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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, have elected, on the 11th of this month, M. Enrico Celio, President of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1948.

Federal Councillor Nobs has been elected Vice-President.

The new President was born on June 19th, 1889, at Ambri di Quito, in the Leventina valley. After absolving the local schools and the College at Balerna he completed his early education at Milan and Einsiedeln, at the same time as Federal-Councillor Etter. Afterwards he studied literature and law at the Universities of Florence, Milan and Freiburg i.Ue.

Returning home, Dr. Celio was entrusted with the editorship of the catholic-conservative "Popolo e Libertà," and later on practised as an advocate in Biasca.

In 1924, he was for the first time elected a member of the National Council, but in 1932 he had to relinquish his seat on being chosen — in succession to Cattori — President of the Ticinese Government as the Constitution forbids contemporaneous membership of the Federal Parliament.

On the death of Federal Councillor G. Motta, he entered, in 1940, the Federal Government. He was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1943.

Owing to the resignation of Federal-Councillor Stampfli, a new member of the Federal Government had to be elected.

There were two candidates in the field, namely: Rodolphe Rubattel (Liberal) member of the government of the canton of Vaud, and States-Councillor G. Wenk (Socialist) a member of the cantonal government of Basle. Rubattel received 138 votes and Wenk 62 votes. The former was therefore declared as elected. The following also received votes: Speiser 21, Müller (Amriswil) 4, and Wey 3.

Federal-Councillor Rodolphe Rubattel was born on the 4th of December, 1896, at Villarzel, in the Broye valley. On completion of his school education he

studied law at the University in Lausanne where he obtained the degree of doctor of law. He then took up journalism as a profession, and in turn was Editor of the "Feuille d'Avis de Montreux," "Tribune de Lausanne," "Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne" and "La Revue."

In 1933, he entered the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud as a liberal, and eleven years later (1944) he became a member of the cantonal government, which post he occupied up to the date of his election as a Federal-Councillor.

The Belgian Premier, Monsieur P. H. Spaak, who, on behalf of the Belgian Government and the Belgian people, presented the Swiss people with a present of three grammes of radium, was received at the Federal Palais in Berne by Dr. Ph. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation and members of the Government.

Monsieur Spaak, in handing over the precious gift, said that Belgium was happy to make this presentation as a thank-offering for all that Switzerland has done for the Belgian people during and after the war.

Dr. Etter, in accepting the present, thanked the Minister for the *beau geste* of his people, and expressed the wish for the further welfare and prosperity of the Belgian nation. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Berne of Monsieur Arthur de Pury. The deceased was a citizen of Neuchâtel. He studied law at the Universities of Neuchâtel and Leipzig and later on entered the Diplomatic Service.

As Secretary of Legation he occupied posts in Vienna, Berlin and Washington, and from 1912-1914 he was Counsellor of Legation in St. Petersburg. For four years (1918-1922) Monsieur de Pury was Swiss Minister to Argentine, and from 1922-1942 Swiss Minister at the Hague. He retired from the Diplomatic Service a few years ago. [A.T.S.]

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On the 1st of this month, the two Federal Chambers assembled in Berne for their Winter Session.

Dr. Albert Picot (Lib.) Geneva, hitherto Vice-President, was elected President of the National Council for 1947/48.

The new "Speaker" was born in 1882 at Geneva, and studied law at the Universities of Geneva, Berlin and Paris, and from 1907-1931 practised as an advocate in Geneva. In 1923, he was elected as a member of the Grand Council of the canton Geneva, and eight years later (1931) he entered the Cantonal government.

Dr. Picot became a member of the National Council in 1935 as a liberal-democrat. He was one of the founders of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

J. Escher (cath.-cons.) Brigue, was elected Vice-President.

The States Council elected as President its former Vice-President, Dr. Alphons Iten (cath.-cons.) from Zug.

The new President was born in 1898 and hails from Unteraegeri. He studied law and national economy at the Universities of Zurich and Fribourg, and afterwards practised as an advocate in Zug. He entered the "Kantonsrat" in 1922 and in 1930 became States Prosecutor of the canton of Zug. Five years later (1935) Dr. Iten was elected a member of the States Council.

