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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Revenue from Swiss Customs duties during the first nine months of this year amounted to Frs.290,000,000 (£16,700,000), against Frs.194,000,000 (£11,200,000) in the same period in 1946. This reflects the rising trend of imports, which from January to September last are expected to exceed exports by as much as Frs. 1,000,000,000 (£57,600,000). Should this movement continue, Switzerland's balance of payments will shortly be adverse. Hence the drive for attracting tourists and for an understanding with Britain with a view to lifting the travel ban.

The damage caused to Swiss peasants by this year's drought is estimated at Frs.200,000,000 (£11,500,000). Federal and cantonal help should supply about Frs.60,000,000 (under £3,500,000) of this.

The Swiss cost-of-living index (August, 1939, equals 100) was 158.7 on 30th September. Prices for milk products have been raised recently, so the index should be a few points higher at the end of October.

It is argued in many quarters that the index no longer reflects the actual cost of living and the Federal authorities have been invited to adapt it to present-day requirements.

During the first week of October the Swiss National Bank's gold reserve rose by Frs.45,000,000 to Frs.5,352,000,000. Bank notes in circulation and other obligations at sight were covered by gold on 7th October, to the extent of 101 per cent.

Britain's exports to Switzerland in September amounted to Frs.34,100,000, against Frs.25,900,000 for the previous month. By this rise Britain now occupies third place among Switzerland's suppliers. Swiss exports to the U.K., during the same period, were Frs.3,700,000 higher at Frs.10,200,000.

The United States retained its traditional post-war position as Switzerland's biggest supplier and customer, its exports and imports during the month

amounting to Frs.97,700,000 and Frs.31,000,000, respectively.

Despite Sweden's import restrictions, Swiss exports to that country rose, from end-August to end-September, from Frs.11,200,000 to Frs.25,000,000.

Switzerland's total imports in September amounted to Frs.386,000,000 and exports were Frs.282,000,000.

The purchase of 75 British Vampire aeroplanes, recently approved by the Swiss Parliament, will involve a deal of Frs.52,500,000. A corresponding credit has just been opened by the Swiss Federal Council, by special decree. The said sum exceeds by far the total monthly U.K. exports to this country.

Switzerland is to pay in dollars for 2,000 tons of unsalted Danish butter. The price to be paid is \$138 per 100 kilos, corresponding to 6.61 kroner per kilo. This compares with the 6.50 kroner per kilo which the United Kingdom was asked to pay.

The quantity of butter involved is about a week's production.

A new trade pact just concluded between Switzerland and Belgium and Luxemburg aims at consolidating the satisfactory trade relations between the countries. Switzerland is to receive more coal, and tourist traffic is to be facilitated.

The results of the Swiss general elections announced showed that the Social Democrats, for four years Switzerland's strongest party, have been overtaken by the Progressive Democrats, a centre party. The pro-Communist "Labour Party," outlawed from 1940 to 1945, has seven seats in the new Parliament.

No change is expected in the composition of the Government — a coalition of Conservatives, Progressives, Social Democrats, and the Farmers, Workers, and Middle Class Party.

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Under the recently concluded trade agreement between Switzerland and Belgium, both countries are to unfreeze each other's blocked Belgian and Swiss assets.

The agreement, not yet published, also provides for Belgium to supply Switzerland with 25,000 metric tons of coal per month.

* * *

The newly appointed American Minister, Monsieur John Carter Vincent, has presented his credentials to Dr. Ph. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, in the presence of M. Petitpierre, Swiss Foreign Minister.

The accredited Minister, was born in 1900 in Seneca (Kansas) and started his diplomatic career in 1924 at the American Consulate in Schangschu (China). He remained in China for eleven years as Consul in Tsinan, Mukden and Nanking. In 1939, he was appointed American Consul in Geneva, during which time he acted as adviser to various American Delegations. A year later he returned to China as Consul in Shanghai.

After the attack on Pearl Harbour, he was attached to the American Embassy in Nanking and Tschunking with the rank of Counsellor of Embassy. In 1943, Monsieur Vincent was employed by the Foreign Office in Washington. He attended various international conferences such as UNO in San Francisco, Potsdam and Moscow. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Monsieur Leelyn Dana Wilgress, Canadian Minister, also presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A new trade agreement just concluded at Berne between Switzerland and Yugoslavia provides for a substantial increase in the exchange of goods between the two countries during the next 12 months.

Yugoslavia will furnish, in the main, fodder, wood, ores, metals and certain foodstuffs, while Swiss exports will consist principally of machinery, instruments, tools, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, as well as cattle for breeding.

