

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss electorate has rejected by 486,506 votes against 267,540 a proposal for a new financial system. It was proposed that each canton should contribute towards the expenses of the Confederation an amount proportional to its population and means, and add that extra tax to its ordinary taxation. This proposal was rejected by 18 cantons (14 full cantons and 4 half cantons) against 7 (five full cantons and two half cantons) 54, 7 per cent of voters went to the poll.

Here are the relative figures :

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Zurich | 37,438 | 110,432 |
| Berne | 28,586 | 78,197 |
| Lucerne | 15,614 | 17,244 |
| Uri | 2,633 | 2,638 |
| Schwyz | 4,897 | 4,510 |
| Obwalden | 2,102 | 670 |
| Nidwalden | 1,399 | 1,693 |
| Glarus | 2,165 | 6,243 |
| Zug | 2,378 | 3,261 |
| Fribourg | 11,512 | 7,989 |
| Solothurn | 7,916 | 22,980 |
| Basle-Town | 7,092 | 19,389 |
| Basle-County | 3,301 | 13,127 |
| Schaffhausen | 4,159 | 9,395 |
| Appenzell A.Rh. | 2,958 | 6,548 |
| Appenzell I.Rh. | 966 | 890 |
| St. Gall | 23,760 | 34,241 |
| Graubünden | 11,074 | 11,686 |
| Aargau | 21,572 | 47,579 |
| Thurgau | 10,301 | 19,798 |
| Ticino | 6,929 | 8,798 |
| Vaud | 28,113 | 25,179 |
| Valais | 9,663 | 9,594 |
| Neuchâtel | 7,763 | 13,309 |
| Genève | 13,249 | 10,816 |
| TOTAL | 267,540 | 486,506 |

* * *

The Swiss Minister accredited to the Italian Republic, Monsieur René de Weck, has died at a

nursing home in Berne, where he was for some time under treatment.

M. René de Weck was born in 1887 in Fribourg, he started his studies at the College of St. Michel and the "Ecole des Chartes" in Paris. Afterwards he studied law at the Universities of Fribourg and Munich. In 1913, he entered the Diplomatic Service of the Confederation, and was transferred as Attaché to the Swiss Legation in London, which post he left after four years to return to the Political Department in Berne.

In 1918, M. de Weck was sent to the Swiss Legation in Paris, where he held the rank of Counsellor of Legation from 1923-1933. From 1933-1945, he occupied the post of Swiss Minister in Rumania. For the last five years he had been Swiss Minister in Rome. M. de Weck also made a name for himself as a writer.

* * *

Federal-Councillor, Dr. Enrico Celio, has been nominated Swiss Minister in Rome, in succession to the late Minister, R. de Weck. He will assume his post in October next.

M. Celio 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

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the Federal Parliament. On the death of Federal Councillor Motta, he entered, in 1940, the Federal Government. He was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1943 and 1948.

The King of Siam, Pumipol, has arrived in Switzerland, after his recent coronation at Bangkok, to continue his studies. He, and his retenue, were officially welcomed on their arrival at the Airport of Cointrin.

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Max Kessi, a medical practitioner of Murgenthal, to the post of surgeon-in-chief of the Swiss Red Cross, in succession to Colonel Hugo Remund (Zurich) who has vacated his post. Dr. Kessi, is at present surgeon-in-chief of the 4th division with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the Swiss Medical Corps.

The following newly appointed Diplomatic representatives have presented their credentials to M. Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation.

Monsieur Eduardo Guzman Vila, Minister of the Republic of Bolivia, and Monsieur Dimitre Tz. Bratanov, Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria.

General K. N. Cariappa, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, was received in special audience, at the Palais Fédéral, by Federal Councillor Kobelt, head of the Federal Military Department.

Cantonal

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the "Schweiz. Tonkünstlerverein" a symphony concert was given at the "Tonhalleaal" in Zurich, under the conductorship of Dr. Volkmar Andrea.

Amongst the many guests present, were the President of the government of the canton of Zurich, and a number of Swiss composers and conductors, including Arthur Honegger and Ernest Ansermet. [A.T.S.]

Dr. h. c. Ernst Schürch, a former Editor-in-Chief of "Der Bund" of Berne, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary in Berne.

Dr. Schürch studied law at the universities of Lausanne and Berne, after which he took up teaching in England and Switzerland. Later on he was appointed President of the District Court of the "Seeland" and "Mittelland" of the canton of Berne. In 1912, he received an appointment on the Editorial Staff of "Der Bund" of which paper he became Editor-in-Chief from 1925 to 1944.

