

Recent deaths in Switzerland

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as well as its resident ducks and swans — the latter in the privileged position of enjoying municipal support and protection from the towns around the lake.

"In Geneva they have their full-time guardian who prepares meals twice a day for them on Rousseau's Island. Through the newspapers and radio he has appealed to the public — so far without complete success unfortunately — not to feed the birds themselves but to deposit their gifts, usually dry bread or buns, in the bins outside his hut. Scores of birds trying to reach titbits thrown from the promenade have been frozen into the ice. Those whose plight is observed in time are rescued by the river police, who respond to calls even in the bitter cold of night. At Rolle, along the lake, amateur frogmen are performing similar missions of mercy."

On the Rhine below Schaffhausen huge accumulations of birds were observed and special bread collections at the local bakeries were made to feed them. But not only wild animals suffered; in the Val-de-Ruz (Neuchâtel) cattle had to be slaughtered as the farmers were no longer able to feed them.

The hard winter has brought bad sales to the markets in towns. Basle, whose market outside the Townhall is usually a lively and colourful scene in the morning, was practically deserted and car parking was already allowed before lunch. Vegetable production declined, but there were plenty of dried vegetables available, and apples, too, came into their own. Milk production in eastern parts of Switzerland showed even an increase and made good the losses in the French-speaking part of the country.

The clearing of ice and snow has brought much extra work and many headaches to local authorities. The municipal budget of the town of Zurich usually allows half a million francs for that item. The first three weeks of January had already used up that amount, not to mention the Fr.315,000 which the clearance had cost in November and December. But it must be said that the work was tackled most efficiently, helped by modern equipment.

Two new methods of defrosting have been reported. At Fleurier the snow from the roads was put into the Buttes stream, where huge masses of frozen snow soon had to be cleared. A trench was hacked in the ice and filled with old petrol-soaked tyres. These were then lit and the snow masses melted away quickly.

The other much more important method was reported by the BBC, and "The Times" gave the following description on 11th January:

"ANTI-FREEZE" KEPT AIRPORT OPEN

"Chance brought about an invention which may revolutionize air navigation by increasing winter air traffic.

"Last year an employee at the Zurich-Kloten airport discovered a mixture containing alcohol which enabled the local runways to be used during the intense cold just before Christmas. For many days, owing to glazed ice, no aircraft could land at Geneva airport, or in France or western Germany.

"The mixture concerned — the secret formula has not yet been divulged — was found by mere chance by a member of the airport staff. He had made with alcohol a liquid for preventing his car from freezing and he was surprised to see that some drops which fell on the glazed ice dissolved it rapidly.

"Experiments were made by, among others, the federal laboratory for the testing of materials, which made it clear that the liquid did not attack concrete, steel and rubber.

"All the trials having been successful the Zurich airport authorities had a motor tank constructed containing about 1,350 gallons with 24ft. hoses on each side for spraying the runways. It takes from 35 to 40 minutes to spray the main landing runway, which is 4,050 yards long and 30 yards wide. The glazed ice melts within five to 15 minutes according to its thickness.

"One spraying costs nearly £100, but Zurich airport found the process profitable as 70 aircraft landed and paid £1,600 of airport duties."

Finally and paradoxically, the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade reported "Ice in a few minutes". A new ice-making machine has been invented, details of which can be found under business news later in this issue. It will, no doubt, come in handy when we are suffering from sweltering heat and yearning for the cold!

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

Reading through the sheets reporting recent deaths in Switzerland, I was struck by how many had occurred amongst prominent members of the press. The editors of several local papers died, amongst them Adolf Schwab of the "Berner Tagblatt"; and former editors like Achille Graber of the "Schweizerische Depeschagentur"; Fritz Egli of the "Limmattaler Tagblatt"; Dr. Joseph Keel of the "Rheintalische Volkszeitung"; Editor-in-Chief of "Neue Zuercher Nachrichten" and "Die Woche im Bild"; Gustave Neuhaus of "La Suisse Libérale" and Louis Loze of "La Suisse Horlogère" and "Revue Internationale de l'Horlogerie". Marius Berthet, known as "Ruy Blag", died in Geneva, and the well-known journalist Emil-Friedrich Rimensberger, who was the first *Attaché Social* at the Swiss Embassy in Washington, at Cornaux sur Chamby. The oldest publisher of the Jura, Ernest Grossniklaus, died at St. Imier at the age of 90, and the well-known publisher, Max Rascher, in Zurich at the age of 80; he specialised in beautiful issues of Swiss writers like Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and was the first to publish reproductions of Ferdinand Hodler's works.

