

# Prepaid subscription rates

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1947)**

Heft 1073

PDF erstellt am: **17.09.2024**

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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 2321/2.

Published Twice Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 30. No. 1073.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29th, 1947.

PRICE 6d.

## PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

(Fortnightly issue.)

UNITED KINGDOM AND COLONIES	{	6 issues, post free . . . . .	3/6
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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

The first railway to be constructed on Swiss soil, that from Zurich to Baden, a distance of 14½ miles, was opened on August 9th, 1847.

In commemoration, both of this event, and of subsequent railway development in Switzerland, various celebrations have been taking place during the present year. These reached their Culmination on August 9th, the hundredth anniversary of the opening.

On Friday (August 8th), a large number of representatives of foreign railways administrations, specially invited for this occasion, were the guests of the Municipality of Zurich. Dr. Luchinger, the Mayor of the town of Zurich, extended a hearty welcome to the delegates and in his address paid a tribute to the late Alfred Escher of Zurich, who, when a Member of Parliament, sponsored and was responsible for the passing of the Bill to bring the principal railway companies in Switzerland under the administration of the state.

The next day (August 9th) on the centenary, Dr. W. Meile, President of the Management of the Swiss Federal Railways, during the official celebration ceremony at the "Kongresshaus" in Zurich, gave an interesting and concise *exposé* of the history of Swiss Railways during the last hundred years.

Federal-Councillor Celio, Chief of the Federal Post and Railway Department, in his speech congratulated the Swiss people on the sacrifices they had made at one time to bring their railway net under State control, an undertaking, although much opposed at the beginning, has since proved to have been a wise undertaking.

In the afternoon the official guests arrived at Baden, where they witnessed a procession depicting the first journey of what was then called the "Spanischbrötlibahn." Amongst the spectators were Federal-Councillor Celio, General Guisan, late Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz, members of the General-Management of the Swiss Federal Railways and high Federal and Cantonal officials.

At the conclusion of the festivities in Baden, the original train, which was boarded by the official guests, left amidst the cheers of the population, and to the thunder of guns, and the music of bands playing on its triumphant journey to Zurich, being greeted at each station by large crowds of cheering spectators; on its arrival in Zurich the participants were received by the Mayor of the town of Zurich.

Dealing briefly with the history of the development of the railways in Switzerland it may be mentioned that after the inauguration of the Zürich-Baden line no other railway was opened for more than seven years. In 1850, however, Robert Stephenson submitted plans for the construction of 400 miles of lines. These comprised an east-to-west trunk route from Lindau to Geneva which followed the main river valleys. The scheme was eventually carried out with some modifications, the Cantons having been given powers in 1852 to grant concessions for that purpose. One consequence of this policy was that development tended to be local rather than national. Amalgamations, however, took place as early as 1853 and continued until about 1890, when five large "area" companies were in existence. During this period a nationally-owned railway was built from Zofingen to Constance via Winterthur, but was absorbed by the North-Eastern private system after only a few years of troubled financial existence. In 1887, the Federal Council took the first steps towards the purchase of all the Swiss railways by the State, and after lengthy negotiations, this was finally sanctioned in 1898. Some 760 route miles of line were taken over on January 1st, 1902, and between then and May, 1903, 770 further route miles were acquired. The Gotthard railway, with a route mileage of 170, was purchased in 1909, since when only 85 route miles have been added. A large mileage of secondary lines has, however, been left in private ownership, as

## CITY SWISS CLUB

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que la prochaine

### ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu, mardi, 9 septembre 1947 au BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, LONDON, W.1, à 6h.30 dîner à 7h.

#### ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Prière de s'inscrire auprès du Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, London, W.1, pas plus tard que le 6 septembre 1947.

LE COMITE.