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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Leopold Figl, arrived on the 1st of this month in the Federal capital, where he was received by the Federal Council *in corpore*.

He conveyed to the Swiss Government and to the Swiss people the thanks of the Austrian Republic for the great help given during and after the war.

On the occasion of a Banquet offered to Dr. Figl, a number of speeches were made in which the friendly relations between the two countries were mentioned.

The Austrian Chancellor said amongst other things:

“The political difficulties facing the Austrian people are created solely by the East.” He accused the Russians of blocking the Austrian Peace Treaty and requisitioning Austrian production without payment. He also mentioned Yugoslav demands for territory and reparations. These points he set against the economic help and political sympathy accorded Austria by the West.

“Austria is determined to resist any territorial concessions to Yugoslavia in Carinthia,” Dr. Figl said. “Austria did not declare war on Yugoslavia and that country has no right to demand reparations from her. By money and propaganda Yugoslavia has tried to create a Yugoslav movement in Austria, intended to organise the Slovenes, but the movement has gained only some thousands of members and 80 to 90 per cent. of the Slovenes are entirely on Austria’s side.

“A good deal of the production of Austrian factories is requisitioned by the Soviet authorities without payment. Some weeks ago the Austrian Government sent a Note to the Soviet Government asking for a clear point of view to be stated with regard to the peace treaty. We have had no answer. The Communist Party in Austria is at present without importance, without respect and without members. Its Press is violently anti-Government, but this we believe to be a sign of weakness.”

Before the departure of the “Bundeskanzler” a dinner was offered to the members of the Federal Coun-

cil at the Austrian Legation. Amongst the guests were: Federal-Chancellor Dr. Leimgruber, late Federal Councillor Wetter, Ministers Hotz, Zehnder, Feldscher, Ruegger, Dinichert and Stucki, Dr. Siegenthaler, President of the Bernese Government, and Dr. Baertschi, Mayor of the town of Berne.

* * *

The Federal Council has appointed M. Hans Nägeli to the post of Swiss Consul in Calcutta, he was born in 1907 at Thayngen (Ct. Schaffhausen) and has been since 1929 in India.

* * *

The centenary celebration of the Swiss Constitution of 1848 started on the 20th of June in Berne, with a procession. Dense crowds watched one of the finest spectacles ever witnessed in the Federal Capital. Unfortunately the weather somewhat spoilt the effect.

The official opening which was to have taken place at the “Wankdorffeld” had to be held at the “Festhalle” of the Federal Singing Competition, it was preceded by religious services in the various churches of the capital.

The principal service was held at the Minster and was attended by the Federal Council *in corpore*, former Federal-Councillors, members of the two Federal Chambers, Federal Tribunal, high Army Officers, amongst them General Guisan, Swiss and Foreign diplomats, high church dignitaries, rectors of all the Universities, etc., etc.

During the service speeches were made by Monsieur Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation, M. Picot, President of the National Council, M. Iten, President of the States Council, and M. Bärtschi, Mayor of the town of Berne.

This service was followed by an official Banquet at the Kasino.

A large number of congratulatory messages were received by various Foreign governments.

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The Swiss wholesale price index for May was lowered slightly to 233.4 in the series based on prices in July, 1914=100 from 234 in April and the May index for the series August, 1939=100 was lowered to 217.5 from 218 in April.

* * *

Passport visas have been abolished between Italy and Switzerland from July 15th under an "emigration agreement" between the two countries. The agreement also provides for the abolition of visas for Italian emigrants in transit through Switzerland for Belgium, pledges the two countries to conclude within six months a convention by which Italian emigrants will continue to enjoy various forms of social insurance while in Switzerland, and regulates minor movements of local populations across the frontier.

* * *

During May, Britain exceeded her previous month's high exports to Switzerland by Frs.400,000 to Frs.38.5 millions.

As a result of a decline in deliveries from other countries, notably Belgium and Luxembourg, Britain advanced to third place among Switzerland's suppliers, preceded by Argentina and the United States.

Switzerland's exports to the U.K. during the month rose by Frs.2.6 millions to Frs.10.4 millions.

For the first five months of 1948, Switzerland had an adverse foreign trade balance of Frs.1,000 millions, against Frs.550 millions during the same period in 1947.

* * *

An official statement announces the end of food rationing in Switzerland as from July 3rd. The food situation, it is stated, is so satisfactory that it is possible to free the last rationed products — namely: rice, flour, and certain qualities of oils and fats.

