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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

On the 6th of July the Swiss electorate went to the poll, for the second time within two months; this time in connection with the Old Age and Survivors Insurance and the new articles of the Federal Constitution on Economic and Social matters.

The Old Age and Survivors Insurance has been accepted by 895,902 against 234,308 votes, and the articles on Economic and Social matters by 582,449 against 520,179 votes, as can be seen from the figures below :—

Cantons	For	Against
Zurich	170,875	22,804
Berne	156,231	31,454
Lucerne	31,713	18,229
Uri	4,086	2,002
Schwyz	9,363	5,214
Obwalden	1,653	2,992
Nidwalden	2,420	1,748
Glarus	7,670	1,231
Zug	5,927	2,372
Fribourg	17,469	14,774
Solothurn	36,970	5,534
Baselstadt	34,378	4,071
Baselland	22,053	2,542
Schaffhausen	13,116	2,043
Appenzell i.Rh.	1,651	882
Appenzell a.Rh.	9,872	2,147
St. Gallen	55,842	13,966
Graubunden	23,394	5,888
Aargau	60,604	15,978
Thurgau	28,872	9,070
Ticino	28,193	2,920
Vaud	63,265	32,236
Valais	19,212	7,708
Neuchâtel	26,762	3,542
Genève	32,598	4,732
<b>Total</b>	<b>895,902</b>	<b>234,308</b>

Cantons	For	Against
Zurich	81,162	108,567
Berne	111,714	69,930
Lucerne	24,546	24,493
Uri	3,024	2,939
Schwyz	6,158	8,123
Obwalden	1,611	2,960
Nidwalden	1,775	2,339
Glarus	4,256	4,414
Zug	4,066	4,127
Fribourg	17,614	14,100
Solothurn	23,289	18,649
Baselstadt	19,850	17,506
Baselland	13,053	10,716
Schaffhausen	7,641	7,019
Appenzell I.Rh.	1,232	1,275
Appenzell A.Rh.	4,451	7,306
St. Gallen	32,234	36,850
Graubunden	18,226	10,011
Aargau	36,743	37,897
Thurgau	22,057	15,348
Ticino	22,108	8,270
Vaud	43,895	48,979
Valais	13,533	12,775
Neuchâtel	16,225	12,603
Genève	27,540	8,436
<b>Total</b>	<b>582,449</b>	<b>520,179</b>

It may well be said that the 6th of July, 1947, will be a memorable day in the history of Swiss democracy, especially as regards social legislation.

At the first glance, the above figures show, firstly, that for the first time for very many years an extremely high proportion of the electorate has come to the Poll. Secondly, that the Act on Old Age and Survivors Insurance has been adopted by the enormous majority of 4:1. Thirdly, that the new Articles of the Federal

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Constitution on economic and social matters have been adopted by only a small majority.

It is particularly gratifying to note that 87% of the citizens have taken part in the votes of the 6th July. Since the existence of the Federal State, this proportion was exceeded only twice: in 1915 for the introduction of a war tax (94%) and in 1938 when "Romanch" was recognised as one of the national languages (91%). In 1931, when the first Act on Old Age and Survivors Insurance was rejected by the people, only 78% of the citizens had come to the Poll, and this was already a high figure.

It is gratifying because in recent years voices were to be heard here and there expressing doubts as to the value of our system of direct democracy. In view of the small proportion of those usually taking part in the votes, the impression was spreading that the number of citizens interested in public affairs was gradually declining. The 6th of July has very fortunately and very clearly shown that this impression was a false one. Indeed, the Swiss people seem to have been moved by "a tidal wave of good will," as a commentator has put it. It seems, therefore, proper to record first of all this revival of civic spirit, which no doubt would consolidate, if need be, the prestige of our democratic institutions.

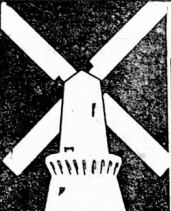
Neither have the fears been proved justified of those who see in the Referendum a brake to social progress. It is true, as Federal Counsellor Stampfli has

expressed it recently in a speech he delivered to the International Labour Conference sitting in Geneva, that social progress is slower and more arduous in a country with a Referendum than in another where citizens have only the right to elect their representatives in Parliament. The very history of the Old Age Insurance Act is a proof of it, as the principle of Old Age Insurance has been accepted by the Swiss people as far back as 1925. It has thus taken 22 years to implement it. But, again, the vote of the 6th July shows that, however slowly, ideas make headway and surely, to quote once more M. Stampfli, an Act which has thus expressly received the assent of the people, has an all the more solid foundation, and its revision in a regressive sense is made all the more difficult and unlikely.