* * *

An important trade agreement, which is expected to increase the volume of business between the two

countries, has been concluded between Switzerland and Italy. Despite many inadequacies, it was deemed appropriate under present circumstances to retain the compensation system for the exchange of goods, payments to be effected by the Swiss National Bank and the Ufficio Italiano dei Cambi, respectively.

For a number of goods the Italian exporter will receive 50 per cent. in Swiss francs, entitling him either to buy goods in Switzerland or to change them into dollars at the official rate.

In some instances, the capital transfer will be resumed by Italy and will comprise interest service for some Italian loans, dues in respect of certain property, educational outlays, pensions, certain transit profits, etc.

Incidentally, a normal trade pact was entered into with Italy as far back as August, 1945, but did not take effect due to the veto of the Allied occupation authorities. The ban was lifted in June, 1946, but the agreement was not put into operation.

* * *

Britain has refused Switzerland's request to withdraw the ban on tourists from Britain.

The British Government's refusal, dated October 15th, was friendly and understanding in tone, and showed full appreciation of the difficulties its decision will cause to the Swiss hotel trade, it was stated.

The refusal was based on the precarious foreign exchange situation in Britain, and on the general economics undertaken to surmount it.

Cantonal

The parish of Arth (Schwyz) has celebrated the 250th anniversary of its foundation. The church was consecrated in 1697 by the papal Nuncio in Lucerne, Michael Angelus Conti, who later became Pope. (Jnnocenz XIII) The church is well-known as a standard work of Baroque art. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Frau Teresa Maier-Lardi, from Etzel near Einsiedeln, has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary in the best of health. [A.T.S.]

* * *

J. M. Schuler, District Commander (Kreis-kommandant) of the canton of Schwyz, has resigned from his post, he has been for the last 50 years in the service of the State. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The death is reported from Lucerne of Dr. F. J. Unternährer who was from 1893—1927 a member of the supreme court of the canton of Lucerne, at the age of 87. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Joseph Balmer-Wicki, a former member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne, and head of a well-known colonial business, has died at Schüpfheim at the age of 46. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Colonel Ludwig von Moos, President of the Board of the von Moos'schen Iron Works in Lucerne, has celebrated his 70th birthday. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Edgar Woog, communist and a City Councillor of Zurich, was arrested there with six other party officials on charges of embezzlement. Woog is a candidate for the Swiss Parliamentary elections. They were later on released. [A.T.S.]

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Jacques Blankhart-Schrafl, senior partner of the Banking firm Blankhart & Co., in Zurich, has died at the age of 84. The deceased, reached the rank of colonel in the army. [A.T.S.]

On the 5th of this month, six weeks after the opening of the "Züka," the 1 millionth visitor has passed through the turnstile. He received a present from the Management. The exhibition came to an end on the 19th of this month, after two months, during which 1.3 million people visited it. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Emil Klöti, a member of the town council of Zurich for 35 years, and Mayor of Zurich during 14 years, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. Dr. Klöti is a member of Parliament (States-Council). [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Zurich of Dr. Hans von Halban-Paravicini, Professor at the University in Zurich, and Director of the Physico-chemical Institute, since 1930, at the age of 70. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Marcel Beck, from Fisibach (Aargau), has been appointed Professor of Swiss History at the University of Zurich, he was, until recently Librarian of the Federal Library in Berne. [A.T.S.]

Eduard Hess, a well-known architect and expert for town planning, has died in Zurich at the age of 71. [A.T.S.]

The loan for 30,000.000.— frs. at 3½ per cent. issued by the canton of Berne has been heavily over subscribed, reduced allocations had to be made. [A.T.S.]

During the month of September altogether 360 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne, 226 persons were injured and eight people were killed. [A.T.S.]

A motor-cyclist and his passenger were killed at a level-crossing between Lyss and Aarberg. The driver failed to notice the danger signal and he was caught by an oncoming train. The names of the victims are: Paul Baumgartner, aged 32, from Rapperswil near

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Schüpfen, and Marti (a young student) from the same town. [A.T.S.]

In Berne, occurred the death of Ferdinand von Salis, at the age of 84.

The deceased was a native of the canton of Grisons. On completion of his studies at the Universities of Lausanne, Leipzig and Berlin, he entered the diplomatic service. Amongst the posts he held were Secretary of Legation in Rome and London, Counsellor of Legation in London and Vienna.

In 1909 he was appointed Swiss Minister in Tokio which post he held until 1919. Later on he was appointed Minister in Rumania, Greece and Yugo-Slavia.