Cantonal

The accounts for 1947 of the canton of Nidwalden close with a credit-balance of 121,873.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The philosophical faculty of the University of Zurich has honoured Arthur Honegger, the well-known composer with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The late Dr. Hermann Stoll of Zurich has left 25,000.—frs. to the "Schweiz. Anstalt für Epileptische" in Zurich, and 20,000.—frs. to the "Schweiz. Zentralverein für das Blindenwesen" in St. Gall. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. Friedrich Weber, the well-known geologist, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Dr. Weber was for many years in the service of foreign petroleum concerns. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Once again a tribunal, this time in Zurich, has passed a ridiculous sentence on a motorist, who being drunk ran into a cyclist, an old man of seventy, killing him outright. He was sentenced to four months imprisonment on probation, and a fine of 500.—frs. (!)

[A.T.S.]

The "Krankenasyll" Adliswil (Ct. Zurich) has received a donation amounting to 25,000.—frs. from an anonymous donor. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Landesmuseum" in Zurich has celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Foundation. Federal-Councillor Dr. Ph. Etter attended the celebration as representative of the Swiss Government. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The literature prize of the town of Zurich for 1948, consisting of 5,000.—frs. has been awarded to the writer Traugott Vogel of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Two people were killed and two badly injured, when a motor-car trying to overtake another car at a high speed skidded and collided with a tree.

The names of the dead are Mrs. Pauline Schwarzenbach, Bäretswil (born 1884) and Mrs. Pauline Stierli, Winterthur (born 1885). [A.T.S.]

* * *

The "Auslandschweizertagung" took place at Interlaken on the 25th, 26th and 27th of June. The Meeting was addressed by Federal Councillor M. M. Petitpierre. (His speech will be found on another page of this issue). [A.T.S.]

* * *

Pastor Hans Hürzeler in Bienne (Ct. Berne) who is well-known for his humanitarian work in connection with the Swiss Red Cross and the Asylum "Gottesgnad," has celebrated his 85th birthday anniversary.

[A.T.S.]

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, 1st August, 1948
2.30 to 5.30 p.m. (Doors open 1.45 p.m.)

AT THE

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Swiss Orchestral Society
Swiss Male Choir Corale Unione Ticinese
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All Swiss and their families are cordially invited. Admission by ticket only, to be obtained in advance, free of charge. Applications for tickets must be made in writing to The First of August Committee, Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1. A stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed, and the name of each person for whom a ticket is required must be stated.

TICKET HOLDERS TO BE IN THEIR SEATS BY 2.15 p.m.

Refreshments will be available.

M. de Meuron, the celebrated Swiss Painter, who enjoys an international reputation, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Neuchâtel [A.T.S.]

* * *

A cashier of a Banking concern in Geneva has been arrested for embezzling an amount of over 300,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A delegation consisting of 400 people from the city of Lyon (France) has arrived in Geneva to express the thanks of its citizens to the Swiss people and the Red Cross for the help they rendered during the last war. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mr. Paul Ruegger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross returned to Geneva on 30th from Washington, where he was received by Mr. Truman and laid before him, as also before the Department of State and the American Red Cross Society, various questions relative to the present and future activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Mr. Ruegger particularly stressed the importance of the revision of the Geneva Conventions, and the preparation of new draft Conventions by the International Committee.

Mr. Ruegger observed once again, with satisfaction the very great interest shown by the highest Authorities of the United States in the humanitarian work of the International Red Cross.

Traffic

Passenger services on the 27.9-mile standard-gauge steam-operated line between Glovelier and Saignelégier in North-West Switzerland, have been discontinued as from May 9th, and replaced by a bus service. The road distance between the places named is 12.6 miles.

The line belongs to the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer du Jura, which is responsible also for the road services. Livestock and goods, however, will continue to be conveyed by rail between the ten stations on the line. This has a very unfavourable alignment, with severe gradients and sharp curves.

Trains have to be reversed at Combe Tabeillon Station, 6.2 miles south of Glovelier, where there is a connection with the Federal Railways Bienne—Delémont—Delle (French frontier) line. Saignelégier is also the terminus of the metre-gauge steam-worked line from La Chaux-de-Fonds, owned and operated by the same company.

There has been widespread discontent with the cancellation of the passenger services, and some 300 representatives of the communities concerned have formed "action committees" to bring pressure to bear on the railway company for a resumption of passenger traffic.

* * *

The Swiss Federal Railways carried in the month of May altogether 18.1 million passengers, or 113,163 more than in May 1947. The receipts for the passenger service show an increase of 1.04 million francs to 23.8 million francs.

Goods traffic (carried 1.61 million tons) increased by 92,296 tons for which the receipts are 29.27 million francs or 1.75 million more than in May 1947.

