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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Monsieur Paul Ruegger, formerly Swiss Minister in London, and now President of the International Red Cross in Geneva, has been nominated a member of the Permanent Court of International Law at the Hague, in succession to the late Professor Dietrich Schindler.

Dr. Paul Ruegger has left for a short visit to the Near East in connection with the events in Palestine.

Federal-Councillor M. Petitpierre has visited Paris, it is said that the visit is of a private nature.

General Douglas, Commander-in-Chief of the Swedish army, has arrived in Switzerland. He paid a visit to Army-Corps Commander Montmollin, Chief of the General Staff. He inspected various military establishments. Federal-Councillor Kobelt, head of the Federal Military Department, held a reception in honour of the distinguished guest. General Douglas also paid a visit to General Guisan at Pully.

Dr. Jaromir Lang, the newly appointed Czechoslovakian Minister, has presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation. Minister Lang, who is 34 years old, was previously a Professor at the Karls University in Prague. During the last war he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He is married to a niece of Thomas Masaryk, first President of Czechoslovakia.

Monsieur Mihail Magheru, Minister of the Republic of Rumania, has presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation.

The Swiss Legation in Moscow, which until now had no official residence, has moved into new premises, containing the Minister's private quarters and offices for the staff.

The Swiss Federal Railways carried in the month of April altogether 17.53 million passengers, or 0.66 million less than in April, 1947. The receipts for the

passenger service show a decline of 0.88 million francs of 23.8 million francs.

Goods traffic, however, increased by nearly 300,000 tons and reached 1.72 million tons. The receipts amounted to 32.99 million francs.

The Federal Chambers (National and States Councils) assembled on the 7th of June in Berne for their summer session, which will last about three weeks.

Authoritative quarters at Berne state that accusations made in the British Parliament regarding the delay in the liquidation of German assets were unjustified, there being no negligence on the part of Switzerland.

It is stressed that Switzerland is willing to cooperate fully, but so long as the Allies themselves are in disagreement about fixing the rate of exchange between the Swiss franc and the German mark to enable adequate compensation of German assets Switzerland cannot proceed with the liquidation.

Two inquiries made by the Federal Council to this effect, it is emphasised, took the Allies 12 and six months respectively to answer.

The Swiss asked for a further explanation a fortnight ago. Their attitude in the whole affair is governed by moral, legal and constitutional considerations, although Switzerland herself is a heavy loser, to the extent of many milliard francs, 900 millions alone in the German-Swiss clearing account.

The Swiss Government has recommended that all new buildings should have air-raid shelters.

Cantonal

During a second ballot for a seat in the cantonal government of Schwyz, Joseph Heinzer (Socialist) was elected, his candidature was not opposed. [A.T.S.]

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The accounts of the canton of Schwyz for 1947, close with a credit-balance of 74,806.—frs. [A.T.S.]

Madame Hélène de Mandrot, living in the South of France, has presented to the "Kunsthau" in Zurich twenty sculptures, principally by Rodin, Villon, Rabi and Jaques Lipchitz. [A.T.S.]

The late Dr. Hermann Stoll, *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Zurich, has left an amount of 1 million francs to the University of Zurich, the interest of which is to be used to augment the fixed salaries of famous teachers.

The "Schweizerische Chemie Syndikat" has made a grant amounting to 92,000.—frs. to the same University for scientific investigations in the field of chemistry. [A.T.S.]

During the month of April, 506 traffic accidents have occurred (1947: 418); 224 persons have been injured (1947: 202) of which 10 fatally (1947: 3).

Motor-accidents in Switzerland are alarmingly on the increase; in spite of this, sentences for dangerous and reckless driving are ridiculously light. The tribunal at Nidau (Ct. Berne) has condemned a motorist, who was found guilty of reckless driving and thus killing a woman, to three months imprisonment, on probation, and a fine of 200.—frs. (!) [A.T.S.]

Jakob Meyer, since 1924, "Regierungsstatthalter" in Murten (Ct. Fribourg) has died at the age of 68. The deceased was, from 1943-1947 a member of the National Council. [A.T.S.]

The accounts of the canton of Berne for the year 1947, close with a credit balance of 613,729.99.—frs.

A large fire which broke out at Langenthal (Ct. Berne) caused considerable damage. Five houses were completely destroyed, amongst them the Headquarters of the Salvation Army. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Georges Delabays has been nominated Librarian of the Library of the canton and University of Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

The late Henry Meyer, a citizen of Luterbach and Solothurn, who was a resident in Egypt for the last 40

years, has left his valuable art collection, consisting of pictures and miniatures to the museums of Solothurn and Bienne. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred at Basle of Joseph A. Seiler, lessee of the S.B.B. station restaurant in Basle, at the age of 52. The deceased was the son of the founder of the well-known Seiler Hotels, he was formerly managing a number of first-class establishments both abroad and at home. [A.T.S.]

