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The Swiss Observer

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The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Jean-Frédéric Wagnière to the post of Swiss Minister to Yugoslavia, in succession to M. Robert Kohli.

Minister Wagnière was born in Berne in 1899, and is a citizen of Fey, Rueyres (Vaud) and Coligny (Geneva). On obtaining his degree as a lawyer, he was appointed Secretary of the International Commission for the Port of Danzig, and afterwards occupied a post in a Banking concern at Geneva.

He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1934, and eight years later (1942) was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. From 1945-1948, he was Chargé d'Affaires in Denmark, and until recently occupied the post of an Observer at the United Nations in New York.

The Belgian Government has raised their Berne Legation to the rank of Embassy. Minister Vicomte de Lantsheere has presented his credentials as Ambassador to the President of the Swiss Confederation.

The Federal Council has decided to create a new Legation in Afghanistan. The Swiss Minister to Persia, Monsieur Escher has been accredited to Kabul, retaining his post in Persia.

The two Federal Chambers have elected Dr. René Perrin, a member of the Federal Supreme Court, in succession to Dr. Logoz who has recently resigned.

The new Federal judge was born in 1910, and studied law at the University of Neuchâtel; after having practised for some time as a lawyer, he was, during the last war with BIGA (Bundesamt für Industrie, Gewerbe und Arbeit). Since 1946, Dr. Perrin occupied the post of Secretary at the Federal Supreme Court.

The Federal Council has appointed Mr. Hans Peter Keller to the post of Director of the Federal Wheat Administration, in succession to Mr. Werner Laesser, who has vacated the post on reaching retiring age.

Mr. Otto Wichser, at present one of the chief engineers of the Swiss Federal Railways, has been appointed General Manager.

He was born in 1910 in Herisau, and is a citizen of Linthal (Ct. Glarus). Mr. Wichser studied at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich. He entered into the service of the Swiss Federal Railways in 1941, and in 1946 was in charge of the bridge service. In 1948, he was appointed one of the chief engineers of the Federal Railways.

Cantonal

A registered envelope addressed to a Bank in Zurich, and handed in at a Post Office in Lucerne, has disappeared. It contained foreign notes to the value of 75,000.— frs. A reward of 5,000.— frs. for the recovery has been offered. [A.T.S.]

The Mayor of San Francisco, Mr. Elmer Robinson, has paid an official visit to Zurich. On his arrival at Klotten he was received by the Mayor of Zurich, Dr. E. Landolt, Dr. Berchtold of "Swissair", and Mr. Florian Niederer, Sub. Manager of the "Schweiz. Zentrale für Verkehrsförderung".

After a Press Conference, the distinguished visitor was entertained to dinner by the municipal authorities at the "Muraltengut". [A.T.S.]

The late Fritz Schiesser, a teacher at the Rüti and Schwändi schools (Ct. Glarus), has left an amount of 29,500.— frs. for various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Walter Früh, a citizen of Zurich and Mogelsberg (St. Gall), and until recently States Prosecutor of the canton of Zurich, has been appointed Police Commissioner for the canton of Zurich, in succession of Dr. J. Nievergelt who has retired. [A.T.S.]

CITY SWISS CLUB

Will Members please note that no Meetings are to be held during July and August.

They will be advised in due course of the resumption of our activities in September next.

THE COMMITTEE.

The canton of Berne joined the Swiss Confederation 600 years ago, in 1353. The official commemoration celebration took place in the University Buildings on Thursday, June 11th. The next day church bells pealed throughout the canton and bonfires were lit. On Saturday, June 13th, guests of the cantonal authorities and representatives gathered for a historical procession. The same evening an official and public performance of the Festival play "Hie Bern, Hie Eidgenossenschaft" (Long live Bern, long live the Confederation) took place at the Festival Hall. On Sunday divine service was held in the town's churches, coupled with an official centenary ceremony at the Minster. The same day a historical procession with 3,000 participants wended its way through the densely packed street. On Friday, 19th the schools celebrated this event. The pupils marched in procession, in the evening with lantern and torches. On the 20th and 21st a grand firework display was held and another procession started from the station to the bear pit. A large number of exhibitions have been arranged in the museums of Berne and other towns in the canton. [A.T.S.]

The Board of the Berne-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway has appointed, National-Councillor Robert Bratschi (Berne) as its Manager in succession to National Councillor Robert Grimm, who is retiring from his post at the end of this year. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Albert Wiesner has been elected Manager of the Municipal Theatre in Basle, he was born in 1889, and studied at the University of Basle and afterwards appeared for many years, as an actor, at German theatres. In 1940, he returned to Switzerland where he held the post as "Regisseur" at various theatres. In 1947, he was appointed Manager at the Municipal Theatre in Lucerne. [A.T.S.]

Mr. O. Cullmann, Professor of Theology at the University of Basle has been honoured with the degree of *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Lund. (Sweden). [A.T.S.]

The canton of Grisons has recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of its entry into the Swiss Confederation, on this occasion various festivities were held at the cantonal capital of Chur. The Federal Government was represented by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Ph. Etter. [A.T.S.]