Gustav Wenk (socialist) from Basle, has been elected Vice-President. [A.T.S.]

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, wife of the late American President, who attended a conference of the

United Nations commission on human rights in Geneva, was the guest of the Federal Council at a dinner held at the "Wattenwylhaus" in Berne. [A.T.S.]

Monsieur Arturo Marcionelli, from Bironico (Ticino), has been promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. Monsieur Marcionelli, who entered the Diplomatic Service in 1935, has occupied posts in Rome and Paris. [A.T.S.]

Switzerland's ban on exporting weapons, munitions and ignition fuses has been extended for a year by the Federal Council.

### Cantonal

The death is reported from Lucerne of Mme. E. Hauser-Döpfner, "proprietress of the Hotel "Schweizerhof" in Lucerne at the age of 83. [A.T.S.]

One man was killed, and several people received more or less serious injuries, when a tramway car overturned near the Stampfenbachplatz in Zurich. [A.T.S.]

The initiative to give women the vote in the canton of Zurich, was turned down by the cantonal electorate. 39,018 voted for, and 134,594 against the bill. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Zurich, of Dr. Josef Speckert, at one time surgeon-in-Chief at the cantonal hospital in Zurich, at the age of 70.

For the last thirty years, he was head of the clinic Materna of which he was the founder. In the army, he held the rank of colonel (Army Medical Service Corps). [A.T.S.]

On the occasion of the *Dies Academicus* of the University of Berne, Dr. Christian Margadant, veterinary surgeon in Chur, was honoured with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*, Dr. Rud. Probst, advocate in Berne, was presented with the Haller Medal. [A.T.S.]

The Grand Council of the canton of Berne having confirmed the election of States Councillor Mouttet, Mr. Brawand (Grindelwald) who was recently elected a member of the National Council will have to resign his seat, as owing to the constitution not more than two members of a cantonal government can sit in Parliament. He is succeeded by Albert Fawer in Bienne. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Geneveys-sur-Coffrane of M. Henri Duvoisin, Watch Manufacturer, at the age of 66. [A.T.S.]

Owing to the precarious financial position of the canton of Fribourg, the Chamber of Commerce of the town of Fribourg has waived the claim for an annual subvention. [A.T.S.]

Gottfried Klaus (socialist) from Solothurn, has been confirmed as a member of the States Council. [A.T.S.]

The van Gogh exhibition which was opened on October 11th at the "Kunsthalle" in Basle, closed its doors at the end of November. More than 35,000 persons visited the exhibition. [A.T.S.]

The University of Basle celebrated its traditional *Dies Academicus* at the Martins Church.



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The following were honoured with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*: Jakob Künzler, from Walzenhausen (Appenzell) who, during his 25 years stay in Armenia has rendered innumerable services to this much persecuted country, and National-Councillor, Johannes Bernoulli architect for his work, extending over 50 years, on town planning. [A.T.S.]

Dr. H. Vogelbach, a well-known medical practitioner in Basle, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred in Basle of Dr. H. E. Gruner, known as an expert on water works, at the age of 75.

For his pioneer work, he received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Zurich. [A.T.S.]

The late Printer Camenisch, in Hinwil, has left an amount of 40,000.—frs. to the community of Hinwil to be used for a home for aged people. [A.T.S.]

Adolf Lerch, a member of the Municipal Council has been elected "Stadtamman" of the town of Zofingen, (Aargau). [A.T.S.]

The death has occurred at Ermatingen (Thurgau) of Dr. W. Aebi, co-founder and Managing-Director for many years of the "Schweizerischen Sprengstoffabrik Dottikon," at the age of 74. [A.T.S.]

M. André Muret, Lausanne, recently elected Member of Parliament (National Council) has resigned his seat. He is succeeded by M. A. Forel, a member of the Grand Council. Forel belongs to the communist party. [A.T.S.]