Economics

Swiss owners of Hungarian nationalised shares are invited to notify them to the Hungarian Legation up to July 31st.

The Hungarian authorities quite recently put into force a new system of nationalisation which entails the taking over of both assets and liabilities of nationalised undertakings, and under which the Government will only redeem the shares of Hungarian nationals resident in Hungary.

Thus, there is, in principle, no nationalisation as far as foreign owners are concerned and therefore no indemnification.

The question arises, then, what will be their position and rights in the new management. There are instances in particular where foreign shareholders are in the majority — some Swiss Trusts being a case in point.

—oo—

Britain, with the maximum number of six pilots, heads the list of nine nations and 36 competitors in the Olympic gliding contests taking place at St. Moritz from July 19th to 31st.

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60 years): Mr. and Mrs. G. Brander-Schlup, Basle; Mr. and Mrs. Jakob Setz Roth in Gallenkirche (Brugg); Mr. and Mrs. A. Zweifel-Dolder, Uetikon.

* * *

The Swiss Federal Aircraft Factory at Emmen, Lucerne, has built an experimental all-wing glider

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which has made several successful flights. It is hoped later to build a larger-powered version.

* * *

The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning has just completed its Nineteenth Congress in Zurich. Delegates attended from practically all European countries and from America, Mexico, South Africa and Australia.

* * *

The Swiss Federal penal court has sentenced to twelve years imprisonment and five years suppression of civil rights Max Leo Keller, one of the leaders of the Swiss Nazis.

* * *

A Swiss firm, Le Société d'Inventions Aeronautiques et Mecaniques, will share with Madame Yvonne Lucie Levy the sum of £120,000 — the highest award made so far by the Royal Commission on awards to inventors.

The award was made in connection with eight patents held by the firm, one of which is partly owned by Madame Levy, which gave rise to the Messier hydraulic undercarriage used on Halifax bombers during the war.

* * *

In 1945 the Lausanne Council adopted a plan to increase the output of the hydro-electric plant of the Bois Noir, near St. Maurice on the Rhône, from 72 million to 326 million kWh. per annum with a rise in winter production from 35 million to 98 million kWh. A barrage has been constructed downstream above the Rhône rapids.



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Placed outside a sharp bend in the river, the water intake to the turbines (at the rate of 200 cu. m. per second) has two openings 4 metres high and 30 metres wide. The metal-cased concrete underground conduit, 7.75 m. in diameter, has a total length of 3,860m. The three 214-r.p.m. vertical-axis Kaplan turbines, each using 66 cu. m. of water per sec., are rated at 24,000 kW. A horizontal-axis turbine drives a 1,200-kW. auxiliary generator.

The plant is operated from a control room outside the turbine house, and the voltage of generation is stepped up to that of the h.v. transmission system at an outdoor substation. The transformers are without regulating devices, control being at the alternators. The station is expected to be completed towards the end of 1949.

* * *

The two rubber-tyred coaches ordered recently by the Swiss Federal Railways are to weigh not more than 22 tonnes each inclusive of 80 passengers, the tare weight thus not exceeding 16 tonnes. As compared with the lightweight steel coaches of 28 tonnes tare adopted for the inter-city fast trains, this means a saving of 12 tons, or 43 per cent.

The second class coach will have seating accommodation for 46 passengers and will be built of aluminium alloy, while the third class coach will seat 76 passengers and will be built of mild steel. The weight of these two experimental coaches has to be kept within comparatively narrow limits because progress so far made in the technique of rubber-tyred railway vehicles does not permit of loading a rubber tyre with a weight exceeding 2,420 lb. (1,100 kg.). This is the reason for the two 10-wheel bogies on each vehicle. Due to the high adhesion between rubber tyres and steel rails, the braking distance of a rubber-tyred vehicle is extremely short. In the case of a Micheline railcar running at 62m. (100 km.) p.h., it is only 492 ft. (150m.). If the experiments with these test vehicles are satisfactory, it is intended to order a large number to form complete rubber-tyred trains to be hauled by the high-speed "Re4/4" class electric locomotives of the Swiss Federal Railways.

* * *

The International Fur Fair of Basle, launched with the intention of replacing Leipzig as European fur centre, is to be liquidated. Two successful exhibitions were held in spring, 1947 and 1948, there being at the latter 58 exhibitors from Britain out of a total of 350 from 26 countries.

