

# News at random

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Dr. Max Petitpierre, Head of the Federal Political Department (Foreign Office), has been elected President of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1950.

The new President was born on the 26th of February, 1899, in Couvet (Ct. Neuchâtel). He studied law at the Universities of Neuchâtel, Zurich and Munich. His thesis for the doctorate in law dealt with the recognition and execution of foreign judgements.

After the conclusion of his studies, he established himself as an advocate and notary in Neuchâtel. From 1926-31, and again from 1938-44, he was Professor of International law at the University of Neuchâtel.

In 1937, he was elected a member of the Grand Council of his native canton, and five years later (1942) he entered Parliament (States Council) as a Liberal.

Two years later (14th December, 1944), Monsieur Petitpierre was elected a Member of the Federal Government, in succession to Monsieur Pilet-Golaz; since then he has been in charge of the Federal Political Department.

Shortly after the announcement of the election a 22 gun salute was fired at his birthplace in Couvet.

Monsieur Edouard von Steiger, was elected by the two Chambers as Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation.

M. von Steiger was born on July 2nd, 1881, in Langnau (Ct. Berne). He studied jurisprudence at the Universities of Geneva, Leipzig and Berne. On the conclusion of his studies he practised as an advocate, firstly in Langnau, and afterwards in Berne. In 1914, he entered the Grand Council of the canton of Berne over which he presided in 1939. In the same year, he was elected a member of the government of the canton of Berne, and in the following year (December 10th, 1940) he entered the Federal Government, in succession to Federal Councillor R. Minger. Monsieur von Steiger was President of the Swiss Confederation in 1945.

Minister Daniel Secrétan, until recently Swiss Minister in Cairo, has been nominated Swiss Minister at The Hague, in succession to Minister Kohli.

Minister Secrétan was born in Lausanne on the 5th of November, 1895. He studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Basle and Stuttgart. In 1919, he entered the Diplomatic Service as Attaché of Legation. From 1921-1928, Secrétan was a member of the Swiss delegation at the League of Nations in Geneva. In 1928, he left the Diplomatic Service on his election as General Secretary of the International Institute for Intellectual Co-operation in Paris.

In 1939, he returned to the Political Department as head of the section for International Re-union. Two years later (1941) he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. Since 1946, he has been at the head of the section of International Organisations. On the occasion of his nomination as a member of the Swiss delegation to UNO in New York, he was promoted to the rank of Minister. In 1948, he was appointed Minister in Egypt.

Monsieur Charles Redard, Swiss Minister in Brazil, has retired from his post on reaching the retiring age.

Minister Redard was born in Verrières (Ct. Neuchâtel) in 1884. He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1911, and was transferred the same year to the Legation in Rio de Janeiro. In 1937, he was nominated Chargé d'Affaires in Lisbon, and four years later (1941) represented our country in the same capacity in Sofia. In 1945, he was promoted to the rank of Minister. At the beginning of 1946, he left Bulgaria, on his appointment as Swiss Minister to Brazil.

The Federal Council has appointed Monsieur Eduard Fer, at present Swiss Minister to the Republics of Argentine and Paraguay to the post of Minister in Brazil, in succession to Minister Charles Redard.

Minister Fer was born in 1894 in Brugg (Ct. Aargau). He studied National Economy at the Uni-

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versities of Munich and Zurich. On entering into the services of the Confederation in 1919, he was transferred, six years later, to the Swiss Foreign Office. In the same year, he was sent to the Swiss Legation in Berlin in the capacity of Commercial Attaché. In 1931 he was promoted to Counsellor of Legation, and in 1941 he left Berlin to take up an appointment at the Swiss Legation in Washington. Four years later (1945) he was appointed Swiss Minister to the Republics of Argentine and Paraguay.

\* \* \*

Counsellor of Legation, Dr. Franz Kappeler, has been appointed to the post of Chargé d'Affaires to the Lebanon, Iraq and Syria.