He retired from the diplomatic service in 1932 on reaching the age limit. [A.T.S.]

Denis Genoud, a former assistant of the State Prosecutor of the canton of Fribourg, has been elected President of the District Court of Greizerz. [A.T.S.]

During the period of July 1st to September 30th, 1947, 183 Traffic accidents have occurred (same period in 1946: 165) in the canton of Solothurn. One hundred and seventy-six persons were injured, and seven people lost their lives. It is stated that the majority of the accidents were caused through careless driving. [A.T.S.]

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Anna Hegner, who enjoys an international reputation as a violinist, has celebrated her 50th Jubilee as an artiste in Basle. In 1897, she appeared for the first time on the concert platform. [A.T.S.]

The well-known Hotelier and proprietor of the Storchen Hotel Elite, A. Brüderlin, in Basle, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. He was for many years manager of Küchlin theatre in Basle, and the Zurich Corso theatre. [A.T.S.]

An accident occurred in Basle near the Oekolompadhaus when a motor-car, driven at excessive speed collided with a tree. The driver received serious injuries, and his passenger a Frau Denz, from Neu Allschwil, was killed. [A.T.S.]

A meeting of delegates of the S.A.C. (Swiss Alpine Club) took place at Basle under the Presidency of H. Kislér (Bienne). Eighty-six delegates were present, representing 35,000 members and 88 sections. Amongst other questions the building of new huts was discussed. (The S.A.C. maintains at present 175 huts.) [A.T.S.]

The canton of Basle-City intends to raise at par a three and a-quarter per cent. loan of 40,000,000.— frs., running for 22 years. A group of Swiss banks will take over 20,000,000.— frs., firm and offer it for public subscription.

A "Vincent van Gogh" exhibition, comprising over a hundred oil paintings and sixty water colour paintings and sketches, has been opened at the "Kunsthalle" in Basle. The exhibition will be open until the 23rd of November. [A.T.S.]

Dr. H. Gauss, from Liestal, has been appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Basle.

Early this month, the section Kreuzlingen — Stein a. Rh. of the railway line Romanshorn-Schaffhausen was run for the first time under electric power. This section measures 65 km., and the costs of the electrification amounted to 11 million francs.

To celebrate the occasion, a banquet was held at Kreuzlingen, at which representatives of the cantonal authorities, and the Swiss Federal Railways took part. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred at Herisau of Dr. Karl Meyer, the founder of the Säntis suspension railway, at the age of 74. The deceased was a member of the "Kantonsrat" of the canton of Appenzel a.Rh. for nineteen years; a member of the cantonal tribunal and editor of the "Appenzeller Landes-Zeitung." [A.T.S.]

The OLMA exhibition in St. Gall closed its doors on the 18th of this month, having been open for 11 days, during which time 192,000 people passed through the turnstiles. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred at St. Gall, of Dr. Bartholomäus Höhener, who, during the last 32 years held the post of a veterinary surgeon of the canton of St. Gall, at the age of 71. The deceased was a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

Albert Probst from Laufenburg (Aargau) has celebrated a rare jubilee; during the last thirteen years he has undergone fifty times blood transfusion for needy patients. During this time he has given altogether 20 litres of blood. [A.T.S.]

The late Mrs. Adele Stäheli-Hofstetter, in Wil, has left an amount of 29,000.— frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

The "Official Day" of "the Fiera di Lugano," which was held on Sunday, October 5th, in Lugano, attracted great crowds.

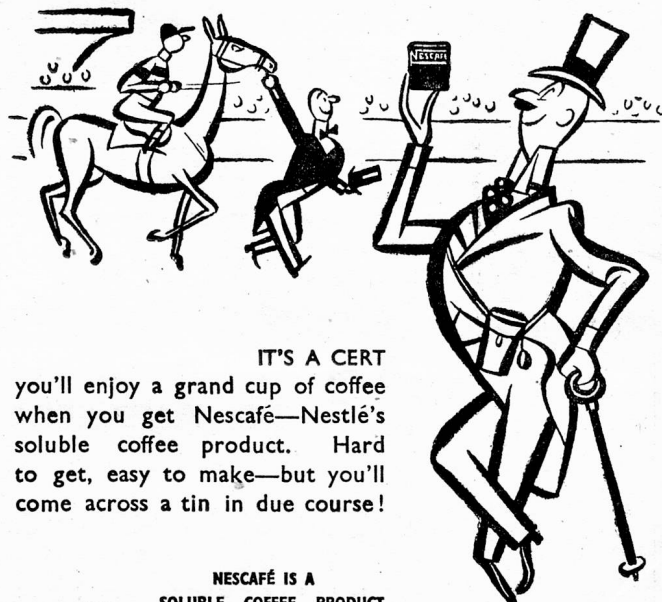
The numerous official guests were received by Carlo Bernasconi, President of the Organisation Committee, and Professor Lonati, Mayor of the town of Lugano.

