

News from Switzerland

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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 FROM SWITZERLAND



Federal

The Federal Council submitted a message to the Federal Assembly concerning the financial position of the United Nations. The UN General Assembly decided last December to issue a loan to the value of 200 million dollars. Its financial state had deteriorated rapidly during the past few years so that the deficit in 1961 amounted to 86 million dollars, including over 50 million dollars in the Kongo account. The Federal Council proposes that Switzerland should take part in raising the loan to 1.9 million dollars (8.2 million Swiss Francs) on condition that her quota would be put exclusively to non-belligerent uses. The message to Parliament explains that although Switzerland is not a member of UNO she belongs to nine of the thirteen Specialised Agencies. Apart from the European Office of UNO, several Specialised Agencies have their seat in Switzerland. About 3,250 international employees work in Geneva and Berne for these organisations, and 57 permanent delegations are accredited to UNO in Geneva. Consequently, important international meetings and conferences are taking place in our country all the time. Our relationship with the United Nations Family is, therefore, many sided and close and expresses our constantly pursued policy of international solidarity. In spite of criticism, which could be levelled at UNO at times, the message by the Federal Council continues, it cannot be denied that they have in many instances rendered invaluable services to the cause of peace which they alone could have done. Switzerland has every interest in the continued existence of the United Nations and should show her willingness to support any efforts towards world peace by participating in this loan. The condition that the Swiss loan should be used only for peaceful actions has been accepted by UNO and Switzerland will thus be able to decide herself in conjunction with the United Nations for what purposes her contribution of the loan may be used.

In another message the Federal Council asks M.P.s to accept the International Wheat Agreement which was signed in Geneva in March in the presence of delegates from 56 countries, including, for the first time, the Soviet Union. Under this agreement, which will be valid for three years from 1st August 1962, Switzerland would be obliged to buy at least 87% of her imports of cereals from the ten wheat exporting countries adhering to the agreement.

A third message by the Federal Council to Parliament concerned a short-term extension of the present special federal subsidy towards the cost of transporting goods for daily use in mountain regions, especially in parts of Grisons, Valais and Ticino.

Another proposal by the Federal Council asked Parliament for power to ratify the new agreement regarding international air traffic signed at the Hague in 1955. At the same time Parliament was given the draft of certain modifications of rules in air transport such as simpler formalities and increase of indemnity.

The last message from the Federal Council was a recommendation to reject the proposed second initiative against atomic weapons in the Swiss Army.

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At the beginning of the third week of the present parliamentary session the discussion of the new labour law was continued. The controversial point concerning a legal claim for holidays was discussed at length. It was agreed that young people up to 19 and apprentices up to 20 years of age should have three weeks' paid holidays.

Another debate in the National Council was about the proposed film law, and later in the week a proposal was submitted by the Commission for Foreign Affairs that Switzerland should become a full member of the Council of Europe.

The National Council also accepted a proposal for a federal subsidy in the fight against rheumatic diseases. Later, several motions were brought forward, one concerning the danger of drug-taking in the form of medicaments, another a demand for increased subsidies for the Swiss schools abroad and a third regarding road safety.

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The head of the Federal Political Department, Federal Councillor F. T. Wahlen, and the Ambassador of Pakistan in Switzerland have signed an extension of the double taxation agreement made between the two countries in December 1959.

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The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of Dr. Eric Kessler, Swiss Ambassador in Turkey, who has reached retiring age. Readers may remember him when he was in London as correspondent of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" from 1929-1939, and later as press attaché. He left in 1946 for Washington, where he was Press Counsellor until 1950. He was then appointed permanent Chargé d'Affaires in Roumania and later Extraordinary Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary in Ireland. For the last five years Dr. Kessler was Swiss Ambassador in Turkey.

The Federal Council has appointed Consul Albert Kadler as Consul-General in Amsterdam in succession to Consul Ernst Theiler, who will be the new Consul-General in Chicago.

The Federal Council has decided to open a Consulate at Douala in Cameroon and to appoint the present Vice-Consul André Simon at Lyon as the new Consul at Douala.

The successor of the late National Councillor Duttweiler in Parliament will be the director of the Migros Club School in Berne, Dr. iur. Casimir Huber from Wittenbach (SG), who will represent the "Landesring der Unabhängigen" as National Councillor for the Canton of Berne as did his predecessor.

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The 46th session of the International Labour Conference took place in Geneva. A thousand delegates, technical advisers and observers took part. The Labour Conference is the highest body of international labour organisations. The general theme of this year's assembly was "the social problems of old age and retirement". The Swiss representative, Dr. Arnold Saxer, Director of the Swiss Office for Social Insurance, gave a talk on the position of the employees of pensionable age in Switzerland and he ended with a suggestion that all the international labour organisations should submit their experiences in this field to other members, as this would be of mutual benefit.