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In 1944, the University of Berne bestowed on him the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Walter Stünzi (Socialist) of Thun, has been elected President of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne; Otto Steiger, (Peasant Party) and Ernst Studer (Liberal) were elected as Vice-Presidents.

Mr. Samuel Brawand (Socialist), has been elected President of the cantonal government and M.V. Moine (Liberal), its Vice-President. [A.T.S.]

During the Whitsun holidays burglars broke into the house of Mr. Scherz, the well-known art collector in Berne and stole a number of pictures, valued altogether at more than £9,000. Among them are a portrait of a man by Franz Hals, a portrait of a woman by Van Dyck and portraits and landscapes by Renoir, Corot and Monticelli.

Two days after the burglary occurred, the pictures were found undamaged in the "Dälhölzli" forest, near Berne. [A.T.S.]

M. Jean-Claude Cotting, has celebrated his 100th birthday anniversary at Marly (Ct. Fribourg), he was presented with the traditional easy-chair by the cantonal government. [A.T.S.]

The 100th Anniversary of the death of Pater Gregor Girard was celebrated at the Franciscan Church in Fribourg, where the bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg addressed the congregation, further celebrations were held at the University of Fribourg.

Pater Girard, a member of the Franciscan order, was born and died in Fribourg, but his work was known beyond the town of his birth. He studied philosophy and theology in Fribourg and Germany, and held a post as a priest in Berne. Afterwards he returned to Fribourg where he occupied himself principally with educational reforms, thanks to his efforts free education was introduced into primary schools in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

The second oldest inhabitant of the town of Basle, Mme. Schneider-Tschopp, has celebrated her 101st birthday anniversary in the best of health. [A.T.S.]

Dr. h. c. Mathilde Paravicini, a great benefactress to the poor, has celebrated her 75th birthday anniversary in Basle. [A.T.S.]

“Kantonsrat” Schmid (Herisau), has been elected President of the “Kantonsrat” Appenzell A.Rh. for 1950/51. [A.T.S.]

Mlle. Marie Beelim who recently died in Chur, at the age of 99, has bequeathed an amount of 40,000.—frs. to a number of public utility institutions. [A.T.S.]

Mme. Lucie Beetschen, authoress known under the pseudonym of “Anna Burg”, has celebrated her 75th birthday anniversary in Aarburg (Ct. Aargau). She is best-known for her book of poetry “Der heimliche Garten”, and for her books for children. [A.T.S.]

The Printing Works, Salvioni & Co., of Bellinzona and publishers of the paper “Dovere”, the organ of

the Radical Party of the canton of Ticino, have celebrated their 100th pubilee. [A.T.S.]

The late M. Franz Koch, Restaurateur, of Lausanne, has left an amount of 12,000.—frs. to various charitable institutions. [A.T.S.]

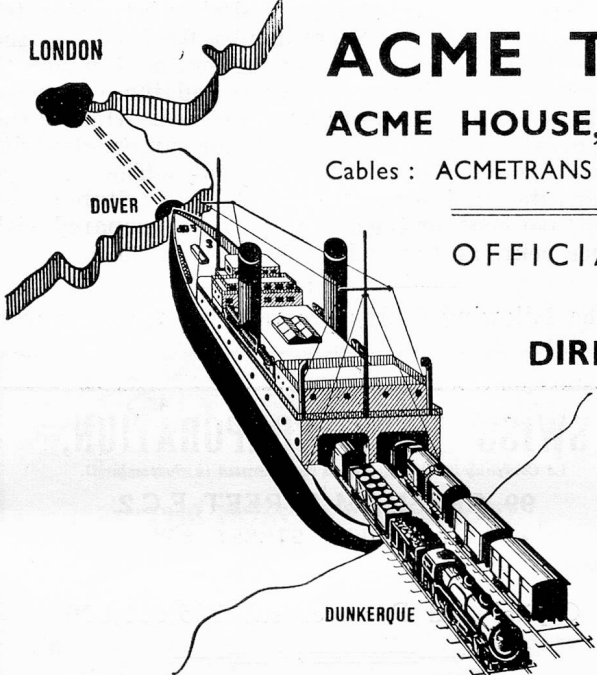
Mme. Veuve Marie Deutscher-Brugel, has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary in Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

The Committee of the “Société romande de radio diffusion” has appointed M. Jean-Pierre Méroz, of Le Locle, to the post of Director of the studio Lausanne. M. Méroz, has been Assistant-Manager since 1939. [A.T.S.]

Two people were killed and two seriously injured, when two motor-cars collided near Lully (Ct. Vaud), the names of the killed are Jules Berthet (60), of Geneva, and Mme. Marie Blanc of the same town. [A.T.S.]