The cantonal Government of Vaud, has recommended the rejection of a proposal to introduce free

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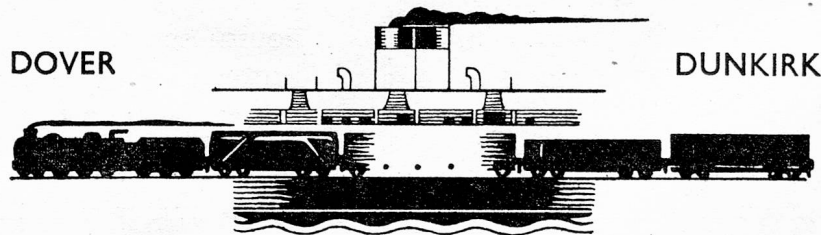
secondary education in the canton. The adoption, it is stated, would deprive the cantonal treasury of at least 200,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

M. Henri Miéville, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Lausanne has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary [A.T.S.]

Hunters who shot a wild animal in the Eichholz forest, (Valais) apparently solved the mystery of the "Beast of the Valais" which in the last 18 months, in spite of the efforts of gamekeepers, hunters and gendarmes to track it down, has caused the death of some 200 sheep and calves on Alpine pastures. The animal shot was a wolf. (At one time it was believed that the "Beast of the Valais" was a panther escaped from a travelling menagerie) as presumably the animal was not alone a general search has been organised in the whole district.

Cantonal-Judge, Alfred Clausen (cons.) Valais, has been elected a member of the States Council. [A.T.S.]

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Burglars entered the premises of the jeweller's firm Vuille in Neuchâtel and got away with goods to the value of 100,000.—frs. No arrest has so far been made. [A.T.S.]

On the 100th anniversary of the termination of the "Sonderbund" war (Nov. 24th, 1847), a manifestation was held at the tomb of General Dufour.

Representatives of the cantonal government, as well as of the Grand and Municipal Councils attended the demonstration. The army was represented by Colonel of Division Montfort. Fernand Vautier, President of the Association of patriotic Societies, read out a message from General Guisan and gave an address, in which he dealt with the circumstances which necessitated the intervention of General Dufour. On the conclusion of the celebrations, flowers were placed on the grave of the General. [A.T.S.]

The Geneva section of the Swiss Alpine Club has nominated André Roch and René Dittert, who have participated in the Swiss Himylaya expedition, as its honorary members. [A.T.S.]

### Army

Colonel of Division Eduard Jordi, who recently tendered his resignation to the Federal Council for reasons of health, died in Berne on the 29th of November.

Colonel Jordi was born in 1887; on obtaining the University degree of doctor of philosophy, he entered in 1912, the Federal Instruction Corps as an artillery officer. On reaching the rank of major he became attached to the General Staff.

Amongst his commands were: chief of staff of the 3rd army-corps, chief of arms (Waffenchef) of cavalry, and in 1931 Colonel of Division and Chief of the light arms units.

Colonel Jordi rendered, during his army career invaluable services to our country. [A.T.S.]

Colonel Pierre de Muralt, has been appointed Chief of the light arms units, in succession to the late Colonel Jordi, with promotion to the rank of Colonel of Division.

Colonel de Muralt, who is a citizen of Châtelard and Zurich, was born in 1896. After obtaining a University degree of doctor of law, he entered the Federal Instruction Corps in 1919 as a cavalry officer. In 1931 he was promoted to the rank of major, and obtained the command of the "Dragoner Abt.1." On his becoming a colonel he was entrusted with the command of the Infantry regiment 4, and in 1943 obtained the post of commander of the light arms brigade 1., two years later

he became Chief of Staff of the 1st army-corps. At the beginning of 1946, he was appointed military attaché in Paris. [A.T.S.]

Colonel of Brigade, Ernst Bernet, from Grindelwald, has been appointed Chief Veterinary Surgeon of the Swiss Army. He practised at one time as a veterinary surgeon in Huttwil and Wangen a.d.A. [A.T.S.]

### Traffic

Flight-Captain Walter Borner, of the Swissair, has, on his flight from Ankara to Geneva, flown his two millionth kilometer. On his arrival in Geneva he was fêted by the Association of Flying Officers, and M. Keller, Sub-Manager of Swissair, tendered to Captain Borner, the congratulations of the Company. [A.T.S.]

