

# News at random

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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Swiss imports in February have decreased by 21,000,000 Swiss francs and exports increased by over 13,000,000 francs over the January figures.

With imports to the value of 36,000,000 francs and exports amounting to 57,300,000 francs, the United States continues to be the principal factor in Switzerland's foreign trade. Among the suppliers of Switzerland, the United States is followed by France, the Belgian-Luxembourg customs union, Italy, Britain, Argentina and Czechoslovakia. Apart from the United States, principal markets of Swiss goods were in France, Belgium-Luxembourg, Sweden, Argentina, Czechoslovakia and Great Britain.

Products of the watch industry maintained their dominant position among the country's exports with 50,360,000 Swiss francs. Machinery to the value of 40,800,000 francs, occupying the second place, represents a considerable increase over the January figures. Exports of silk, cotton and products of the chemical industry maintained their January levels.

All restrictions regarding the consumption of electricity in Switzerland have been taken off.

The wholesale price index of Switzerland rose to 203.9 by the end of February 1947, against 100 for August 1939. The increase during January amounted to 0.2 per cent, and to 3.1 per cent. during the year between January 1946 and January 1947.

An agreement has recently been concluded between Switzerland and Liechtenstein on one part and Sweden on the other, eliminating visas after the first of this month, except for persons who desire to take up jobs in Sweden, as well as in Switzerland.

The Federal Political Department makes known that similar negotiations with other countries are under way.

According to a statement issued by the Federal Finance Department, there were, at the end of December 1946, altogether 87,207 persons in the employ of the Confederation, of these, 31,975 were employed by the Swiss Federal Railways.

There are forty-four Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Swiss Confederation in Berne, consisting of 33 Ministers, 5 permanent and 6 (ad. int.) Chargé d'Affaires. The total number of diplomats accredited is 265 which constitutes a record.

The Federal Council has promoted M. André Parodi, 1st Secretary of Legation at the Swiss Legation in Rome, to Counsellor of Legation. M. Parodi was born in 1909, and hails from Geneva, he entered the diplomatic service in 1932.

M. Henri Voirier, formerly in charge of the Swiss Consulate in Marseilles (ad. interim) has been promoted Consul at Besancon. He joined the Consular Service in 1932, and the Swiss Consulate in Marseilles in 1937.

Dr. Max Holzer, has been nominated Vice-Director of the "Bundesamt für Industrie, Gewerbe und Arbeit." He was born in 1902, and after having studied political economy at the Universities of Jena, Munich and Berne, entered into the service of the B.I.G.A. in 1933.

After a break of more than nine years, the Republic of Austria has again a Legation in Berne.

The Austrian Government has appointed Monsieur Rudolf Seemann as Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the Swiss Confederation, he has recently presented his credentials to the President of the Swiss Confederation. [A.T.S.]

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

### L'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE ANNUELLE

aura lieu Mardi, 29 Avril, 1947, au BROWN'S HOTEL, DOVER STREET, W.1, le diner commencera à 6.30 heures précises.

#### ORDRE DU JOUR:

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Procès-verbal.            | Décharge au Comité.                 |
| Admissions et Démissions. | Elections du Comité pour 1947-1948. |
| Divers Rapports.          | Divers.                             |

Messieurs les Membres sont priés de s'inscrire par écrit pas plus tard que le 25 Avril auprès du Manager, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.

**Cantonal**

A large timber yard at Waldibrücke, between Emmen and Eschenbach, (Ct. Lucerne) was completely destroyed by fire. The damage is reported to be considerable.

Dr. Albert Wiesner from Basle, has been appointed Manager of the Municipal Theatre in Lucerne. [A.T.S.]

Frau Sophie Hofstetter-Illi in Zurich, has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary; on this auspicious occasion she was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Mayor of Zurich.

Werner Bärlocher, until recently, Chief Engineer of the Swiss Federal Railways, has died in Zurich at the age of 68. The deceased was well-known as the constructor and designer of a number of bridges and viaducts of the Bodensee-Toggenburg Railway.

The "Gemeinderat" of Zurich has sanctioned a credit of 532,000 frs. for the erection of a Sportsground in Oerlikon. [A.T.S.]

