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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Two Federal Chambers (National Council and States Council) at their combined sitting, elected, on the 16th of December, 1948, Mr. Ernest Nobs, as President of the Swiss Confederation.

Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre, has been elected Vice-President.

The new President was born on the 14th of July, 1886, in Seedorf (Ct. Berne) and is a native of Seedorf, Grindelwald and Zurich. After having passed through the teachers seminary in Berne, he obtained a post as teacher in Wynau and Ostermundigen (1906-1912).

From 1912, onwards he occupied various posts as Editor of Socialist papers, first in Lucerne and afterwards at St. Gall. Three years later (1915) he obtained a post on the editorial staff of the "Volksrecht" Zurich, of which paper he became editor-in-chief in 1922.

Mr. Nobs was from 1935-1942 a member of the government of the canton of Zurich, and afterwards was elected Mayor of the town of Zurich. He entered Parliament (National Council) in 1919.

On December 15th, 1943, he was elected a member of the Federal Government in succession to Federal-Councillor Wetter. He was the first Socialist to be a member of the Swiss Government and our country's first Socialist President.

Federal-Councillor Max Petitpierre, was born at Neuchâtel on the 26th of February, 1899. He studied law at the Universities of Neuchâtel, Zurich and Munich, obtaining his degree of doctor of law in 1924.

From 1926-1931, and again from 1938-1944, he was Professor of International law at the University of Neuchâtel. He entered the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel in 1937 as a Liberal, and five years later was elected a member of the States Council (Ständerat).

In 1942, began a meteoric career, he was elected a member of the Swiss Federal Government in 1944, in succession to Federal-Councillor Pilet-Golaz. Since

then he has been in charge of the Political Department (Foreign Office).

Dr. Eugen Blocher (Basle) has been elected President of the Federal Supreme Court (Bundesgericht).

Dr. Jakob Halblützel (Zurich) has been elected Vice-President.

Joseph Escher (cath. cons. Valais) has been elected President of the National Council.

The new "speaker" of the National Council was born on September 17th, 1885, at Simplon-Dorf (Ct. Valais). He studied law at the Universities of Berne and Berlin after which he established himself as an advocate and notary in Brigue.

From 1920-1928, Escher was President of the community of Brigue-Glis. In 1915, he entered the Grand Council of the canton of Valais over which he presided in 1923. Nine years later (1932) he became a member of the cantonal government. Escher was elected a member of Parliament (National-Council) where he sat from 1925-1932, and again in 1936. He is at present President of the catholic-conservative people's party of Switzerland.

Jaques Schmid (Socialist) was elected Vice-President of the National Council.

He was born on the 2nd of April 1882, in Altstetten, (Ct. Zurich) and is a native of Urdorf (Zurich). He studied in Paris and for twelve years was a compositor in Germany and France.

Schmid then became for twenty years an Editor of various Socialist papers, amongst them the "Volks-

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recht" Zurich, and the "Volk" Olten. He entered the "Kantonsrat" of Solothurn in 1912, and has been since 1931 a member of the government of the canton Solothurn. Since 1917, he has been a member of Parliament (National-Council).

* * *

Gustav Wenk (Socialist, Basle) has been elected President of the States-Council (Ständerat).

He was born on the 31st of March, 1884, in Basle-Augst. By profession he was a school teacher. In 1925, Wenk entered the government of the canton of Basle as a Socialist which post he occupies to-day. He entered Parliament (States-Council) in 1935.

* * *

Dr. Paul Haefelin (Radical, Solothurn) was elected Vice-President of the States-Council (Ständerat). He studied jurisprudence at the Universities of Lausanne, Berne, Munich and Leipzig.

From 1916-1918, he was President of the Tribunal Solothurn-Lebern. For three years (1918-1921) he occupied the post of secretary of the watch industry of the canton of Solothurn, and from 1921-1923 he was secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of the canton of Solothurn. He was elected a member of the "Kantonsrat" in 1925 and since 1933 he has been "Stadtammann" of Solothurn.

He entered Parliament (States-Council) in 1939. In the army, he reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel (Infantry).

* * *

Professor, Dr. Hans Pallmann has been nominated, President of the Swiss School Council (Schweiz. Schulrat). He was born in 1903 in Frauenfeld (Ct. Thurgau) and is at present Rector and Professor at the Federal Technical University in Zurich.

* * *

Monsieur Kosta Bogilov Svetlov, the newly accredited Bulgarian Minister to the Swiss Confederation, has presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation in Berne.

* * *

The customs receipts for the month of November, 1948, amounted to 29.5 million francs (November, 1947: 40.4 million francs). The receipts for the first nine months of the year amount to 374.9 million francs or 8.3 million francs more than in the same period of the previous year.