(Most news items supplied by courtesy of A.T.S., Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

Cantonal

The Cantonal Police in Zurich have issued a warning that chain letters are prohibited by law. This follows the circulation of chain letters reported from Basle last month.

The meeting of the "Gemeinderat" Zurich on 20th June, in which the restoration of the old houses "in Vorderberg" in Zurich-Fluntern and new buildings proposed by the trust "dwellings for large families" were debated, was interspersed with songs by a girls' choir of an American High School. The young ladies are on a tour of Europe.

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The cantonal authorities of Lucerne have agreed to an increase in family and children's allowances for municipal employees and teachers.

They also accepted the accounts of the commune, which showed a surplus of Fr.68,000 with a total income of 36.15 million francs.

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The electorate of Grenchen (SO) have approved an estimate of ten million francs for a new water supply system. It is expected that several other communes can be joined to the new installations in time.

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The Town Council of Basle has decided on a supplementary annual subsidy of Fr.452,700 for a cost-of-living grant and an increase in children's allowances for members of the Municipal Theatre, the Basle Orchestral Society and the Academy of Music.

A third open-air bath in Basle has been inaugurated. Two-thirds of it are situated on Basle Campagne territory. The pools for men, women and children contain 5,000 cubic metres of water, and the new device enables the water to be renewed six times a day. The cost amounted to nearly 5½ million francs.

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Fourteen years ago the proposal that the Commune of Herblingen (SH) should become part of the town of Schaffhausen was rejected by the "Grosse Rat". Now

the Initiative has been brought into action with a total of 2,211 signatures, and the electorate will have to make the decision.

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The Town Council of Schaffhausen has decided to make a contribution of Fr.92,000 towards a lighting installation of the football grounds. The Referendum has now been taken and the proposal will be put to the vote of the citizens.

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At an extraordinary meeting of the Commune of Moerschwil, St. Gall, the citizens decided without any debate to grant half a million francs for the building of a new gymnasium.

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The Commune Assembly of Zofingen (AG) has awarded honorary citizenship to Sister Margaretha (Nelly) Bieri from Schangnau (BE) in appreciation of her valuable services at the regional hospital since 1919.

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"The Generalrat" of La Chaux-de-Fonds have elected Miss Marguerite Greub, member of the "Workers' Party" (Partei der Arbeit), as their Chairman. She is the first woman to be at the head of a legislative body in Switzerland.

The Council approved the annual accounts for 1961, which ended with a surplus of a quarter of a million francs. It also decided to arrange a competition for the planning of a new school centre on the Place d'Armes.

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The Town Authorities of Neuchâtel have agreed to assign the office of Municipal President to each of the five Town Councillors for a year at a time. The Director of Police, Fritz Humbert-Droz, has been elected for 1962/63.

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The Geneva Town Council has approved a motion for a subsidy of Fr.20,000 and a guarantee of Fr.10,000 for the 17th "Rencontres Internationales" at Geneva. Fr.60,000 have been granted to the "Fêtes de Genève", which will take place in August.

News items by A.T.S.

DEATHS

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Henri Brun, aged 76, the head of the engineering firm of Brun & Co., Nebikon.

Alfred Gradmann, at the age of 69. He was a well-known architect, president for many years of the Association of Swiss Architects. He was a member of the board of the Institute "Juventus" in Zurich and principal of the Technical Evening College.

Professor Dr. William Henri Schopfer died in Berne at the age of 62. He was director of the Botanical Institute of Berne University and Professor for Botany and Biology.

Frau Adelheid Kaiser-Burki, 100 years old three months ago, died at Ammannsegg near Biberist.

Frau Dr. med. Martha Friedl-Meyer died in Zurich at the age of 71. She was chief surgeon at the "Schweiz. Pfliegerinnenschule" in Zurich from 1933 to 1961.

Fernand Werthenschlag, aged 77, head of the information department of the Swiss Industries' Fair in Basle from 1920-1951.

Frau Frida Hoffmann-Moosherr, 99, widow of the late Federal Councillor Hoffmann.

Grossrat Adolf Wirth from Haegglingen died at the age of 83; well-known politician, founder of the firm of Riwisa A.G. Haegglingen, and chairman of the Sanatorium Sanitas at Davos for many years.

Raymond Clavien died at Sion at the age of 63; local politician, leader of several Valaisan agricultural associations and president of the Farmers' Union of the Suisse Romande.