The "Saurer-Werke" in Arbon, employing 3,200 workers and employees, have celebrated the 100th anniversary of its foundation. Amongst those who attended the official Banquet were Federal-Councillor Rubattel and representatives of a number of important industrial concerns. [A.T.S.]

The late Mlle. Marguerite Poitry of Yens (Ct. Vaud) has left an amount of 15,000.— to the cantonal hospital. [A.T.S.]

The "Ecole Polytechnique" Lausanne has celebrated its Centenary. The town of Lausanne gave a reception at which 1,200 persons took part. Dr. Ph. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation extended to the school authorities the greetings of the Federal Council, and in a speech passed in review the history and work of this famous school. [A.T.S.]

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Francesco Antognini, lawyer, in Bellinzona, at the age of 90. The deceased was for many years a member of the rural council of Bellinzona, of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino, and President of the "Unione popolare cattolica Ticinese". In 1919, he was elected a Member of Parliament. (National Council).

Paul Demme, landscape and portrait painter, in Paris, aged 87. He was for many years a teacher at the "Gewerbeschule" in Solothurn.

Colonel Albert Schmid, in Zurich, at the age of 90. The deceased was from 1887-1937 a member of the Federal Corps of Instructors. He was at one time commander of the 14th Infantry Brigade, and during the first world war was at the head of the 24th "Landwehr" Brigade.

André Montandon, Publisher of the "Courier du Val de Travers" in Fleurier, aged 50. [A.T.S.]

The following anniversaries have been reported in the Swiss Press:

Emil Grünefelder (80) of St. Gall. By profession a lawyer, practising at Flums; he was a Member of Parliament (National Council) from 1905-1943. For eleven years (1909-1920) he sat in the Grand Council of the canton of St. Gall, and from 1921-1942 Grünefelder was a member of the Government of the canton of St. Gall. He held the post of "Landmann" three times.

Colonel Franz Spycher (80) of Fribourg, a notary, and for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Fribourg. He was, for 4 years President of the "Sense" District Court in Tavers.

Dr. h. c. Robert Thomann (80) of Münchwilen (Ct. Thurgau) an authority for "Turbinenbau". He was for some time Professor at the Technical University of Stuttgart, and afterwards at the "Ecole d'Ingénieurs" at Lausanne, and the Technical University of Graz. Dr. Thomann is the author of a number of works on the subject of water turbines.

Johann Vonmoos (80) of Ramosch (Engadine) who was for 12 years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Grisons, and from 1913-1919, a member of the cantonal Government, he sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1919-1943. Vonmoos was for many years on the Board of the "Rätischen" railways. [A.T.S.]

The undermentioned couple have celebrated their diamond wedding-anniversary (60) in Switzerland: Mr. & Mrs. A. Dubois-Dubois of La Chaux-de-Fonds. [A.T.S.]

Flight-captain Hans Kuhn, since 1936 in the service of "Swissair" has flown altogether 3 million kilometers. Hans Kuhn, who is 42 years of age accomplished in 1948, his first million kilometers flight record and in 1950 his second million kilometers record. [A.T.S.]

An International Festival of Travel Films will be held at Locarno, this summer during the seventh International Film Festival, which is to be held there from July 2nd to 12th. The purpose of this innovation, which is in addition to the normal work of the festival, is to show how much the cinema can help tourism. According to the "Gazette de Lausanne" foreign embassies and legations in Berne have been asked to

arrange for the best films in this category to be sent to Locarno this summer.

Officially recognised by the International Federation of Film Producers, the Locarno Film Festival is meeting continued success. Selected films will be shown in the evenings, either in the open-air theatre or, if the weather is not suitable, in the new hall of the Casino.

The collaboration between the European Railways, in which the Swiss Federal Railways play an important part, never ceases to assert itself, as it is shown by innovations, among which the most recent were the fast trains linking the main Swiss towns to Milan, Genoa, and the Lausanne-Dijon "Autorail" service.

The latest of these innovations is the introduction of the "Autorail" service Zurich-Bâle-Frankfurt am Main, named the "Helvetia-Express". Since May 17th, it is possible to leave the shores of Lake Zurich shortly before 8 a.m., and to reach Frankfurt am Main in time for lunch at 1 p.m. Passengers from French-speaking Switzerland who leave their home-towns at dawn are also able to reach Bâle by the early morning trains and to board the "Helvetia-Express" there. Passengers can leave Frankfurt towards 6.30 p.m., and arrive at 10.30 p.m. approximately. Next autumn, the "Helvetia-Express" will be extended to Hamburg. Customs formalities only last a quarter of an hour — a minimum — and are carried out in the train.

This "Autorail" train consists of three units: two with lateral corridor for 2nd class passengers, and one fitted as dining-car. There are two compartments arranged as conference room and office, where a secretary is available for dealing with correspondence.