Guglielmo Canevascini, President of the cantonal government, in his address, laid stress on the necessity of creating additional industries owing to the fact that many of the peasants from the mountains are settling down in towns.

Federal Councillor v. Steiger, brought the greetings of the Federal Government, congratulating the "Ticinese" for their discipline and their parliamentary representatives, who put the good of the country before their party interests.

On the conclusion of the Banquet the traditional procession was held, which was watched by large crowds. The Fair, which came to a close on Saturday, October 18th, was visited by altogether 122,941 persons. [A.T.S.]

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The death is reported from Lugano of Heinrich Stilling, writer and novelist, at the age of 61. The deceased was awarded the Schiller Prize in 1941.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Auguste Fontollet, from Pery (Vaud) has been appointed chief-engineer of the 1st District of the Swiss Federal Railways, in succession to P. Jaton, who has retired from his post [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Lonza electrical and chemical works at Visp (Valais) have celebrated their 50th anniversary.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

From Recon villier comes the news of the death of André Ruedin, Manager of the "Société horlogère de Recon villier," at the age of 45. [A.T.S.]

* * *

More than 60,000 people attended the vintage celebrations at Neuchâtel. The procession in which 1,000 people took part was one of the biggest for many years.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

Fifty-five members of the Swedish Hoteliers Association have arrived at Neuchâtel where they were received by Armand Montandon, Manager of the Hotel school. Their visit is connected with the study of schools for the Hotel trade. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Edouard Lacroix, engineer-in-chief of the cantonal office of works in Geneva, was the victim of a road accident which proved fatal. He was 66 years of age.

[A.T.S.]

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Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The scarcity of paper and the costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Thursday, December 11th, 1947, together with remittance for 6/-.

Jean Boissonas, a former member of the government of the canton of Geneva, has celebrated his 80th birthday. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A party of thirty American Hotel keepers arrived at Geneva, where they were received by the cantonal authorities. During their stay in Switzerland they will visit various tourists centres. [A.T.S.]

Army

A military machine of the type Morane 3801 crashed on the Albis near the station Sihlbrugg. The machine caught fire and the pilot, sergeant Kurt von Burg (age 22) was killed. [A.T.S.]

Humanitarian

Through the intervention of the "Pro Juventute" institution, 110 Swiss children from Tunis, Algiers and Marocco, have spent a two months holiday in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Fifty children from Czecho-Slovakia, have, after a stay of two months, left Switzerland for their own country; another batch of 50 children from Austria have entered our country for a two months visit.

[A.T.S.]

—00—

The next Federal Gymnastic Festival will take place at Lausanne in 1951. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Five members (four men and a woman) of the Swiss expedition to the Himalayas have returned to Switzerland by air after successful researches, lasting five months. Their names are : André Roch (Leader), René Dittert, Alfred Sutter, Alexandre Craven (guide) and Mrs. A. Lohner. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Offenders against the security of the roads are unfortunately very leniently dealt with in Switzerland. A lorry driver, who through carelessness caused the death of a woman, was condemned to three months imprisonment on probation (!) by a Court in Lausanne, whilst another motorist, who through negligence, caused the death of two people, badly injuring another three, received a sentence by a Court in Lugano to nine months on probation, with a fine of 2,000.— frs. It is

about time that motorists, who endanger the safety of road users, should be treated with more severe sentences. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversaries (60 years): Mr. & Mrs. Kung-Huwiler, Muri-Dorf (Aargau); Mr. & Mrs. J. & K. Studhalter-Haas, Kriens, (Lucerne); Mr. & Mrs. J. Beul-Züger, Lachen, (Schwyz); Mr. & Mrs. F. Bachmann-Scheiwiler, Degersheim, St. Gall; Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Wiget-Steiner, Brunnen, (Schwyz); Mr. & Mrs. F. Schwander-Howald, Nidau, (Berne), parents of Mr. H. Schwander, of 14, Lansdowne Court, Purley, have celebrated their Iron wedding anniversary (65 years).

* * *

The appearance of the Swiss Alps has changed during the past summer. The heat has been so great and so continuous, and the drought so serious, that many glaciers are now hanging like old rags on the naked collars of the highest peaks.