* * *

Monsieur Tulio Franco, the newly appointed Minister of the Dominican Republic to the Swiss Confederation, has presented his credentials to the President of the Confederation in Berne.

* * *

Dr. J. Baltensperger, Director of the "Eidg. Vermessungsamt" in Berne, has retired from his post on reaching the age limit. Dr. Baltensperger has been in the Civil Service since 1912. In 1937, he received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* from the University of Lausanne.

* * *

M. André Boissier, has been appointed chief of the Protocol in succession to M. J. A. Cuttat, Counsellor of Legation. M. Boissier, who hails from Coligny (Geneva), was born in Paris in 1904. He studied law at the Universities of Cambridge, Geneva and Paris, and from 1942-1947, was Secretary at the Swiss Legation in Washington.

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Cantonal

Dr. Robert Billwiller, formerly Director of the "Meteorologischen Zentral Anstalt" in Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. He retired from this institution in 1944, on reaching the age limit, after 41 years in its service. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Dr. F. Calonder, a former Federal-Councillor, has recently celebrated his 85th birthday anniversary in Zurich.

Dr. Calonder, is a citizen of Trins (Ct. Grisons). He was a member of the Federal Government from 1913-1920, and President of the Swiss Confederation in 1918. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The late Bruno Schuler, son of the textile industrialist Caspar Schuler-Suter in Wetzikon (Ct. Zurich), has left an amount of 500,000.—frs. for the support of needy musicians, a further amount of 50,000.—frs. for the "Gemeindestube" Wetzikon and the remainder of his fortune of more than half a million francs to the District Hospital Wetzikon. [A.T.S.]

* * *

For having wilfully broken two windows at the Federal Palais in Berne, National-Councillor Gottlieb Duttweiler was fined an amount of 400.—frs. The actual damage caused amounted to 182.90.—frs. which has already been paid. [A.T.S.]

* * *

At long last our authorities at home, who in the past have treated motor accidents caused through negligence and under influence of alcohol with almost criminal leniency, are waking up.

9. 1949, 1695.

The "Polizei-Direktion" of Zurich has announced, that in future the names and addresses of all motorists whose license has been cancelled or endorsed will be published in the "Amtsblatt." Heavier fines, and in serious cases imprisonment are to be considered.

We hope that other municipal and cantonal authorities will follow suit. Motor accidents caused through negligence and under influence of drink have of late alarmingly increased.

During the month of November, altogether 528 traffic accidents occurred in the canton of Zurich. 209 persons were injured and ten persons lost their lives. [A.T.S.]

Caspar Elmer, merchant, who recently died in Schwanden (Ct. Glarus), has left 75,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

Samuel Roulet, National Councillor (Peasant Party), has celebrated his 70th birthday party in Missy, near Payerne. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Hans Fischer, rector of the "Gymnasium" in Bienne (Ct. Berne), has, after 35 years as a teacher, retired from his post.

He is succeeded by Dr. Ernst Stahel, since 1942, teacher of mathematics at this institution and honorary Professor of the University of Brussels. [A.T.S.]

Dr. H. Greinacher, Professor of experimental physics in the faculty of sciences of the University of Berne, has been awarded the Theodor Kocher Prize by the University in recognition of his skill in experimental work. [A.T.S.]

Madame Veuve Marie Anna Späti, the oldest inhabitant of Switzerland, has celebrated her 105th birthday anniversary at Gerlafingen (Ct. Solothurn). [A.T.S.]

Jaques Schmid, a member of the government of the canton of Solothurn, has been elected "Landammann." Otto Stampfli has been appointed "Vice-Landammann." [A.T.S.]

Director Ernst Müller, a member of the Board of the "Georg Fischer, A.G." in Schaffhausen, has celebrated his 40th service jubilee. [A.T.S.]

The oldest inhabitant of the town of Herisau, (Ct. Appenzell a-Rh.), Ulrich Schoch, has celebrated his 97th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The late Mr. Emil Schläpfer-Altherr, in Speicher, has left an amount of 91,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions in the canton Appenzell A.Rhoden. [A.T.S.]

The Kurhaus Gaisswiesen, near Flums (Ct. St. Gall), was completely destroyed by fire. [A.T.S.]

The District Hospital Oberengadin in Samaden (Ct. Grisons), has received a legacy amounting to 50,000.—frs. from the late Mrs. F. Töndury-Lanz, of Schanf. [A.T.S.]

A fire which broke out at the "Waggonfabrik Schindler, A.G., in Pratteln (Ct. Aargau), caused damage amounting to over one million francs. [A.T.S.]