The Russian Minister, Monsieur Anatole Kutaschenko, paid an official visit to the town of Zurich. Accompanied by Dr. A. Lüchinger, Mayor of Zurich he visited some of the municipal institutions.

At a luncheon offered to the Russian diplomat by the town of Zurich, various speeches were made, expressing the hope, that now that diplomatic relations

having been restored, beneficiary relations for both countries in the commercial sphere, might result. [A.T.S.]

States-Councillor Melchior Hefti, since 1920 a member of the cantonal government of Glarus, has retired from his post.

The Grand Hotel at Adelboden (Bernese Oberland) has been burned to the ground. Having been closed during the war, it was only recently renovated and made ready for the tourist season. The damage is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of Frs. 1,500,000. An investigation as to the cause of the fire has been ordered.

The 72 year-old Marianne Gertsch-Amatter, from Wengen (Ct. Berne), was smothered with a cushion by her daughter, the latter was taken to an asylum, pending further investigations, as she is believed to be of unsound mind.

Professor Glanzmann, head of the University Clinic (Jennerspital) in Berne, has been nominated a correspondent of the "Société de Pédiatrie de Paris." [A.T.S.]

After a long illness, the well-known painter, Hiram Brulhart, died at Fribourg at the age of 69. He was at one time President of the Association of Swiss painters, he was also a sculptor and architect of some repute. [A.T.S.]

The accounts for 1946 of the canton of Solothurn show a credit-balance of Frs. 366,441.57.

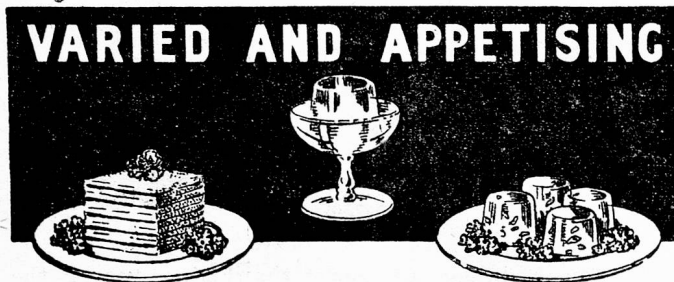
Federal-Councillor Stampfli spoke at a "Volks-tag" arranged by the Liberals of the canton of Solothurn, in favour of the Old-Age Insurance and Pension Fund, expressing the hope that this time the initiative will not meet the same fate as in 1931, when it was turned down by the Swiss electors. [A.T.S.]

A smuggling affair, not devoid of its humour, has taken place at the Franco-Swiss frontier. A young man from Basle, hired a motor-car for a trip into French territory in order to sell a quantity of gold coins. He was stopped, and examined by a French Customs official, and deprived of his precious horde, in addition the motor-car was confiscated.

The proprietor of the car got wind of the happenings, and at once arrived at the customs office, where he saw his car outside the office: without much ado he jumped into the car and drove at great speed over the frontier, much to the surprise of the French customs officials. [A.T.S.]

The death is reported from Basle, of Professor Carl F. Keel, a lecturer at the Federal Technical University in Zurich, and former Director of the "Schweiz. Acetylen Verband," at the age of 68.

The Swiss Industries Fair which is to be held at Basle from April 12th to 22nd, will be larger than last year's Fair, it covers a floor space of 80,000 square meters, accommodating 2,100 stands.



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The theological faculty of the University of Basle has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* upon Professor Alfred de Quervain and pastor Wilhelm Vischer, on the occasion of their retirement from the University.

\* \* \*

Dr. Hans Munch, Director of the Conservatoire in Basle, since 1935, when he succeeded Felix Weingartner, is relinquishing his post shortly, in order to take up orchestral conducting both at home and abroad.

\* \* \*

Two candidates contested the seat which lately became vacant in the cantonal government of Schaffhausen. Theo Wanner (socialist) was elected with 6,407 votes, his opponent, Hans Heer (liberal) received 5,312 votes. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The death is reported from St. Gall of Mr. Franz Schmidt, editor of the "Volksstimme" at the age of 45. The deceased, who belonged to the Socialist Party, was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of St. Gall.