The following casinos, where "boule" is played, are open all the year round: Arosa, Baden, Bad Ragaz, Berne, Brunnen, Crans-sur-Sierre, Engelberg, Genève, Interlaken, Locarno, Lucerne, Lugano, Montreux, St. Moritz, and Thun. To the above must be added, for the winter season only, the Casino at Davos.

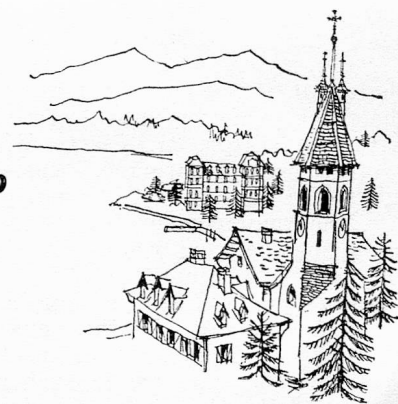
In their report of last year the Swiss Hotel Keepers Association published some interesting figures. Hotel guests domiciled in Switzerland made up 53% of the total number of nights spent in Swiss hotels. The total income which Switzerland derives from tourist traffic is estimated at 1,000 million

francs. Tourist traffic from abroad shares in this figure to the tune of about 600 — 650 million francs. The increase achieved during 1952 compared to 1951 is mainly due to traffic from abroad. The OEEC countries share in this increase to the extent of 11.3%. It is well known that the peak period for tourist traffic is during the summer months from June to September. During these four months 60% of the total yearly traffic are handled. The Swiss hotels are conscious of the fact that a price increase must at all costs be avoided. This is a commendable and necessary policy and allows Switzerland to be competitive in the international field.

In the calendar of events for September the following dates are the most important:

1st-13th Montreux: 8th Musical September; symphony concerts with the participation of conductors and soloists of international reputation. 2nd-12th Geneva: Various International Meetings; lectures and discussions bringing together prominent personalities. 5th-6th Aarau: Celebration of the 150th anniversary of the entry of the Canton of Aargau into the Confederation (festival and processions). 4th-6th Crans s. Sierre: 1953 Swiss Golf Championship. 4th-20th Lausanne: At the Conservatoire: courses in pianoforte interpretation, given by Alfred Cortot. 5th-6th Interlaken: Horse Show. 5th-6th Kandersteg: Motor races, from Mitholz to Kandersteg. 5th-6th Zurich: Army Sport Days. 7th Reconvilier (Bernese Jura): Great Chandon Horse Fair. 12th-14th Zurich: Boys' Shooting Competition (Knabenschieszen). 12th-27th Lausanne: 34th "Comptoir

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Suisse", National Autumn Fair. 13th Bâle: International Horse Races. 14th Einsiedeln: Fête-Dedication of the Angels; religious processions. 19th-20th Lugano: Swiss Golf Championship for professionals. 21st-4th Oct. Geneva: 9th International Musical Competition. 27th Aarau: International Horse Show.

* * *

By about 17,900 votes to 13,400, the electors of Canton Geneva have rejected a proposal that the constitution should be amended to allow women to vote in the cantonal elections. After a consultation last November, when one-half of the Geneva women expressed the wish to vote, the cantonal parliament decided by a small majority to satisfy them. The decision, however, was subject to endorsement by the electorate. The relevant Bill was backed by the Roman Catholic, Socialist, and Communist parties.

The Geneva vote was awaited with great interest in Switzerland, as this was the first canton in which it was proposed to introduce votes for women. Apart from Canton Vaud, which last year rejected a women's local franchise Bill, none of the 22 cantons had been called upon to vote on the question.

The Federal constitution does not grant the vote to women, but it was recently proposed in the Federal Parliament that the possibility be examined of modifying the constitution to that effect, and the Federal Government recently accepted a proposal in Parliament that the problem should be studied. Here also, however, the ultimate decisions rests with the electors, who do not seem very favourable to such a change in their political traditions.

* * *

Under the pressure of public opinion the financial group which, by insisting on dictating editorial policy, had created the crisis in the "Gazette de Lausanne" has begun to withdraw.

Letters exchanged between M. Burnat, the vice-chairman of the paper's new management board, and the three former members of the board who, together with the editor, M. Pierre Béguin, resigned under protest, seem to provide a basis for a sensible settlement. In his letter M. Burnat proposed that:—

The management board should be composed of seven members, of whom five should be appointed by the executive committee of the Liberal party of Vaud Canton and two by the shareholders.

The first task of the newly reconstituted board would be to draw up a contract with the new editor, "whoever he may be, in such a manner that he can assume fully the moral responsibility for the newspaper"; and (last but not least:

"The new board shall then study proposals for changing the statute to be submitted to the general meeting of the shareholders in such a way as to limit the number of votes at the disposal of a single shareholder."

In their reply the three spokesmen of the Vaud Liberal party (now the minority group of shareholders) and of the editorial staff, seized upon the last point and maintained that "there is no other solution than to do away with the concentration of a large number of shares in the hands of a few people and to amend the statute in such a way that the right to vote of each shareholder is strictly limited and thus new attempts to seize the newspaper cannot occur": only on this basis, the three spokesmen said, could negotiations be opened.

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