The well-known art collector, Baron Eduard von der Heydt, honorary citizen of Ascona (Ct. Ticino) has given his famous and valuable collection of asiatic art treasures to the town of Zurich.

The collection will be housed at the Villa Wesendonck in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Alphone Sidler, President of the Tribunal of Siders (Ct. Valais), has retired from his post which he had held for the last 44 years. [A.T.S.]

Colonel Max Fertig, former commander of the artillery-brigade 1, and a well-known alpinist, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Orbe. [A.T.S.]

On the 9th of December, 1948, it was a hundred years, since the birth of Dr. Frédéric Ferrière, of Geneva. He was Vice-President of the International Red Cross Committee, President of the Society for Hygiene of Geneva and founder of the section for relief of the civil population, which was opened in 1914 by the Red Cross. [A.T.S.]

Army From an announcement made in the Swiss Parliament it follows that the Swiss Federal Council are shortly to submit a Bill recommending the purchase of a further 100 British Vampire planes.

A year ago the Swiss Parliament approved the purchase of 75 Vampires — a deal which required Swiss Frs.52,500,000.

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Traffic

The ten-year programme of development is without doubt the largest which the Swiss Federal Railways have ever announced. The major part of the programme, of which the total annual cost will be frs.190,000,000, or about £11,000,000, is devoted to way and works, particularly improvements and extensions to important stations and their approaches and doubling single-line sections which at present form a bottleneck in international and cross-country routes. The financing of so huge a project is a special problem, and it is proposed to solve it by new legislation. The part of the programme — some frs.43,000,000 — which cannot be financed out of the Federal Railways account and depreciation reserves, will be paid for by the Confederation, and cantons and municipalities concerned. Presumably the new Railway Act now being framed will contain clauses compelling local authorities to contribute towards the cost of railway improvements in their area; until now their contribution has been voluntary. Certainly, in a land where town councils spend so much in improving amenities for visitors, they should not begrudge a share of the cost of railway improvements which are likely to benefit their tourist traffic. Again, industrial centres should bear a due proportion of expenditure on alterations to tracks and yards which will provide them with better freight train services.

—oO—

At the Swiss radio station of Sottens, a new transmitting tower has been installed. It is the most modern in Europe, and reaches a height of 600ft.

Danish exports to Switzerland under a new trade agreement include 21,500 cattle, 1,200 tons of pig meat, abattoir products and sausage meat.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:—

Alfred Rubattel, a member of the Board of the "Verbandes Schweiz. Raiffeisen Kassen" and a former President of the community of Villarzel. (The deceased was a brother of Federal Councillor Rubattel.)

Dr. Jules Guex, Professor of Literature at the University of Lausanne, aged 77.

Oscar Schuster-Schmidheini, head of the carpet manufacturing firm, Schuster & Co., St. Gall and Zurich. He was one of the founders of the "Wildpark" Peter and Paul in St. Gall. He reached the age of 77.

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Marcel von der Weid, former member of the government of the canton of Fribourg, aged 83.

Colonel Karl Wuhrmann, chief of the Department of Aviation, at the age of 53.

Karl Kost, proprietor of the well-known firm Kost (Sports equipments) in Basle, at the age of 63. Kost was, in his younger years, one of the pioneers of Ski and Tennis sports.

August Gattiker-Sautter, from 1934-1943 a member of the National Council and partner in the Textiles firm Gattiker & Steinmann, in Richterswil, at the age of 76.

Victor de Graffenried, advocate, and a former "Platzkommandant" of the town of Berne, at the age of 71.

Franz Raeber, Publisher of the "Vaterland" in Lucerne, at the age of 60. The deceased reached the rank of Colonel of Artillery in the army.

Colonel of division Otto Hilfiker in Thun, at the age of 76. The deceased was from 1898-1942 a member of the Federal Instruction Corps. He retired in 1942.

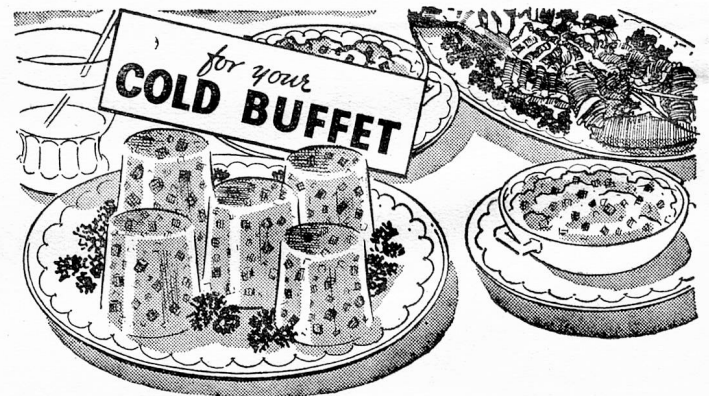
Gustave Moor, Founder of the firm G. Moor, A.G., in Basle, at the age of 43.