This is particularly so in the case of the Rhône glacier, which a few years ago sprawled lazily in the Gletsch glen and now shrinks at the level of Belvedere, or of the small glacier on the south-eastern flank of Les Diablerets, which is now reduced to a small white speck on the grey rocks. Some summits have lost their snow caps, while on others the bare rock is everywhere protruding where once snow and ice existed.

A general retreat of Alpine glaciers has been going on since 1850 — with occasional forward dashes — but it has never reached such proportions as during the present year. Before 1850 observations were scarce and rather inaccurate, but it is known that Alpine glaciers made their last big offensive between 1820 and 1850.

There was also a time towards the end of the seventeenth century when Alpine glaciers were receding and when, according to tradition and to certain documents, their retreat exceeded the present rate. Last summer your Correspondent came across some old papers in Zermatt which stated that the Bishop of Sion had allowed the people of Zermatt to go to Sion to attend the June procession by crossing the Col d'Hérens, as it was free of ice and snow and was the shortest route to the capital. Local tradition also says that at the same time a man could walk up to the Théodule Pass without setting foot either on ice or on snow, and that herds of cattle, pack mules, and oxen frequently crossed from Switzerland to Italy and *vice versa*. The Matterhorn museum at Zermatt possesses some mule shoes, cattle chains, and other relics of that period found on the Théodule and Tiefenmatten glaciers.

DEBROUILLARDE.

Une petite fille de trois ou quatre ans était penchée sur le chat et lui donnait quelque chose à manger que le chat, visiblement, n'avait pas envie d'avaler, c'était des Graines pour canari. "Voyons, lui dit son oncle, maman ne t'a certainement pas dit de donner ces graines au chat?"

"Non, elle m'a dit que c'était pour le canari."

"Alors va le trouver dans la cage."

"Il n'est pas dans la cage, il est dans le chat."

UN APPEL AUX SUISSESSES D'ANGLETERRE.

Depuis le début de 1947, plus de 2,000 Suissesses ont débarqué en Angleterre.

Préoccupées vous-mêmes de votre foyer, des difficultés économiques que vous rencontrez chaque jour, peut-être n'avez-vous jamais songé à ce que devenaient ces jeunes compatriotes!

Vous souvenez-vous encore de votre arrivée en Grande-Bretagne et des obstacles que vous avez dû surmonter: la langue étrangère, la vie si différente, le mal du pays, l'ennui de la maison qui rendent la solitude parfois intolérable?

Alors, voulez-vous tendre une main amicale à ces jeunes filles qui se trouvent isolées, peut-être en danger moral? Nous ne prendrons que peu de votre temps si précieux. Nous vous prions seulement, *en devenant une Amie de la Jeune Fille*, de voir ce que vous pourriez faire dans votre entourage immédiat pour aider une ou deux Suissesses. La campagne hivernale semble triste à qui s'éloigne de sa patrie pour la première fois et l'après-midi de congé passée dans un Londres maussade et brouillardieux n'a rien de distrayant... à moins qu'on ne s'égare dans des lieux peu recommandables. En devenant une Amie, n'ayez crainte: il ne vous sera rien demandé que vous ne puissiez offrir. Plutôt qu'une aide matérielle, c'est un soutien moral qu'il s'agirait d'offrir à nos Suissesses, celles qui sont éloignées dans la campagne, celles qui craignent les Y.W.C.A. à cause de la langue, celles que n'attirent pas les clubs d'une Eglise et qui sont justement les plus exposées!

Vous savez peut-être que les Amies de la Jeune Fille, fédération internationale, ont pour principe d'aider toute jeune fille, sans distinction de religion, condition sociale ou nationalité. Si nous vous demandons de tendre la main aux Suissesses, c'est que "charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même" et que nous savons de source sûre que nombre de nos jeunes compatriotes sont en difficulté en Angleterre.

Pensez à ce que vous aimeriez que l'on fit à vos filles, à vos sœurs à l'étranger et faites-le pour d'autres, en nous écrivant que vous devenez une des nôtres.

Bureau Central des Amies de la Jeune Fille,
2, rue du Seyon,
NEUCHÂTEL (Suisse).

The Alpenrosen Club

ST. PETER'S HALL, WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL, near VICTORIA, S.W.1

Socials, Dances, Sports

ENGLISH LESSONS, HEIMATLIEDER

The Club is open every Sunday from 7 - 10.30 p.m.

ALL SWISS and their friends are welcome and assured of a pleasant meeting place and healthy recreation.

NEW MEMBERS please enrol now.

Further particulars from:— Rev. A. LANFRANCHI,

1, Maiden Lane, London, W.C.2. — Tel.: TEMple Bar 4700.