### Economics

The shareholders of the Swiss Reinsurance Company have been convened in an extra-ordinary general meeting for the purpose of increasing the share capital. It is proposed to call up an additional 20%, which will provide fr.11,600,000, thus raising the paid-up capital to fr.34,800,000 (60%).

Dr. A. Wander A.G., of Berne, manufacturers of pharmaceutical preparations and of Ovaltine, proposes to increase its share capital from 5,500,000 to 9,500,000 Swiss francs.

—oo—

As President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor E. Celio, has accepted the Honorary Presi-

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dency of the stamp exhibition (IMABA) which will take place in 1948 in Basle under the auspices of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie." [A.T.S.]

In spite of the alarming increase of motor accidents in Switzerland, caused by reckless driving, sentences passed by various Courts are ridiculously low.

A motor-cyclist who at an excessive speed and with faulty brakes ran into a cyclist killing him, was condemned by a Bernese Court, to two months imprisonment on probation (!).

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60 years): Mr. and Mrs. E. Längin-Grether, Muttentz, Mr. and Mrs. P. Seiler-Schilt, Bönigen; Mr. and Mrs. K. Schwyter-Ruoss, Galgenen nr. Siebnen; Mr. and Mrs. Ruffieux, Crésuz; Mr. and Mrs. Sprenger-Bollinger, Neftanbach. [A.T.S.]

The University of Lausanne has just honoured a remarkable lady by conferring upon Sister Julia Hofmann the degree of doctor, *honoris causa*. In a smaller way Sister Hofmann has been a Dr. Barnardo of Switzerland. Her work began in 1899, when she took into her home two destitute children. It was a spontaneous action prompted by pity without any thought of what the future held in store for her. But neighbours were aware what she had done: soon it was common gossip that there was in their midst a lady who cared for poor, sick children. Other children were brought to her and succoured. Larger, and still larger quarters became necessary. Then a home was built for these abandoned children, but more opportunities

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came her way. There followed a home for women and then a home for men. To-day "Ebenezer," as the institution is called, cares for three hundred men, women and children. Hundreds have been rescued and transformed by the love and labour of Sister Hofmann, now in her eightieth year. Funds have been provided by friends and well-wishers, and so the work has been maintained. Now the time has come, greatly to her sorrow, for her to pass the work to other hands, but not before the University has given testimony to the appreciation of the Swiss people.

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**THE SWISS MINISTER'S JOURNEY TO INDIA.**

As already mentioned in the English Press, Monsieur Paul Ruegger has left London for India.

The following *communiqué* concerning the Minister's journey has been published in Berne:—

"Le 8 octobre 1947, l'Assemblée Fédérale a donné son approbation au message du Conseil Fédéral proposant l'établissement de représentations diplomatiques suisses auprès de l'Inde et du Pakistan, du Royaume de Siam et d'autres Etats voisins.

Cette décision de l'Assemblée Fédérale pourra prendre effet le 14 janvier 1948, lorsque le délai de référendu facultatif, prévu par la Constitution, aura expiré.

A la suite des contacts préliminaires entre le Gouvernement Fédéral et le Gouvernement de l'Inde et au cours desquels M. Krishna Menon, actuellement Haut-Commissaire de l'Inde à Londres, a été reçu en février dernier à Berne, le Conseil Fédéral a autorisé et chargé M. Paul Ruegger, Ministre de Suisse, de se rendre dans la seconde moitié de décembre, pour une mission spéciale, à la Nouvelle Delhi pour préparer l'établissement de rapports diplomatiques futurs et en vue de développer les relations d'amitié entre les deux Pays. Cette décision répond à une invitation adressée au Ministre Ruegger, par l'entremise du Haut-Commissaire de l'Inde à Londres, de la part du Gouvernement de l'Inde.

Il est prévu que le Ministre Ruegger étendra sa mission spéciale aussi au Dominion du Pakistan. Son absence de Londres sera de quelques semaines."