Julien Tissot, a former mayor of the town of Le Locle, at the age of 76.

Marie Steiner-von Sievers, widow of Dr. Rudolf Steiner of Goetheanum fame, at the age of 82.

Henri-Ernest Allemant, manufacturer and former President of the community of Leubringen and Chairman of the Biel-Leubringen railway, at the age of 86.

[A.T.S.]



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The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary: Mr. and Mrs. Johann and Emilie Bosshardt-Bär, Zurich; Mr. and Mrs. de Chambrier, Chateau de Cormondréche. [A.T.S.]

Beer consumption* in Switzerland has fallen 19 per cent. since before the war and 33 per cent. as against the 1929-32 average, the Brewers Association reports. [A.T.S.]

SWISSAIR OPENS A NEW SERVICE TO ENGLAND.

With a view to extending the air traffic between England and Switzerland, and in order to enable the inhabitants of the Midlands and northern England to fly rapidly to Switzerland, Swissair had decided to establish a direct connection, operated twice weekly, between Zurich and Manchester.

This service will also facilitate relations between English businessmen in the Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool districts, and their colleagues in Switzerland.

The inauguration of the line took place on Saturday, 11th December, 1948. The Swissair plane arrived in Manchester at noon carrying several specially invited persons, including Mr. Luechinger, President of Zurich Council. Miss Kingsmill Jones, Lord Mayor of Manchester, has welcomed Mr. Luechinger personally when he descended from the plane, and a reception was held at the airport to mark the occasion.

The return flight was made on Sunday, 12th December; among the passengers on board were four

British journalists, who assisted at a session of the Federal Chambers in Berne.

PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.
 ("Semaine Suisse") Service de Presse.

Un récent guide de voyage américain pour l'Europe (Fielding, New-York 1948) est tout à fait élogieux pour les chemins de fer suisses "qui circulent avec la précision d'un chronomètre." En ce qui concerne la cuisine: "on peut manger de tout et partout." La fondue et le schabzieger sont spécialement vantés. "Quant à la Suisse," écrit Fielding, "c'est la collection la plus représentative des divers modes de vie qu'on peut trouver à la surface du globe" et il conclut: "si l'on donnait à nos savants 50 millions de dollars et autant de bombes atomiques qu'ils désireraient, en leur demandant de bâtir n'importe où un paradis touristique, ils s'exclameraient, en montrant la Suisse: Et pourquoi donc? vous l'avez déjà!"

Sur l'initiative de notre Légation vient de s'ouvrir à Paris un Foyer de la presse et du livre suisses, où l'on peut trouver tous les journaux et revues de chez nous ainsi que les livres les plus marquants ayant paru en Suisse. L'inauguration a eu lieu en présence de notre ministre C.-J. Burckardt, de membres de l'Académie française et du corps diplomatique, de hauts fonctionnaires de la République et de représentants de la presse et des maisons d'édition suisses.

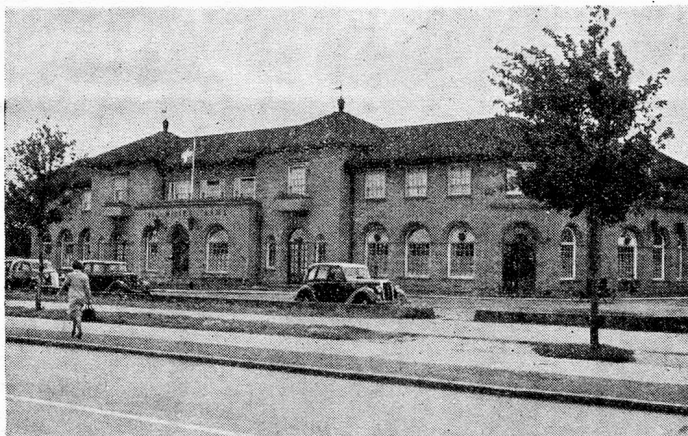
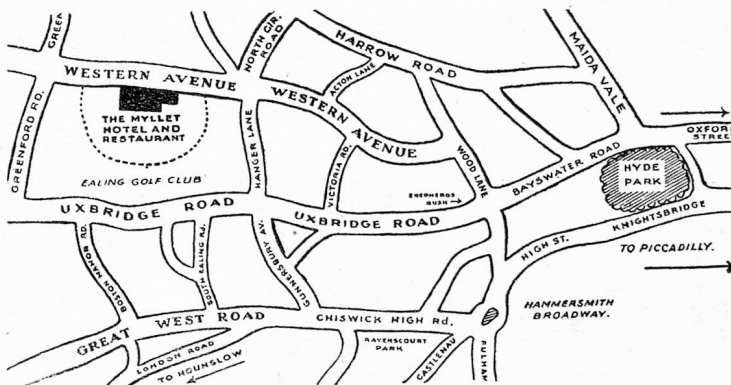
Le professeur Leo Weber, directeur de l'école normale soleuroise, a parlé de "l'éducation chez l'individu," qu'il a opposée à l'éducation de la masse.