\* \* \*

A prominent citizen of the town of St. Gall, has died in the person of Dr. Karl Roth, at the age of 92. The deceased was for many years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of St. Gall, over which he presided at one time. In 1921, he entered the cantonal Tribunal over which he presided for a number of years. In the army, he reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Mme Schulz-Reutimann from Zurich, a skating instructress, lost her life when on a skiing excursion near the Kesch hut (Grisons), she was buried by an avalanche.

\* \* \*

The 36 year-old Otto Tramp and the 37 year-old Albert Balli, both members of the "Unteroffiziersverein" Brugg, were caught in an avalanche near the Jürg-Jenatsch hut (Grisons). All efforts to restore them to life, proved fruitless. [A.T.S.]

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A large part of the ancient walls surrounding the town of Rheinfelden (Aargau) have collapsed. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

In the presence of the cantonal authorities and representatives of the "Raiffeisenkassen" of the canton of Thurgau, a simple celebration was held at Homburg, the birthplace of Pastor J. E. Traber, the man who, in the year 1900 founded the first "Raiffeisenkasse, at Bichelsee.

\* \* \*

The elections for the Grand Council of the canton of Thurgau have shown little change. The Liberals have gained two seats. The parties are represented as follows: Liberals 28 (26); Peasants 31 (33); Socialists 32 (32); Cath. Popular Party 20 (22); Christian Socialist 8 (5); Democrats 1 (1); P.D.A. 1 (0); Evang. Pop. Party 1 (0). [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Arthur Honegger, the well-known Swiss composer, was the chief guest at a reception given by the government of the canton of Ticino, on the occasion of a "Honegger" Festival to be relayed by the Monteceneri Studio.

\* \* \*

The firm Fratelli Branca in Chiasso has celebrated their 100th birthday. To celebrate this event, the firm has made several generous donations to charitable institutions.

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A large consignment of Nylon stockings, valued at 20 million lire was stolen from a goods wagon at the Chiasso station. [A.T.S.]

Doctor Demiéville, doyen of the medical practitioners of the canton of Vaud, has died in Lausanne at the age of 92. The deceased was a lecturer at the University and for a number of years President of the "Société climatérique de Leysin."

The death has occurred at the age of 79 of Auguste Dufour-Nicollier, formerly Director of the "Cigarren-fabrik Ormond;" he took a great interest in the administration of the community of Vevey. [A.T.S.]

Rudolf Gugelmann, a member of the Management of the firm Gugelmann, A.G., in Langenthal, has lost his life. He was caught in an avalanche when on a ski-ing expedition near the Findelen glacier.

Professor Jean de la Harpe, who is known to the London Colony by his lectures under the auspices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, has died suddenly at Neuchâtel at the age of 55.

After having studied at the University of Lausanne, and at the Sorbonne in Paris, he received an appointment as a teacher at the "College" in Vevey. In 1929 he was called as a lecturer to the University of Neuchâtel. He was the author of many works dealing with international relations, and played an important part in the New Helvetic Society, the League of Nations Union, etc.

The accounts of the canton of Neuchâtel for the year 1946 show a credit balance of Frs.861,000. [A.T.S.]

The following well-known and distinguished citizens of the town of Geneva have recently died: Dr. Raoul de Seigneux, Professor at the medical faculty of the University of Geneva, and a gynaecologist of international repute; Professor Hugo de Claparède for many years a lecturer at the University at the age of 77.

The accounts for 1946 of the town of Geneva close with a deficit of 989,769 frs.

The thirty-one-year-old John Michaud (Vaudois) a merchant, intended to do away with his wife; for this purpose he sought the aid of three men, who were to arrange a motor-car accident in which the wife would lose here life. The latter was employed by an Insurance Company as Secretary in which capacity she had the keys of the safes. It was the intention of Michaud to get hold of the keys after the death of his wife and rifle the safes.

A colleague of Mrs. Michaud got wind of the plot,

the police was informed and Michaud and his three associates have been taken care of by the Police.

Professor Pierre Besse, head of the physical-therapeutical Institute of the cantonal hospital in Geneva, and Professor at the University has retired from his positions.