The Commercial University of St. Gall has celebrated its 50th Jubilee. [A.T.S.]

The eight million francs loan, issued by the canton of Aargau at 3½ per cent, has been oversubscribed and allocations had to be reduced. [A.T.S.]

Dr. P. Herzog, a medical practitioner, who recently died at Amriswil (Thurgau) has left an amount of 28,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions of the canton of Thurgau. [A.T.S.]

On May 30th, it was a hundred years since the dyke of Melide (Ct. Ticino) was built, this event was celebrated at Bissone, where a commemoration tablet was inaugurated in honour of Pasquale Lucchini, the promoter of the undertaking. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Vevey of M. Gérard de Palézieux, a former banker. The deceased was

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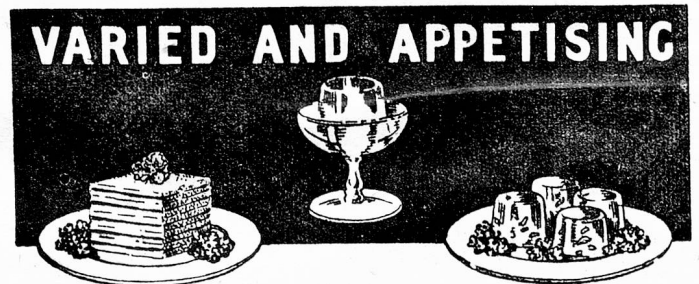
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closely connected with the Swiss Alpine Club, he was one of the Founders of the section Jaman. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The clinic "Belgica" erected by the Belgian Red Cross at Montana (Ct. Valais) was inaugurated in the presence of Prince de Merode, President of the Belgian Red Cross and high Belgian and Swiss officials.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The well-known watch manufacturing firm, Jaquet-Huguenin, in Ponts-de-Martel, have celebrated their 100th anniversary of their foundation. [A.T.S.]

* * *

David Revachier, a former National-Councillor and from 1923-1932 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Geneva, has died in Bourdigny at the age of 86. [A.T.S.]

* * *

M. Camille Brandt, has been nominated President of the government of the canton of Neuchâtel, and M. Pierre-Auguste Leuba, Vice-President. [A.T.S.]

Economics

The World Bank is selling 17 million Swiss francs' worth of serial bonds maturing 1953-54 to the Bank for International Settlements. The latter is purchasing the bonds for investment.

These are the first World Bank bonds to be issued in other than dollar denominations. The bonds are dated April 1st, 1948, and will mature for 6½ million Swiss francs on April 1st, 1953, 6½ millions on October 1st, 1953, and 4 millions on April 1st, 1954, and are

redeemable at any time upon due notice, at par, plus one-half per cent premium.

The proceedse will be made available to Holland for the purposes of the \$195 millions loan granted last August. Holland needs Swiss francs to pay for electrical equipment purchased from Switzerland.

The original loan to Holland was altered to provide for repayment in Swiss francs in amounts and dates of corresponding maturities of the World Bank's Swiss franc bond issue.

* * *

The Swiss Parliament has just been invited by the Federal Council to ratify the Swiss-Soviet Commercial Treaty which was signed in Moscow on March 17th last, and which should have come into force on April 1st.

Implementation of the agreement, however, will encounter numerous technical difficulties.

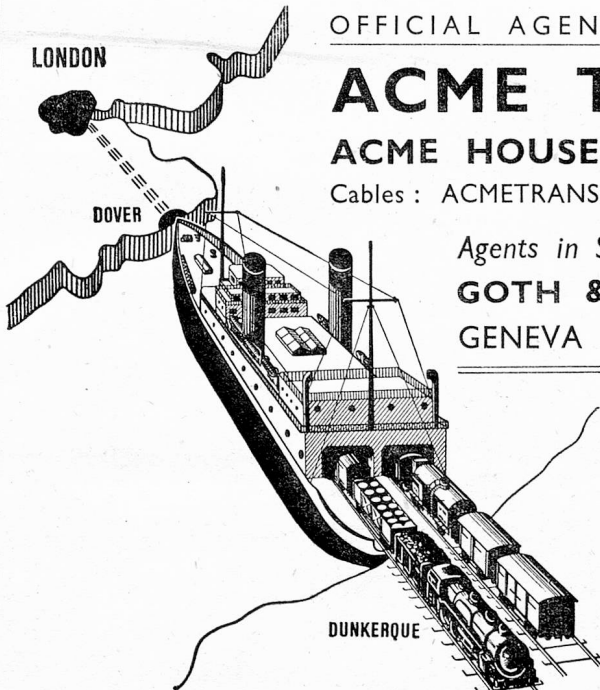
Switzerland could not previously open any credit to Russia since too many matters were still in abeyance since the 1941 agreement.