More than 101,000 persons went through the turnstiles at the recent “Comptoir” in Neuchâtel. [A.T.S.]

M. Emile Losey, Central Secretary of the S.K.V. (Suisse Romande), has celebrated his 30 anniversary in the service of the “Schweiz. Kaufmännischen Verein”. After having been President and Honorary Member of the section Neuchâtel of the S.K.V. he was appointed on the 1st of June, 1920, to the post of Central Secretary and head of the “secrétariat romande”. During the tenure of his office he has



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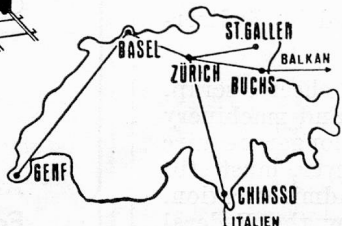
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M. Losey was recently elected President of the Grand Council of the canton Neuchâtel. (He is well-known in the Swiss Colony of London, having attended on several occasions anniversary celebrations of the Swiss Mercantile Society, London, which is a section of the S.K.V.)

* * *

M. Albert Dussoix (National Democrat), has been elected Mayor of the town of Geneva for the year 1950/51. He is 39 years of age. M. Lucien Billy has been elected Vice-Mayor. [A.T.S.]

Economics

Swiss exports of capital since the end of the war reached about 1,900 million Swiss francs, *i.e.*, about 300 million Swiss francs per annum, according to a statement by Dr. W. Schwegler, a director of the Swiss National Bank. A part of these credits was repaid in the course of last year. Of the total amount of 1,900 million Swiss francs 800 millions were Government credits, 250 million foreign loans, and about 800 million credits and advances granted by banks.

* * *

Swiss Federal Railways lost about £3,320,000 in 1949 compared with a profit of about £1, 250,000 in 1948. An official report attributes this development to increasing competition from other means of transport, especially by road. The report further says that decreasing goods traffic is due mainly to growing competition from lorries. In 1949 the railways carried 16,000,000 tons of goods, or 2,500,000 tons less than in 1948. The deficit for 1949 was only the second in the last 11 years. Swissair had an operating loss of about £420,000, and what the company describes as a "particularly unfavourable outlook" for 1950 has led the company to ask the Government for financial help. Cuts in operations, plans and personnel have already come into force.

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A £5 million trade treaty was signed by Switzerland and Sweden.

* * *

Swiss exports, with the exception of cheese, scrap, hides and skins, embroidery machinery and machinery for the watch and clock industry no longer require official export permits. Exporters, however, must still obtain the consent of the Quota Administration. Export fees have also been abolished by the Federal Government.

An assembly plant for British and American cars has just been officially opened at Schinznach (Ct. Aargau). The plant will assemble Chrysler, Plymouth, as well as the smaller De Soto and Dodge models, and the English Standard "Vanguard." In addition, the works will produce a new Swiss light motor-cycle the "Ami."

The factory will be operated by Auto-Montage Schinznach A.G. The present output of the works is three to four automobiles per day, but it is intended to increase production considerably within a short time. It is thought that the works will process 750,000 francs' worth of Swiss material annually.

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The Swiss Government has abolished price control on a number of foodstuffs including chocolate, sausages and frozen meat. The prices of cinema tickets, hospital treatment, motor-car repairs, photographic developing and printing and imported leather have also been freed.

* * *

In a recent public discussion held in Berne in connection with the planned upward revision of Swiss tariff rates, a representative of the trade section of the Swiss Ministry of Economics declared that the Swiss Government was examining the question of a temporary revision of existing rates.

Hitherto, Swiss authorities had been reluctant to act or even to comment on demands made by leading representatives of Swiss private firms for an immediate temporary upward revision of Swiss tariff rates, since the promised introduction of a new permanent tariff list had been so long delayed.

* * *

Swiss interests rates have continued to decline in the course of the last few months. Statistics compiled by the Swiss National Bank reveal that interest rates for cash bonds of 12 State banks declined on the average from 2.65 per cent. at the end of January to 2.60 per cent. at the end of April and those charged by large banks from 2.50 to 2.28 per cent. During the same period average interest rates for savings deposits declined from 2.33 to 2.31 per cent. The average interest rate for first mortgages paid by 12 State banks was 3.54 per cent. at the end of April as compared with 3.56 per cent. at the end of January, 1950.

: o :

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

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Gaudenz von Planta, well-known "Bündner" author, in Domleschg (Ct. Grisons), at the age of 81.

Benno Schwabe, Proprietor of the Publishing firm, Benno Schwabe, of Basle, aged 66.

