not later than Saturday, 12th March. After dinner, at about 8.30 p.m., the film "Panorama 1959" (Ciné-Journal Suisse) and, if time allows, another film on Switzerland will be presented.

Eggenberger (Socialist) 38,692 votes, Hans Schneider (Liberal) 38,294 votes. These four were formerly in office. The three new members are: Gottfried Hoby (Cons.) with 38,543 votes, Dr. Albert Scherrer (Cons.) 37,992 votes, and Dr. Guido Eigenmann (Liberal) 35,328 votes. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the canton of St. Gall for 1959, close with a credit balance of 1,528,957.— francs.

[A.T.S.]

A military training aeroplane, type "AT 16" crashed near Nesslau (Ct. St. Gall). The two pilots, 1st lieutenant Armando Mazzioni (28), and sergeant Richard Ullmann (23) lost their lives. [A.T.S.]

An avalanche which came down from the Cluexhang near Pontresina caused the death of a 62-year-old Dutch skier. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the canton of Aargau for 1959, close with a credit balance of 257,000.— francs.

[A.T.S.]

Frau Wwe. Anna Barbara Simmen-Zurmühle of Schinznach-Dorf has celebrated her 101st birthday in Erlinsbach. [A.T.S.]

Two skiers who were passing on a slope, in spite of a danger sign, started an avalanche in the Combe de Medran, above Verbier (Ct. Valais), which lower down buried five skiers, three of whom succeeded in freeing themselves, whilst two were found dead by the rescue party. They are: Miss Myrian Gygax (29) a radiologist of Lausanne, who had celebrated her birthday the same day, and Mrs. Schaedeli-Salzmänn of Geneva. [A.T.S.]

Due to carelessness of passengers rocking a cabin of the cable railway La Barboleusaz-Les Chaux-Gryon above Bex (Ct. Valais) a cabin left the cable and fell about 60ft. Of the six occupants two were killed outright, and the other four were taken to hospital in a serious condition. The names of the dead are: Mrs. Germaine Reisser (37), and her mother Mrs. Marie Wursten (64) both of Geneva. [A.T.S.]

Geneva has been chosen as the headquarters of the seven Powers of the European Free Trade Area, because the French Government has indicated that it would not welcome it in Paris. [A.T.S.]

The accounts for 1959 of the canton of Neuchâtel show a deficit of 2,098,618.— francs; those of the canton of Zug close with a credit balance of 11,000.— francs. [A.T.S.]

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Mr. David Balfour, formerly British Consul-General at Smyrna, has assumed office as Consul-General at Geneva in succession to Mr. H. R. Sawbridge. [A.T.S.]

The eighty-seven-year-old Honoré Vernain, proprietor of a diamond cutting establishment at the Rue de la Coulouvrenière, Geneva, on leaving his premises carrying a brief case containing diamonds to the value of 250,000.— francs, and 30,000.— francs in banknotes was stopped by two men who demanded the handing over of the brief case. On his refusing to do so they knocked him down and decamped with the booty. A big reward has been offered for the recovery of the diamonds and the money.

It has just been reported that three men and a woman have been arrested. Some of the stolen diamonds have been found on a man who tried to leave the airport of Cointrin for Paris. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. Paul Hedinger, from 1924 to 1946, Director of the "Basler Kantonal Bank" in Basle at the age of 83.

Alfred Huggenberger, writer and poet in Gerlikon aged 93. The deceased was born in 1867 in Bewangen (district Winterthur) the son of peasants. At an

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early age, he had to work very hard at his parents' homestead. In 1903, he got married and bought a farm at Gerlikon, which he himself managed until a few years ago. He sat for a number of years in the "Kantonsrat" Thurgau and was "Ortsvorsteher" of Gerlikon.

He published in 1896 a small book under the title "Lieder und Balladen," which at once focused the attention of literary circles on this peasant poet. There followed stage plays, novels and still more books of poetry. Amongst the plays is perhaps best known his comedy "Em Bollme si boes Wuche" (1912), and of his stories and novels the following: "Das Ebenhöch", "Dorfgenossen", "Die Bauern von Steig", and "Die Geschichte des Heinrich Lentz" have been published in several editions.

* * *

Mme. Jeanneret-Perret, mother of the famous architect, Charles Edouard Jeanneret-Gris, known under the name "Le Corbusier", in Corseaux-sur-Vevey at the age of 100.