The New Chargé d'Affaires was born in 1898 in Frauenfeld (Ct. Thurgau). He studied law at the Universities of Zurich, Geneva and Berne. Dr. Kappeler entered the Diplomatic Service in 1926. In 1936 he was transferred to the Swiss Legation in Berlin with the rank of 1st Secretary of Legation, where he remained until 1944. During his stay in Berlin he was promoted to Counsellor of Legation. After his return to Berne he occupied various important posts at the Swiss Foreign Office.

\* \* \*

Dr. Alcardo Pini (Radical) was elected Vice-President of the National Council for 1950.

Dr. Pini was born in 1907 in Biasca (Ct. Ticino). He studied law at the Universities of Berne and Lausanne, and afterwards practised as an advocate and notary in Biasca. In 1931, Pini was elected a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino over which he presided in 1944. He was elected a Member of Parliament (National Council) in 1942. Since 1948 Pini has occupied the post of Central President of the radical-democratic party of Switzerland.

\* \* \*

The Federal Council has elected the following to the posts of Customs Directors: Gérard Borgeaud (born 1903) Pully, Customs District V, Lausanne, and Undecimo Amado (born 1890) Bedigliora, Customs District IV, Lugano.

\* \* \*

The Swiss people by a national plebiscite have adopted the Government's proposals for increasing the wages and salaries of 93,000 civil servants with 545,868 votes for, and 441,711 votes against it.

\* \* \*

Monsieur Enrique P. Manchego Herrera has presented his credentials to Monsieur M. Petitpierre,

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Swiss Foreign Minister, as Minister of the Republic of Peru.

\* \* \*

On the occasion of the departure of Mr. A. R. Preston, American General Consul in Zurich, the Society of "Schweizer Freunde der U.S.A." (SFUSA) gave a farewell Luncheon in his honour.

\* \* \*

Hans Nebiker (Basle) has been nominated Honorary Swiss Consul in Recife-Pernambuco (Brazil), in succession to the late Otto Ammon. Consul Nebiker has been in Brazil since 1917.

\* \* \*

Customs receipts in the month of November, 1949, amounted to 42.3 million francs, or 2.7 million francs more than during the same period in 1948.

During the eleven months of 1949, customs receipts reached the total of 441 million francs or 52 million francs less than in the previous year.

\* \* \*

During the month of November, 1949, the Swiss Federal railways carried 16.29 million passengers, which is 128,700 less than in November, 1948. The receipts from passenger traffic amounted to 19.27 million francs or 153,000.—frs. less than in November, 1948. Goods traffic registered a reduction of 107,000 tons and amounted to 1,46 million tons. The receipts amounted to 26,98 million francs.

\* \* \*

Dr. Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, has received members of the Diplomatic Corps, as well as representatives of the Government of the canton of Berne, on New Year's Day.

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**Cantonal**

A serious accident happened at the beginning of last month on the "Urner" lake (Lake of Lucerne), when a number of riflemen were returning by a motor boat from a shooting practice.

On approaching Isleten, the boat was caught in a heavy storm and sank, of the seven occupants five were drowned, namely: Hans Gasser, Isenthal, chauffeur, aged 45, married; Alois Gasser, Isenthal, post-master, aged 37, married; Eduard Ziegler, Isenthal, farmer, aged 41, married; Werner Aschwanden Isenthal, boot-maker, aged 23, single; and Johann Aschwanden, Isenthal, farmer, age 20, married.

Peter Arnold and Karl Aschwanden both from Isenthal were saved. [A.T.S.]

Albert Züst, a former States Councillor, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary in Lucerne. The "Jubilar" was from 1912-1920 a judge and for the same period a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Lucerne, over which he presided in 1919. From 1920-1929, he was a member of the government of the canton of Lucerne. In 1929, Züst was elected a member of Parliament (States Council), from which he retired in 1943. He is also a "Bankrat" of the Cantonal Bank Lucerne and a Director of a number of industrial concerns. [A.T.S.]