The majority of some 600,000 votes and the proportion of acceptance of 4:1 by which the Act was passed, has been a great surprise to everybody. Even the most optimistic did not expect a proportion of acceptance higher than 2:1. It may be of some interest for the sake of comparison to recall that in 1912 another important part of the Swiss social legislation, namely, the Act on Sickness Insurance and Workmen's Compensation, as well as, in 1937, the Penal Code, were adopted by majorities of only some 40,000 votes. Even the principle of Old Age Insurance was carried in 1925 only by a majority of less than 200,000.

Whatever one may think of the qualities or of the defects of the new Act, the fact that the accepting majority has been an overwhelming one, should be considered as highly satisfactory. As it is, this majority includes undoubtedly large parts of every category of the population. The Act has not been passed against the will of any of these categories or of important parts thereof. It is not a triumph of one over another. Peasants as well as workers, Conservatives as well as Socialists, French and Italian as well as German-speaking Cantons, have taken their share in the victory, and consequently in the responsibility it entails. It is well so. The Old Age and Survivors Insurance Act is a work of national solidarity. Its enforcement implies the willing co-operation of one and all. It will impose on this and on future generations a heavy financial burden. The Swiss people have, with unmistakable clearness, expressed the will to undertake the task and to accept the burden. Under these circumstances, there is no reason to doubt that any difficulties which may arise in the enforcement of the Act will be successfully overcome. "Where there's a will, there's a way."

As regards the new Articles of the Constitution on economic and social matters, the accepting majority is comparatively a small one of only some 60,000 citizens and of 4 Cantons. It is difficult, particularly from abroad, to analyse the reasons which have led more than 500,000 citizens to vote against. The Articles touch on manifold matters and therefore have given rise to manifold objections. Here again, it can hardly be said that definite groups as a whole have been 'for' and others 'against'. However, the general characteristic of these Articles is, while still proclaiming that freedom of industry and commerce is guaranteed, to increase the right of the Federal State to restrict this freedom in various respects. Obviously, there was no general enthusiasm for accepting these restrictions and for shifting to the State further responsibilities. The small difference between




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the " ayes " and " noes " seems to indicate that the people accepted the proposals rather as a necessary evil than as a development which it considered desirable. This reluctance has not escaped the notice of the authorities concerned who have already, in commenting the vote, voiced their intention to exercise their new powers with caution and restraint. This seems indeed to be the right conclusion to be drawn from a pretty even Poll. True democracy, does not only imply that the minority must submit to the majority but also that the opinion of the minority, particularly of a strong one, has to be duly taken into account when carrying out the decision.

The two votes of the 6th of July certainly rank amongst the most important the Swiss people have had to take in the last twenty-five years. By introducing Old Age and Survivors Insurance they have achieved a very great social progress, which was keenly expected by a large number of citizens. By revising the Articles of the Constitution on economic and social matters, they have brought the constitutional frame of economic and social legislation into harmony with the requirements of our times and opened the door to further progress.

\* \* \*

Dr. Carl Burckhardt, Swiss Minister in Paris, has been appointed Head of the Swiss Delegation at the Conference in Paris.

\* \* \*

According to a decree of the Federal Council, dated July 4th, 1947, all Italian credit-balances in Switzerland are " unfrozen."

\* \* \*

The International Wheat Conference started in Paris on the 9th of this month. The Federal Council has sent the following Delegation to take part: E. de Graffenried, Counsellor of Legation, London, W. Laesser, Director of the Wheat Administration, Hans Keller, Thomas Brandle and Louis Jeanrenaud.

\* \* \*

The Bulgarian Finance Minister, Iwan Steffanoff, has arrived in Berne. In the presence of Federal Councillor Nobs and representatives of the Swiss Press he gave a lecture at the Bulgarian Legation on the Financial and Economical problems of Bulgaria.

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### Cantonal

A monument was unveiled at Fluelen in memory of Dr. h. c. Emil Huber-Stockar (1865-1939) a pioneer of the electrification of the Swiss Federal Railways. The monument was commissioned by the Swiss Federal Railways and the Swiss Electro-Technical Society and executed by the Zurich sculptor, Fischer. On his own initiative Emile Huber started in the years 1905-1909 with the electrification of the line Seebach-Wettingen and between 1922-1925 supervised the electrification of the Gotthard line. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two persons were killed at Pfäffikon (Schwyz) when a motor-cyclist ran into a group of people.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Frau Aloisia Frey-Schwyter, in Lachen (Schwyz), has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary in the best of health. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

For the first time, since 10 years the white flag was hoisted over the Municipal Building at Schwyz, denoting that the prison cells, which are housed there, were empty. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Pierre Jacot-Schneider — teacher in Gelterkinden — and his wife were killed, when a motor-car, in which they were travelling and driven by a chauffeur from Sarnen, left the road near Sachseln and was hurled

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down into the Melchaa gorge. Their four children and the chauffeur suffered serious injuries, and had to be taken to hospital. [A.T.S.]