* * *

Christian Kautz, Swiss international racing motorist, was killed and a French racing driver, Maurice Trintignat, was seriously injured after crashes in the Grand Prix of Europe and an international small-car race held in Berne. Three other drivers were hurt. There were two fatal crashes during practice for the Grand Prix event, which was won by the Alfa-Romeo team.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

(*"Semaine Suisse"*) Service de Presse.

La revue londonienne "Star" estime que l'armée suisse est la plus forte et la mieux équipée de l'Europe occidentale.

* * *

Une exposition d'affiches suisses a été ouverte à Dublin (Irlande). Le ministre de l'éducation a loué

le haut niveau artistique de ces travaux. La presse irlandaise a donné une critique excellente de cette exposition.

* * *

Le plus important des journaux de Dublin consacre un article à la constitution helvétique et conclut par ces mots : " Nous nous demandons toujours ce qu'il faut admirer le plus dans cette constitution : sa sagesse ou son caractère éminemment national.

* * *

Le peintre Rivier a été élu membre correspondant de l'Institut de France.

* * *

Le premier appareil indien de ligne qui a atterri à Genève apportait au président de la Confédération des messages d'amitié du Premier ministre indien.

* * *

Le professeur Dr. Ros de Zurich a été nommé docteur honoraire de l'école supérieure de technique de Vienne. La société des ingénieurs et architectes autrichiens lui a décerné la médaille d'or.

* * *

En présence du prince héritier de Suède et de 500 invités s'est ouvert à Stockholm une grande exposition d'architecture suisse. La presse estime notre architecture pleine de qualités et très au courant des progrès réalisés dans ce domaine. Le professeur Nils Ahrbom écrit dans le catalogue de l'exposition : " L'art de la construction est arrivé en Suisse à un niveau que la Suède n'atteint qu'exceptionnellement." Le prince héritier s'est expliqué en détail divers travaux suisses.

* * *

La presse irlandaise écrit à propos de l'exposition d'affiches suisses à Dublin que notre production égale celle des Etats Unis au point de vue de la technique de la couleur mais qu'elle la dépasse quant au goût.

* * *

La dernière création de l'industrie suisse est la montre-bracelet réveille-matin. Depuis 50 ans, les spécialistes cherchaient à résoudre ce problème technique.

* * *

La Morris Motors Ltd. anglaise va construire des camions sur licence Saurer. Lord Nuffield, président du conseil d'administration, a déclaré que ces véhicules Diesel vont surclasser tous les autres véhicules de leur catégorie .

* * *

Des ingénieurs forestiers de tout l'Empire britannique, accompagnés d'étudiants, vont faire une tournée de 14 jours en Suisse pour visiter des exploitations forestières, des écoles et des ateliers.

* * *

En 1947, 200 invalides de guerre anglais sont venus passer 5 semaines de convalescence en Suisse. En 1948, ils seront 240. Il s'agit de les arracher à la monotonie de la vie d'hôpital et de leur redonner goût à l'existence.

* * *

Un important journal de Belgique défend énergiquement le point de vue de la Suisse dans la question de la liquidation des biens allemands. Il écrit que la Suisse ne se laisse guider, dans cette affaire, que par des considérations juridiques.

* * *

Le Journal danois " Information," dans un éditorial consacré aux fêtes du Centenaire de la constitution, écrit que la Suisse forme une nation, un pays

et un peuple bien que ce peuple parle 4 langues et professe diverses religions et bien que les cantons et les communes jouissent d'une certaine autonomie. Les Suisses n'ont pas besoin de chercher à l'étranger la signification des mots " démocratie " et " liberté."

* * *

Une nouvelle liaison aérienne Rome-Genève vient d'être inaugurée.

* * *

A Zurich vient de s'ouvrir un congrès international d'urbanisme et de construction des habitations. Le congrès de l'Union internationale d'astronomie se tiendra cette année aussi à Zurich, au mois d'août.

* * *

En été 1949 débiteront les travaux de construction du plus grand barrage de Suisse, celui de la Greina, qui permettra la livraison de 950 millions de Kwh. Le lac de la Greina contiendra 106 millions de mètres cubes d'eau.

* * *

Le Dr. William Rappard, titulaire de la chaire d'économie nationale à l'Université de Genève, a été élevé à la dignité de docteur en droit honoris causa de l'Université de Californie.

* * *

On a fêté, à Paris, le cinquantenaire de l'hôtel " Ritz." César Ritz, petit berger du Haut-Valais, a réussi, grâce à son énergie et à son travail, à devenir " le roi des hôteliers et l'hôtelier des rois." Qui dit " Hôtel Ritz," dit " élégance discrète et meilleure tradition hôtelière suisse."

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