Jean Binet, at Trélex-sur-Nyon aged 66. The deceased studied at Geneva University and at the Institut Jacques Dalcroze, Ernest Bloch being one of his teachers. He worked abroad for some years with Bloch, and lived for a time at Brussels and finally went to live at Trélex. He wrote several ballets, (including "P'île enchantée"), church music, choral works, a Divertissement for violin and orchestra, and some charming incidental music for films.

Auguste Leuba, from 1907 to 1919 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, and from 1914 to 1919 he sat in the National Council; in St. Blaise at the age of 82.

Aloys Baeriswil, in Fribourg aged 71. He was from 1936 to 1956 a member of the Government of the canton of Fribourg.

Albert Natural, formerly Director of "Natural A.G.". Forwarding Agents, Geneva, in Geneva at the age of 80.

Jakob Büechi, from 1922 to 1942 a member of the "Stadtrat" Winterthur, and from 1921 to 1936 a member of the "Kantonsrat" Zurich, in Winterthur aged 83.

Henri Bernus, for many years Vice-Director of the "Schweizerischen Landesbibliothek," in Berne at the age of 88.

Dr. h.c. Rudolf Kölner, author of the book "Die Basler Fasnacht" and an authority on Guilds, in Basle aged 82.

Mme Henri Gagnebin, wife of the Honorary Director of the Geneva Conservatoire, in Geneva.

Hermann Leu-Grieder, Journalist and author of the books "Unter dem Aequator", and "Tropenschule" in Zurich at the age of 71.

Paul Gimmi, sen., a well-known industrialist of Eastern Switzerland, in St. Gall aged 87. [A.T.S.]

* * *

ANNIVERSARIES.

Professor Dr. Karl Weber (80) of Liestal. From 1909 to 1920 editor of the "Basel Landschaftliche Zeitung", from 1920 to 1930 editor of the "Basler Nachrichten", and for twenty-three years Bernese editor of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung." He was from 1928 to 1952 lecturer (Dozent) at the University of Zurich, and from 1942 to 1952 Professor of "Zeitungskunde" at the University of Berne. The "Jubilar" is an honorary member of the Swiss Press Association.

Dr. Max Staelin (80) of Basle, from 1928 to 1944 President of the Board of the "Schweizerischen Bankverein", and from 1944 to 1956 President of the Board of "Ciba". [A.T.S.]

* * *

LEGACY.

The late Frau Elisa Müller-Schäch of Aarau has left an amount of 126,000.— francs to the town of Aarau for the poor of the town. [A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Lachat-Moret of St. Ursanne. Mr. and Mrs. F. Keller-Sprenger of Döttingen (Ct. Aargau) have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65). [A.T.S.]

* * *

VARIOUS.

Jacques Piccard, the young Swiss scientist and son of the famous Professor Auguste Piccard was honoured by the President of the United States of America for the part he has taken in the descent of the Navy's bathyschape "Trieste", which in January broke a record by sinking to a depth of 37,800 feet in the Pacific Ocean off the Marianas Islands. President Eisenhower granted Mr. Jacques Piccard a "Distinguished public service award."

The "Trieste" was designed after World War II, principally by Dr. Auguste Piccard, the Swiss scientist who is also famed for his exploits in balloon stratospheric flights.

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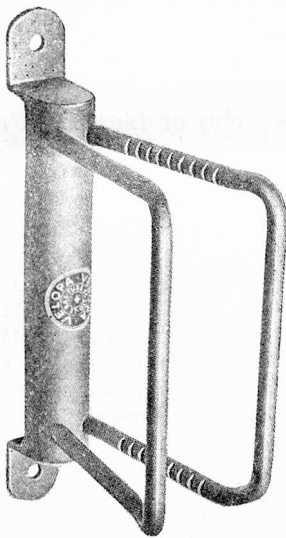
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On his arrival at Cointrin (Geneva) from Cairo, on February 17th, Flight-captain Walter E. Borner of Swissair, has covered altogether six million kilometres. He is the first Swiss pilot who has flown a distance which is fifteen times the distance from the earth to the moon. Captain Borner has spent over 19,400 hours of his life in the air. He received his schooling at Olten, where afterwards he underwent an apprenticeship as a mechanic. In 1927 he was appointed assistant manager of the Cointrin airport. From 1930 until his appointment with Swissair in 1933, he was manager of the Aerotraffic S.A. in Geneva.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Zurich: Some 27 million overnight stays at hotels, pensions and health resorts were registered in Switzerland last year, it was announced by the Swiss National Tourist Office. An almost two million, or eight per cent, increase over the previous year's total thus resulted in the best twelve-month returns ever recorded in Swiss tourism. It is emphasized that Swiss tourist statistics do not register visitors' nights at small non-resort hotels and inns accommodating a maximum of five guests, or at other popular tourist lodgings, which are generally included in the statistical research elsewhere, such as holiday chalets, youth hostels and cottages for mountaineers. It is estimated that at least 10 million nights have been accounted for by visitors to these types of lodgings — in Canton Grisons alone the 12-month total up to September 30, 1959, was 2.1 million — which would bring Switzerland's 1959 overnight-stay record to close to 40 millions.