On the 23rd of March, an exhibition of works by the famous Dutch painter, Van Gogh, was opened at the Musée Rath in Geneva in the presence of the Dutch Minister in Berne. The exhibition will be open until April 20th. [A.T.S.]

### Army

Sergeant Walter Bosshardt, described as the most highly-paid spy in the service of Admiral Canaris, the Nazi war-time espionage chief, has been sentenced to four years' imprisonment and Army degradation, by a Lausanne tribunal.

In addition to giving invaluable information about the effect of German rocket bombs in England and selling vital Swiss defence secrets, Bosshardt is believed to have given the Germans complete details of valuable Swiss intelligence service methods to the French Second Bureau.

The Swiss press protests against Bosshardt not having been sent before a military tribunal, which has powers to inflict life imprisonment.

### Traffic

On the occasion of the centenary of the Swiss Federal Railways, the Swiss schools and the railway authorities have collaborated to produce an exhibition under the title "Youth and the Railways" which is to tour the principal towns of Switzerland. The exhibition was opened on Saturday, 23rd of March, at the House of Congress, Geneva, by M. Henri Grandjean, director of elementary and secondary education.

The exhibits consist of wall-charts and vertical stands, and have been designed in equal proportions by the railway authorities and the scholars themselves. The first series of charts show ingeniously by means of photographs, diagrams, and electrically controlled coloured lights the actual working of a railway system with all its technicalities, and give a clear picture of gradients, signals, tunnels, bridges, funiculars, and

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the other wonders of a mountain railway system. The next section shows the history of the Swiss railways, opposition met with and overcome, construction of the St. Gotthard tunnel by Louis Favre, the nationalization of the five big companies, and the electrification of the system in recent years. Other exhibits show graphically the services rendered to the people by the railways — the transport of mails, milk and other agricultural products, the manifold business and holiday facilities for the public, and demonstrate vividly the crippling of the national life which would follow any dislocation of the system.

The school exhibits present a remarkable varied display of work carried out by Swiss children from all parts of the country, though chiefly from German-speaking Switzerland. Every possible school subject has been utilized by the teachers to link up with the railways. Drawings and diagrams come first, in water-colour, pen, pencil, lino-cut, and silhouette of every conceivable theme connected with the railways, from goods yard to mountain funicular, all grades from the highest to the lowest classes exhibiting their work. The next section testifies clearly to the popularity of the project method. The occasion of a school excursion has been chosen by many schools to carry out all kinds of class-work, such as essays on types of fellow-passengers met with, diaries of the day's activities, map-making and scale-drawing, the writing of letters to railway authorities and hotel managers and the study of the replies.

Finally the railways exhibit vivid photographs and diagrams calculated to show the joint responsibility of the railway personnel and the travelling public for the proper functioning of the system; the sense of civic pride is encouraged with examples of courteous behaviour and cleanliness in the trains. The imaginative lay-out of the exhibition appeals to both young and old, and it is arousing great interest in Swiss educational circles.

\* \* \*

Jules Gloor, wireless operator of the "Swissair" has recently celebrated the event as a "kilometer

double millionaire." During his twenty years of service with the company he has flown altogether two million kilometers, which is equivalent to the distance fifty times round the earth. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The International Union of Public Transport proposes to hold a congress for five days from September 15th onwards at Montreux. The programme includes visits to the Sécheron works, and inspection of new equipment on the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway and the tramway and trolleybus undertakings in Zurich.

\* \* \*

During the month of February, 1947, the Swiss Federal Railways have carried 15.86 million passengers, or 700,000 more than in February 1946. The receipts increased by 305,000 frs. and reached the total of 16.89 million francs.

The goods traffic shows a decrease; altogether 1.22 million tons were dispatched or 12,496 less than in the previous month, the receipts reaching 23.65 million francs or 360,000 frs. less than in January of this year. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A commission to study Aerodromes in the United States has returned by air after a fortnight's stay in America, where they visited a number of airports.

The members expressed their satisfaction at what they had seen, and some of the latest improvements seen in the U.S.A. will be copied for the new Swiss Air Port at Kloten.