A number of well-known scientists also have left this world: the economist, Professor A. Amonn in Berne; Professor Dr. Ernst Gaugler, expert on the New Testament at the University of Berne; Professor Charles Gonet, reader in Forestry at the Federal University of Technology in Zurich from 1941 to 1957; the astronomer, Professor Edmond Guyot from Neuchâtel; the Schaffhausen geologist, Jakob Huebscher; the well-known surgeon from Geneva, Professor Dr. Charles Juillard; Dr. h.c. Johann Friedrich Schmid, the discoverer of the zodiacal light, farmer at Oberhelfenschwil, St. Gall; Professor H. Sturm-Specht, well-known shorthand expert from Zurich; Professor René Verniory, reader in Palaeontology at the University of Geneva; and finally the social economist, Professor Dr. O. Widmer, from St. Gall.

The world of art has also lost some prominent members: the dialect writer, Karl Grunder, from Berne; the writer, Dr. Carl Ritter, famous for his Joseph Schmidt biography, "Ein Lied geht um die Welt"; the novelist, Edwin Arnet, who wrote the pageant play "Das Eidgenössische Wettspiel", for the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich in 1939; Georges Hoffmann from Geneva, who specialised in criminal and psychological sketches for the radio; and the well-known Vaudois René Morax who wrote novels, poetry and plays and the text of "Le Roi

David" for which Arthur Honegger composed the music. The Vaudois actor, Max Lerel (Maurice Versel), died in Lausanne, and the popular actor and comedian, Rudolf Bernhard, who originated from Basle but ran his own theatre in Zurich, died in Zurich. Hans Baenninger passed away in Zurich, well-known radio personality and actor, and a former teacher.

The following artists died: the sculptor, Giovanni Ballerini, in Schaffhausen; the painter, Louis Rivier, in Lausanne, well-known for his religious paintings; the painter, Rudolf Muelli, from Zurich; the two painters from Neuchâtel and Geneva, Ferdinand Maire and Charles de Ziegler. Finally, the death is reported from Berne of one of the biggest art collectors in Switzerland, Hermann Rupf, whose valuable collection, the "Hermann und Margrit Rupf Stiftung", will now pass on to the Berne Art Museum.

Amongst a long list of politicians, I would mention former Councillor of States Adrien Lachenal from Geneva; Jakob Vollenweider-Dubs, the former deputy-director of the commercial section of the Federal Department for Economics; Dr. Eugène Péquignot, former Secretary-General of the same Federal Office; and finally, Dr. Charles Fauconnet from Geneva, who had been for many years a director of the Federal Office of Health in Berne.

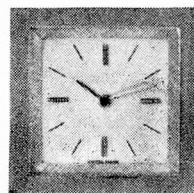
A well-known military man in the Ticino died in the person of Colonel Ettore Moccetti from Lugano. The world of sport lost the former Olympic gold medallist and director of the ski-school of St. Moritz, Edy Reinalter; and Erich Burgheimer, former President of the Jewish Sport and Gymnastic Society, in Zurich. A popular personality departed with Captain Alfred Blatter, for 52 years employed by the Lake of Constance navigation service.

Switzerland has also lost some prominent women, amongst them Rosa Neuenschwander from Berne, well known for her social and educational activities and director of the first SAFFA (National Exhibition of Women's Work), 1928. Her autobiography appeared at Christmas, with a foreword by Federal Councillor Wahlen. Dr. Marie Huber died in St. Gall, the mother of the recently elected Federal Judge, and known for her activities in the Social Democratic movement in St. Gall; the first welfare worker for the blind in the Canton of Berne was Margrit Schaffer, a pioneer in that work, who died at the age of 79; Mathilde Blattner-Amrein died in Lucerne at the age of 89 — after the death of her husband, the historian, Dr. h.c. Wilhelm Amrein, she managed the "Gletschergarten" in Lucerne; Catherine Buercher-Cathrein died at Brigue, well known as hotel proprietress in the Valais, as welfare worker and writer; Anna Hegner, the well-known violinist in Basle, died early in February.

In conclusion, no fewer than eight centenarians, all women, died in Switzerland recently; the "youngest" was 99 — the oldest inhabitant of Luetzelflueh, Anna Ryser-Leuenberger; Laure Decorvet died at nearly 100 in Geneva, a former Salvation Army welfare worker; Berthe Heimgartner from Basle, resident at Champéry died, also at 100. From the German-speaking part of Switzerland came Anna Pflug-Neuenschwander, who died in Geneva in her 101st year. At the same age, Marian Pym, an Englishwoman resident in Switzerland, died at Veytaux (Vaud). And again from the French-speaking part came the news of the death of Juliette Favre-Gygi, who passed away at 101 at Moudon. Another Englishwoman, Anna Wilson, died at Blonay at the age of 102. Finally, Fanny Reymondaz-Bernard, who was blind, died at 103 in a nursing home at Prilly.

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