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* * *

Les Suisses en Hollande : le Dr. Paul Zumthor, de Genève, vient d'être appelé à la chaire de littérature et de langues romanes de l'Université de Groningen; le professeur bâlois A. Portmann a donné à Utrecht une conférence sur des problèmes biologiques; l'oratorio "In Terra Pax" du compositeur genevois Frank Martin fixé à Amsterdam a été joué pour la première fois en Hollande par le Concertgebouw-Orchester.

* * *

C'est un Suisse âgé de 35 ans, Ernest Meyer, qui a été nommé chef de la mission que le fonds de secours international pour les enfants, de l'ONU, envoie en Allemagne.

* * *

"Pro Juventute" a distribué 420,000 kg. de fruits frais, don de nos paysans aux enfants montagnards.

* * *

Une fabrique horlogère suisse a remporté un nouveau record de précision pour montre bracelet à l'observatoire de Kew-Teddington (Angleterre). Sur un maximum possible de 100 points, ce chronomètre en a obtenu 93,8. La variation journalière n'a été que de 0.13 seconde.

* * *

Le "Don suisse" qui vient de cesser son activité a réparti 200 millions de francs suisses à 18 pays. Un solde de 5 millions a été remis à "L'aide à l'Europe" et à d'autres œuvres de secours.

SCHWEIZERBUND (Swiss Club)

President: Mr. E. Siegrist.

74, CHARLOTTE STREET, W.1.

First **GENERAL MEETING A.R.** (after rebirth)

Saturday, January 22nd, 1949, 4 p.m. sharp.

Agenda: Balance sheet for July-December, 1948.

Election of the Swiss Minister,
Monsieur Henry de Torrenté,
as Honorary President.

Election of new Committee.

It has also been decided, at the "lively" Special meeting of January 8th, attended by 67 members, to amend Rule 9 (1) to the effect that the Committee shall consist of Swiss or of Swiss descent only.

Suitable Swiss members for the committee have been proposed at the above Special meeting and in view of other important items on the agenda, it is the duty of every Swiss member to attend and give our Minister a hearty welcome.

Dances every Saturday and Sunday from 8-11 p.m. in the renovated Ballroom.

Une exposition "Les peintres suisses d'aujourd'hui" s'est ouverte à Hambourg; accueillie avec une extrême faveur par la presse elle suscite un intérêt considérable auprès du public.

"HERAN, DU EHRENWERTE SCHAR VOM ALTEN SCHWEIZERSTAMM."

Hail noble Swiss, ye gallant breed,
Ye ancient, honoured host,
Our hearts beat high with awe and pride,
Up-surgin' like the stormy tide
Against a rock-bound coast.

United stand we here to praise
God's spirit and His love,
For He who fathoms all our hearts
Will guide us, when the day departs,
To His bright stars above.

Whilst yet the fields are blessed with green
And while the mountains last,
Our liberty shall not decay,
Warmed by its sunny tender ray
Your sons will hold it fast.

So let us guard this gift anew,
A precious, treasured hoard,
Then gather, as the fresh young seed
Of ancient stock, with Winkelried
Around the festive board.

Translated by J.J.F.S.

CONFRERIE VAUDOISE

Nous avons le plaisir d'inviter tous les Vaudois et Vaudoises ainsi que tous les amis du Pays de Vaud à se joindre à nous pour célébrer l'Indépendance vaudoise par un

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Nous serons honorés à cette occasion de la présence de

Monsieur le Ministre et Madame Henry de Torrenté.

Les Isolés, les Jeunes surtout, rencontreront nombre d'amis!

Pour renseignements ou billets, prière de s'adresser auprès de MM. A. Renou, Président, 14, St. George Street, Hanover Square, W.1 (Max. 5977); E. A. Grau, Trésorier, Stone House, Bishopsgate, E.C.2 (Bis. 5911).