Mme. Cecile Lauber, the well-known author, has celebrated her 60th birthday anniversary in Lucerne. Amongst her best-known works are 'Die Verständigung an den Kindern'; 'Die Wandlung'; 'Gang in die Natur'; 'Der dunkle Tag.' [A.T.S.]

A fire which broke out at the saw-mill of Adolf Aeckerli, in Reiden (Lucerne), caused damage amounting to 77,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

The painter Augusto Giacometti, who recently died in Zurich, has left an amount of 100,000.— frs. to the school of his native town Stampa (Bergell), and 200,000.— frs. to the "Bergeller" hospital. The picture gallery at Chur has received a number of his paintings. [A.T.S.]

For having forced his grown up daughter to swallow cherry stones, a man in Zurich has been charged with attempted murder.

When the daughter refused to obey, the man flew into a temper and started to throw various contents of the kitchen out of the window. The police were fetched, and on their arrival were received with revolver shots. One of the policemen, in self-defence shot the man into the leg, which necessitated his removal to hospital. He is now being charged with attempted murder. [A.T.S.]

Professor Dr. H. Pallmann has been elected rector of the Federal Technical University in Zurich for 1947/48. [A.T.S.]

Hermann Farnet, President of the District Court in Ober Stammheim has succeeded the late National-Councillor Stiefel, in the National Council. [A.T.S.]

The population of the town of Zurich at the end of June numbered 370,351 persons. [A.T.S.]

A collision between two tramway-trains occurred at the Escher-Wyss Platz in Zurich. Ten people were injured and had to be taken to hospital. Seven, after having been attended to were sent home whilst three people were detained, but their condition is not considered to be serious. The material damage is considered to be between 20-30,000.— frs. [A.T.S.]

The 32nd Esperanto Congress will be opened on the 26th of this month in Berne under the honorary Presidency of Federal-Councillor Celio. Thirty-one countries, with altogether 1,500 Delegates will be represented. [A.T.S.]

Dr. A. Wander, Chairman, and for many years Managing-Director of the Dr. A. Wander, A.G., in Berne, and Chairman of various A. Wander concerns abroad, well-known as the producer of Ovaltine, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The well-known writer, Hermann Hesse (70), has received the decree of doctor *honoris causa* by the philosophical faculty of the University of Berne. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Bienne of the well-known Watch Manufacturer, Hans Hofmann, at the age of 68. He had gained a great reputation in Swiss sports circles. [A.T.S.]

Ernst Feuz, a keen Zurich mountaineer, accompanied by the guide, Walter von Allmen, of Mürren, has made the remarkable descent from the summit of the Mönch via the "Nordwand" from the Lauperliniger hut to the Eiger glacier station. [A.T.S.]

Emil Andres, senior partner of the Printing Works "Express" in Bienne, has died at the age of 60. The deceased was the author of a number of plays in Swiss dialect; many of his plays were accepted by municipal theatres in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

After a lapse of eight years, the "Tell Spiele" in Interlaken have started again. The opening performance, which took place on the 13th of this month, was attended by Federal-Councillor, v. Steiger. [A.T.S.]

Professor Dr. Robert Burri, late Director of the bacteriological institute Liebefeld (Berne) has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

One of the largest and best-known hotels at Interlaken, the Grand Hotel "Beau-Rivage" has, after seven years, been re-opened. During the war this establishment was taken over by the Swiss General Staff. [A.T.S.]

August Jäggi, aged 68, has died in Solothurn as the result of an accident. The deceased was from 1911-1916 editor of the "Oltener Nachrichten," from



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1916-1924 editor of the "Solothurner Nachrichten" and from 1924-1931 editor of the "Oltener Morgen." He was a member of the "Kantonsrat" for 13 years, over which he presided in 1935. He was a member of Parliament (National-Council) from 1923-1939.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two women, having refreshments in a tea-room in Basle were in deep conversation; a woman who was sitting at a table close by, overheard the conversation which was about recent burglaries from various show windows in the town.

The involuntary hearer of the conversation became suspicious, and informed the police who made inquiries, which proved successful. A quantity of goods, such as fur coats and carpets which had been missed from show windows were found at the house of one of the women. The two women and a man have been arrested after they had admitted the thefts.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Professor Carl Henschen, Director of the surgical clinic of the University of Basle, who recently vacated his post, on reaching the age limit, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Professor Henschen, who enjoys an international reputation, was from 1917-1926 surgeon-in-chief of the cantonal hospital at St. Gall, and since 1926 professor at the University of Basle.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Two tourists from St. Gall, Arnold Gerboche and Werner Dietrich were killed when ascending the Staubern-Kanzel (Appenzell).

[A.T.S.]