Professor H. Luedeke died in Basle at the age of 73. He was Professor of English at the Basle University from 1930 till 1959.

Prof. Dr. ing. Mirko Gottfried Ros, former professor at the Federal University of Technology in Zurich, died at the age of 83.

Professor Hans Wehberg, General Secretary of the Institute of International Law, died at Geneva, aged 77.

Arthur Fischer-Streitmann, well-known actor, died in Basle at the age of 78.

GOTTLIEB DUTTWEILER

1888-1962

As we reported in our last issue, National Councillor Gottlieb Duttweiler died on 8th June at the age of nearly 74 years. He was born in Zurich on 15th August 1888, a citizen of Zurich and Oberweningen. His father was manager of the "Lebensmittelverein Zurich". Young Gottlieb went to school in Zurich and afterwards served an apprenticeship with an agency for food imports. He spent a year in France and in 1910 entered the services of Pfister & Co. in which firm he became a partner in 1917. His business travels took him to Turkey, Asia Minor, Trieste, Genoa, Barcelona, Malaga and New York. In 1923 he and his wife emigrated to Brazil, where he became co-owner of a coffee plantation. But as his wife could not stand the climate he returned to Switzerland two years later. On 25th August 1925, together with Fritz Keller and Rudolf Peter, he founded the Migros A.G. They started with only a few lorries which circulated as "mobile shops". This undertaking succeeded rapidly. In 1935 he founded the "Hotel-Plan" organisation in order to help the tourist industry, but above all to enable people of modest means to enjoy holidays at low and inclusive terms. In 1941 he transformed the Migros A.G. into a co-operative society which today has 593,410 members. Duttweiler was the first man to start self-service shops in Switzerland and later he introduced Migros markets, founded the crude oil refinery Frisia A.G. at Emden, the Migros Bank and other companies.

When the Migros was ten years old, Gottlieb Duttweiler started his own independent political movement, the "Landesring der Unabhängigen". The paper "Die Tat" was published as a weekly information paper for his party, but on 1st October 1939 it began to appear as a daily paper.

From 1935 to 1940 and again from 1943 to 1949 Duttweiler was a member of the National Council, and from 1949 to 1951 he represented the Canton of Zurich in the Council of States. From 1951 until his death he was again a member of the National Council, this time representing the Canton of Berne. During the 27 years of his parliamentary career he sat on many important commissions, e.g., foreign policy, customs tariffs, etc.

But Duttweiler was not only interested in commerce and politics. He also founded a number of educational and cultural institutions. He started schools and classes for adult education in large towns as well as in smaller places. His "Club House Concerts" were a great success, as were his other ventures of a similar nature.

One of the organisations he created was in the interests of the Swiss abroad who had lost their livelihood during the war. Having lived so much outside Switzerland himself, he always remembered his compatriots abroad and identified himself with their concerns again and again.

To say that Gottlieb Duttweiler was a most enterprising and hard-working man is somewhat an understatement. He was full of tremendous vitality and energy and a real fighter. He fought antiquated commercialism on one hand, and on the other he was antagonistic to big monopolies and trusts. The competition which his business ventures created certainly contributed to maintaining lower prices. It stirred up the Swiss retail trade, unfortunately sometimes at the expense of the small retailer. His political views, too, were often unorthodox and controversial, and I have heard him called the "enfant terrible" of the Swiss political arena. He had many adversaries and fighting certainly was the spice of life to him.

Now "Dutti", as he was affectionately called by his friends and admirers — and disparagingly by his opponents — has gone to rest. It is said that Zurich has never seen such a funeral as that of Gottlieb Duttweiler on 13th June. The late National Councillor was an outstanding personality, and friends and foes alike agree that he was one of the great Swiss of our times. The fact that there was a remarkable absence of hatred or bitter feelings in the many obituaries that appeared all over the country speaks well both for him and his adversaries, who gave him credit and even, if reluctantly, admiration.

Mariann.

ERRATUM

We regret that a mistake occurred in the last issue when it was said that the *Swiss Bank Corporation* celebrated a double anniversary. This should have been the *Union Bank of Switzerland* (Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft), which celebrated the centenary jubilee of the foundation of the two banks (Bank of Winterthur and Toggenburger Bank) whose merger created the Union Bank of Switzerland in 1912, with head office in Zurich.

The *Swiss Bank Corporation* (Schweizerischer Bankverein) was established in 1872. Its head office is in Basle and the London office at 99 Gresham Street, E.C.2.

The error in translation was not ours, as we received the news in *English* from the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (OSEC, Office Suisse pour l'Expansion Commerciale) in Lausanne. But we apologise for any inconvenience caused.