**Economics**

The Board of the "A.G. Brown-Boveri & Cie" in Baden, proposes to the General Meeting, which will take place on the 16th of April, an increase of its capital from 37.5 to 45 million francs.

\* \* \*

From a report issued by the Federal Banking Commission there were, up to the end of 1946, 1,348 Banking Institutes in existence, namely 31 Cantonal Banks; 5 what is called "The Big Fives;" 349 Local

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### Humanitarian

The Mayor of Vienna has invited the collaborators of the "Schweiz. Hilfswerk," who are at present in

Vienna, to the Town Hall, where he thanked them, on behalf of the people of Vienna for their great help they have rendered.

Since the end of the war and up to December 1946, the "Schweizer Hilfswerk" has sent 18.7 million kilogrs. of goods to Austria representing a value of 16.2 million francs.

\* \* \*

The Chief Medical Officer of the Swiss Red Cross in Berne has recently received the visit of Dr. Josef Brunner, Head of the Austrian Red Cross. The object of this visit was to thank the Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss people for their help given during times of distress.

\* \* \*

Thirty cases containing provisions, toys and tools to the value of 7,000 frs. have been dispatched to the Red Cross in Splitt (Yugoslavia) for distribution.

\* \* \*

Two hundred British children from Kent and Essex have arrived in Basle for a three months' holiday at the invitation of the Swiss Red Cross.

—oo—

Swiss Alpinists are planning expeditions to two areas of the Himalaya mountains the coming summer.

The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research is sponsoring the expeditions, which will leave as one group in May.

In India the group will split into two sections. One will go to the Gangotri area of the Himalayas in the United Provinces of India, the other to the Gilgit area in Kashmir, Tibet.

\* \* \*

The third International Competition for Musical

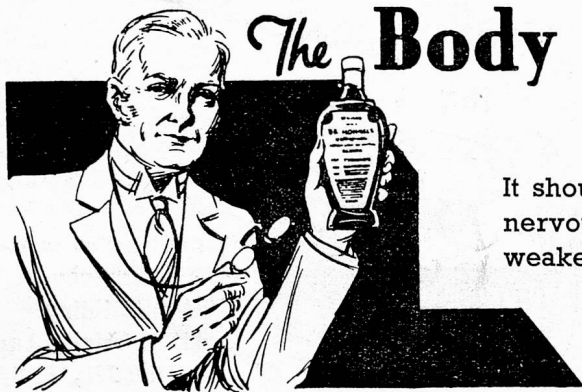
Performances sponsored by the Conservatory of Music in Geneva, will be held there between September 22nd and October 5th. It is open to singers, pianists, violinists, clarinetists and trumpeters. Candidates must be at least fifteen and not over thirty years old, as of October 1st, 1947. First-prize winners in the 1939 and 1946 competitions are not eligible. Application forms and pamphlets stating the rules and requirements in full are obtainable without charge by writing to the secretariat of the competition at the conservatory. Applications must be received by August 1st.

The jury is authorized to award two first and two second prizes of 1,000 and 500 Swiss francs each, for men and women candidates in the vocal, piano and violin classifications. The first and second prizes for clarinetists and trumpeters will be 500 and 250 Swiss francs each. Prizes can be withheld if none of the candidates meets the required standard.

The preliminary competition will take place between September 22nd and 27th; the identity of the candidates will be unknown to the jury. The finals will be held in public in a large hall between September 29th and October 4th. Winners selected by the Organizing Committee will take part in an orchestral concert on October 5th. All candidates who are considered as sufficiently qualified in the finals will receive diplomas; silver medals may also be awarded to candidates who do not win prizes, but have given distinguished performances. Candidates may bring their own accompanists, at their own expense, but the Organizing Committee will supply accompanists without charge upon request. Information about lodging accommodations in Geneva may be obtained by writing to the Reception Committee of the International Music Competition at the Conservatory.

\* \* \*

The Swiss film producer, William Wyler, of "Marie-Louise" and "The Last Chance" fame, has received several prizes for his last film, "The Best Years of Our Life" produced under his direction in Hollywood. This film was declared the best film in 1946.



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