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The "Kurhaus Tannenheim" on the Flumserberg (St. Gall) was destroyed by fire. The damage is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 100,000.— frs.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Johannes Huber, a member of the National-Council since 1919, and Jakob Fenk, since 1925 a member of the same Council have resigned their seats in Parliament. Both represented constituencies in the canton of St. Gall, and belong to the Socialist Party.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. F. Laager, "Stadtammann" of the town of Aarau, since 1938, has resigned his post for reasons of health.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Jakob Käch, who had been since 1910 connected with the "Schweiz. Bauernverband," and editor of the "Landwirtschaftlichen Marktzeitung," has died in Brugg at the age of 67.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Arnold Haller has been appointed keeper of the archives and head of the famous cantonal library of Aargau. He is the author of a number of historical works.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Doyen of the medical practitioners of the canton of Aargau, Dr. Benedikt Simonett-Ries, died at Frick at the age of 87. He was for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Aargau.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Italian Government has decided to re-open their Consulate at Locarno, which has been closed during the war.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

In the neighbourhood of Lugano several men joined a policeman who was in pursuit of two suspects. In the darkness, one of the men accompanying the policeman, saw something moving, and fired, unfortunately he hit one of his companions, in the person of Valentino Cameroni, from Cureglia, who died almost immediately.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Heinrich Amsler, who was well-known at home and abroad as a Hotelier, has died in Vevey at the age of 68.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Swiss Chemical Syndicate has made a donation of 46,000.— frs. to the University of Lausanne. This amount is to be used for research work.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Not a week passes without some fatal accidents due to reckless driving. A motor-cyclist on the road Visp-Brigue, ran into two passers by killing one, J. A. Roberti, instantaneously, the motor-cyclist himself was killed.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

From Martigny (Valais) comes the news of the death of Camille Desfayes at the age of 87. The deceased was a former cantonal judge and President of the Grand Council of the canton Valais. He sat at one time in Parliament (National Council).

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Commercial School at Le Locle (Neuchâtel) has celebrated its 50th jubilee.

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The couple, Camille Giauque-Lehmann, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60 years).

[A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Edouard Darbre, a teacher for 44 years in Môtiers and President of the rural district council, has died

there at the age of 73. He was, at one time, Central President of the Federal Gymnastic Society. [A.T.S.]

The Police of the town of Geneva, have arrested a certain Georg Kundert, who broke into a flat and got away with a cash box containing 79,000.— frs. All but 10,000.— frs. was recovered. [A.T.S.]

### Army

Captain de Pourtalès, a member of the Instruction Corps of the Swiss Air Force, crashed with a machine of the type Me.109E near Granges-Paccot (Fribourg); he was severely injured and had to be taken to hospital. [A.T.S.]

### Humanitarian

A group of 40 British war invalides, who have spent five weeks at Lützelau, near Weggis, have now returned to London, a further group of some fifty invalides have arrived at Lützelau. [A.T.S.]

—oo—

The Hungarian Government has started an action in a Swiss Court against the former Hungarian Minister in Berne, who recently vacated his post, owing to political differences.

Dr. Franz Gordon, the former Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Hungary, has refused to hand over the keys of the safe, which were deposited in a Swiss Bank, to his successor. The case will shortly come before the Supreme Court of the canton of Berne. [A.T.S.]

The next International Stamp Exhibition will take place in Basle from the 21st-29th August, 1948. (This

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year's Exhibition was held in New York). The President of the Organisation Committee is Professor Brogle, Director of the Basle Fair. [A.T.S.]

The set of four semi-postals to be issued by Switzerland this year to mark the 656th anniversary of its independence, will simultaneously commemorate the centenary of the founding of the Swiss Railways. The set will include the following: Five-plus-5 Rappen, green and red, track crew at work. Designed by Paul Boesch, engraved by Albert Yersin and produced at the Government Printing Office, Berne. Ten-plus-10 Rappen, grey chamois and red, Rorschach Station, designed by Willi Koch. Twenty-plus-10 Rappen, carmine, chamois and grey, Luen-Castle Station. Designed by Willi Koch. Thirty-plus-10 Rappen, blue grey and red. Fluelen Station. Designed by Hans Thoni. The last three stamps all were produced by helio-gravure by Courvoisier, La Chaux-de-Fonds.

The stamps will be placed on sale at all Swiss Post Offices up to August 15th, but will be valid for postage until November 30th.

From New York comes the news of the death of the well-known portrait painter, Adolf Müller, at the age of 85. A. Müller was a native of Hospental and emigrated to America at an early age, where he soon gained a reputation as a portrait painter. Since Leo XIIIth, he had painted all the Popes; the German Emperor, Wilhelm II also sat for him, and many famous American politicians and financiers were portrayed by him. [A.T.S.]

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