* * *

Lucerne: The shortest and most direct trans-Alpine route, Switzerland's St. Gotthard named after a holy man who also was known as St. Godehard, is celebrating the 1000th birthday of its patron-saint in the current year. The Holy Gotthard, at the same time, is the patron-saint of the German city of Hildesheim where he gained immortality as a bishop. Born one thousand years ago at Reichendorf, Bavaria, he was canonized after his death, and the first chapel was dedicated to him at the top of the St. Gotthard Pass towards the end of the 12th century. An International Gotthard Meeting is to be held at Lucerne on July 9th and 10th to commemorate the occasion. The mayors of all important cities along the St. Gotthard route, from Hamburg to Genoa, will be invited to participate in the conference which is being organized by the St. Gotthard Committee, a group of ardent champions for the construction of a St. Gotthard road tunnel to secure all-year-round motor traffic. An inspection tour of the area and a visit to Lugano, the southern gateway to the St. Gotthard, will conclude the Lucerne conference.

* * *

Lucerne: No government crisis, major strike or political demonstration is likely to disturb Switzerland's traditional complacency and peace. A crowd of 1,500 youngsters who recently marched in protest through the streets of the picturesque city of Lucerne, therefore, was quite an unusual sight. What was the purpose of their demonstration? To achieve something ultra-new? No, they urged the preservation of something very old — the quaint waterfront of Lucerne alongside the river Reuss, whose architectural unity was threatened by an ultra-modern glass-and-



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chromium office building. This eye-sore in the medieval silhouette of Lucerne's "Old Town" was to replace a beautiful old framework structure. "We have no objection whatever to modern designs in architecture, but we certainly will fight against any attempt to destroy our city's centuries-old architectural monuments," the youngsters argued, and it seems that they have already won: According to unconfirmed reports the endangered riverside house and its entire neighbourhood reaching as far uphill as the tower-studded city-walls, will be placed under monument protection.

* * *

Bellinzona: The spring and summer season programmes of Lugano and Locarno, Southern Switzerland's two leading lakeside resorts, are packed with extraordinary events. An International Exhibition of Black-and-White Sketches and Etchings will open at Lugano on April 14th and last till June 12th. Nearby Mendrisio will again attract crowds of visitors to its traditional Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Processions on April 14th and 15th. Staged in the original splendour of historic and religious costumes and displays, they are considered unique for this part of Europe. The "Concerts of Lugano" is the unpretentious name of what could be called an international music festival. This series of gala concerts will begin in April and feature world-famous guest orchestras, conductors and soloists throughout the season. A final highlight of Lugano's tourist season will be reached on Sunday, October 2nd, when the traditional Grape-Harvest Festival culminates in a parade of floats.

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THE SWISS AMBASSADOR'S CONGRATULATION TO H.M. THE QUEEN

Madam,

February 20th, 1960.

The Federal Council, on hearing the happy and felicitous news of the birth of His Royal Highness Your son have requested me to beg leave of Your Majesty to offer to You and to His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, their sincere good wishes.

May I be permitted at the same time to assure Your Majesty that my wife and I, my Embassy and my compatriots in this country share the feeling of joy which this happy event has brought to Your family and to Your peoples.

I have the honour to remain,
Your Majesty's
Most humble and devoted Servant,
sig. A. Daeniker.

To The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

February 29, 1960.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to Your Excellency's Note of the 19th of February, enclosing for transmission to The Queen a letter conveying the congratulations of the Swiss Federal Council on the happy occasion of the birth of a Royal Prince to Her Majesty.

In reply, I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that this letter has been duly laid before Her Majesty.

I avail myself of this opportunity to transmit to you and Madame Daeniker, to the members of your Embassy, and to the Swiss colony in this country the sincere thanks of my Sovereign for the much appreciated good wishes to which you have given expression.

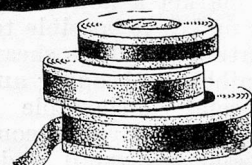
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