Moreover, Russian prices, especially of agricultural products, are higher than on the world market and the transportation costs are particularly high in Russia.

Therefore three possibilities are envisaged: First, that Russia in order to get Swiss francs should sell her goods at lower prices than on her internal market; second, that Russia should buy Swiss machines at over-estimated prices, thus reaching a balance; third, that Russia should sell gold to pay for her imports.

The last solution seems the most probable although no decision has been taken yet.

Under present circumstances, such a treaty must



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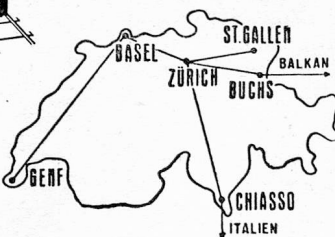
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be considered as a frame for all practical measures which both parties will have to agree upon with a view to "facilitating and intensifying the exchange of goods and services."

* * *

The Swiss wholesale index for April declined slightly to 234 from 234.5 for the series based on July, 1914 = 100, and to 218 from 218.4 for the series based on August 1939 = 100. The corresponding figures for April, 1947, were 212.8 and 198.

Humanitarian

The rural district council of Bienne (Ct. Berne) has made a donation of 10,000.—frs to the Fund for children in distress in Europe. [A.T.S.]

—oO—

The Lucerne International Music festival will be held from August 11th to August 29th. The programme will include eleven concerts conducted, among others, by Kubelick, Charles Münch, and Furtwangler. Among the soloists will be Isaac Stern, Casadesus, Arthur Schnabel, and Wilhelm Backhaus.

* * *

The first of three electric passenger and goods locomotives ordered by the Netherlands Railways from Swiss manufacturers was delivered recently in Holland and was placed in service on April 16th. The weight of the locomotive in working order is approximately 100 tons.

* * *

The Swiss Locomotive & Machine Works and the Oerlikon company have secured an order jointly from the French National Railways to build a prototype Co-Co electric locomotive for operation on a 50-cycle single-supply.

* * *

British and Dutch tourists can now travel all the way to Switzerland by boat. For the first time since the war, a Dutch firm has opened a twice-weekly service down the Rhine from Rotterdam to Basle.

* * *

A new Swiss-Dutch agreement which has just been signed will come into force on July 1st, 1948. The pact deals mainly with the adjustment of goods quotas fixed in December, 1946.

As far as Dutch imports were concerned, main goods were those essential for reconstruction such as machine tools and chemical dyestuffs, but the Dutch negotiators have asked for, and have obtained, an extension of the essential goods category to textiles.

On the other hand, the Netherlands has been anxious to balance its payments and so avoid loss of gold. Consequently Swiss imports are increased.

* * *

Paintings and drawings by the old Swiss master Fuseli, which have been drawn from most of the famous galleries and private collections in this country, are now being exhibited in Cork Street, off Old Bond Street.

Among them are five from the well-known Ford collection, three of which appeared in the exhibition which Mr. Brinsley Ford arranged at the Royal Albert Memorial, Exeter, in the early part of last year.

They are two pencil and water-colours, "The Toilet" and "Bust Portrait of a Lady," and a pencil wash, "The Fireplace."

Fuseli, who was born in Zurich in 1741, died in 1825, and was buried in St. Paul's.

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary: Mr. and Mrs. Albert Pfändler-Eschmann, in Degersheim; Mr. and Mrs. K. Ott-Sigrist, in Dielsdorf; Mr. and Mrs. V. Hansen-berger, in Krummenau. [A.T.S.]

Mr. and Mrs. Eugène Jacot-Dubois, in Les Buttes, have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65 years). [A.T.S.]

* * *

President Truman, accompanied by his wife and daughter have attended the Première of the Swiss film "Die Gezeichneten" at Washington.

The film introduced by the Praesens Company of Zurich received enthusiastic Press notices. [A.T.S.]

WAS DEN SCHWEIZER FREUT.

(Schweizerwoche Pressedienst.)

Als neue elegante Schöpfung der Schweizer Uhren-industrie kommt eine durchsichtige Armband — bzw. Taschenuhr auf den Markt. Für die Zeitabnahme bei den Olympischen Spielen 1948 in London fiel die Wahl der Experten auf schweizerische Chronographen.

Die portugiesische Eisenbahngesellschaft hat in der Schweiz 60 grosse Vierachser-Personenwagen in Auftrag gegeben. Die Wagen wurden früher in Frankreich, Belgien und Amerika gekauft. Unsere Industrie werde deshalb berücksichtigt, weil sie heute im Leichtstahlbau führend sei.

Die Ergebnisse der schweizerischen Beteiligung an der Internationalen Mailänder Messe waren sehr be-

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