Dr. Wilhelm Sarasin-His, in Basle, at the age of 68. He was at one time a lecturer of Philology at the University of Basle, and later on, a partner in the "Seidenfabrik" which was founded by his father. He was President of the Swiss Silk Ribbon Manufacturing Association.

Theodor Schild, founder of the "Kosmos-Fahrrad-fabrik Th. Schild & Co. of Bienne, and head of the "Eterna" Watch Works, in Grenchen, at the age of 80. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in Switzerland: Mr. and Mrs. J. Meier-Karrer, of Uzwil (Ct. St. Gall); Dr. and Mrs. Max Müller-Rüfenacht, of Berne; Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hugonnet-Laffely, of Morges. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Switzerland intends to introduce television in the near future and proposes a standard of 625 lines and 25 frames/sec. The first stage in the development of a Swiss directional network was the establishment of a telephony link between Zurich and Geneva with relay stations on the Uetliberg and the Chasseral. The relay station on the Chasseral has been enlarged in the course of the past year and its own power plant has been installed. It is expected to play a big part in international telephony traffic. The Chasseral is mentioned as one of the high-altitude stations, together with the Dole, the Santis, Pilatus and San Salvatore, for eventual use in television transmission. In view of the mountainous nature of the country in some localities, relay stations will be used near the larger towns, e.g., on the Uetliberg for Zurich and the Gurten for Berne. It can be assumed that in the eventual television network a relay station will be required on the average every 100 km. The repeater installation and aeriels would cost in each case about 50,000 Sw. fr.

These plans are only provisional and further experiments will be necessary before a final plan for the Swiss television network can be evolved.

* * *

The directors of the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa announce the conclusion of an agree-

ment with the Union Bank of Switzerland whereby the bank will grant a loan of 50m. Swiss francs (about £4m. in South African currency) to the corporation.

The loan, carrying interest at 4 per cent. per annum, will be repayable at par in 1962 except that Anglo American has the right to redeem at par in whole or in part at any time after 1957.

* * *

Trumpeters and drummers in the Swiss Army will get a special course of medical training, and in the event of war will serve as orderlies.

INTERNATIONAL RALLY AT INTERLAKEN.

The date for this international motor-car rally has been fixed for Sept. 7th to Sept. 12th. It offers many opportunities to the enthusiastic motorist and promises to provide first-class sport.

The minimum qualifying run is 2200 km., equalling 1370 miles. Participants will also have the chance of competing in the Swiss National Auto-Slalom which will be run on Interlaken airfield on Sept. 10th.

The rally is linked with a circular tour starting from Interlaken on Sept. 11th and leading over six passes of the Central Alps. The tour will include, as a supplementary trial, a mountain race from Gadmen to the top of the Susten pass. This contest, at the beginning of the 6 mountain-pass-tour will not only provide additional interest to the participants, but will also attract a large number of spectators.

The official programme, due to appear in a few days, will enable us to publish further details. The closing day for entries is July 15th.

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION.

The First of August Committee of the Swiss Colony in London have much pleasure in extending to all Swiss and their families in Great Britain a cordial invitation to join in this year's celebration of our SWISS NATIONAL DAY.

The date, time and place will be found on the front page.

Admission will be BY TICKETS ONLY, which will be FREE OF CHARGE and must be applied for in advance. Application should be made by post, to Mr. A. Gandon, The Hon. Secretary, THE FIRST OF AUGUST COMMITTEE, 53, Friars Place Lane, Acton, London, W.3. No ticket can be sent unless a 2½d. STAMPED and ADDRESSED ENVELOPE is enclosed with the application. The full names of all persons for whom tickets are required must be stated.

The tickets will be issued after July 15th but applications must be sent now, the sooner the better. The Theatre holds some 2,200 people. All seats are reserved except 344 balcony seats which are unreserved. Tickets will be issued in strict rotation. Early application is therefore advisable to save disappointment.

It will greatly help the Committee if ticket holders who find themselves prevented from attending the celebration will be kind enough to return their unwanted tickets AT ONCE to the above address for the benefit of other fellow countrymen.

And last but not least, it is hoped again that as many visitors as possible will wear national costume.

THE COMMITTEE.

CITY SWISS CLUB

The next meeting will be held at

THE DORCHESTER HOTEL

on **Wednesday, July 5th, 1950, at 6.30 for 7 p.m.**

Mr. Philip James, Art Director to the Art Council of Great Britain, will speak to the Members on "Art in the Community."

Members and Friends wishing to attend should advise the Manager, Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, not later than Tuesday morning, 4th July, 1950.