Professor Heinrich Zangger, founder of the "Gerichtsmedizinischen" Institute of the University of Zurich, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary. Professor Zangger was awarded the Marcel Benoist Prize in 1926, and is a *doctor honoris causa* of the Universities of Zurich and Frankfurt a.M. [A.T.S.]

Dr. René Wehrli, has been appointed Conservator of the "Kunsthhaus" Zurich, in succession to Dr. Wartmann, who recently vacated his office. [A.T.S.]

Professor, Dr. Eugen Grossmann, for many years Professor for National Economy at the University of Zurich has, celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. [A.T.S.]

Otto Pflughard, architect, and former member of the "Kantonsrat" Zurich and member of Parliament

(National Council) has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary in Zurich. Many public buildings in Zurich have been built from his plans. [A.T.S.]

The Theological Faculty of the University of Marburg (Germany), has nominated Professor Dr. Walter Nigg, the well-known church historian, a *doctor honoris causa*. [A.T.S.]

Professor Max Huber, the distinguished international lawyer, has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary in Zurich.

Since he gave up the presidency of the International Committee of the Red Cross five years ago he has lived quietly in retirement in Switzerland. He had been a member of the International Committee since 1923 and was president all through the onerous war years. Vital though his work was in this field, he will probably be best remembered for his work at the International Court of Justice. As a Swiss delegate to the League of Nations he helped to draw up the statute of the International Court, and in 1921 was elected as one of the judges to that court. His distinguished work led to his promotion, at the early age of fifty, to the presidency of the court, which he held until 1931.

In his early days he chose to accept the professorship of constitutional and international law at Zurich rather than enter the Swiss Diplomatic Service. But he was not allowed for long to remain in academic life. During the first world war he served as legal adviser to the Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army, and in 1918 he was appointed permanent legal consultant to the Swiss Political Department. From that position he was drawn into the early work of the League and thence to the International Court.

The Gottfried Keller Prize of the "Martin Bodmer Stiftung" has been awarded to the writer Rudolf Kassner, of Siders. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Emil Brunner, Professor of Theology at the University of Zurich, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary. Professor Brunner joined the University in 1924 of which he was rector in 1942/44. [A.T.S.]

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Dr. Meinrad Lienert, formerly Director of the "Schweizerischen Zentrale für Handelsförderung" has been sentenced to six months imprisonment (on probation) and the book-keeper Bühler, to four months imprisonment (on probation) for negligence and falsification of documents. Both the accused have lodged an appeal. [A.T.S.]

Professor Ferdinand Gonseth, Professor of mathematics at the Federal Technical University of Zurich (ETH), has been made an honorary citizen of Sonvilier. [A.T.S.]

During the month of November, 1949, altogether, 311 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Berne. 186 people were injured of whom 7 died from their injuries. [A.T.S.]

The Secondary School for Girls, in Fribourg, has celebrated its 100th anniversary of foundation. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Heinrich Hunziker, the well-known specialist for goitre diseases, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary in Zug. [A.T.S.]

A postbag containing bank notes to the value of 10,000.—frs. was stolen from the Post Office in Rickenbach (Ct. Solothurn), no arrest has yet been made. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Hans Hinderling, President of the Appeal Court of Basle, has been appointed Professor extraordinary at the University of Basle.

Professor Hinderling was born in 1901, he received his schooling in Basle and entered afterwards the University of his native town, where he finished his academic studies with great success and with the degree of doctor of law.

During the last few years he has occupied the post of President of the Appeal Court, where he enjoys a great reputation. He is the author of a number of works dealing with Civil Law, and has been an honorary lecturer at the University of Basle for some time.

(Professor Hinderling is a brother of our compatriot, Mr. Armand Hinderling of 19, Steeles Road, Hampstead, N.W.3.)

Professor Andreas Speiser, has been elected rector for 1950 of the University of Basle. [A.T.S.]

A fire which broke out at the "Grosshaus" in Wallenstadt (Ct. St. Gall), caused serious damage. The building is occupied by 52 persons, most of whom have lost their home. [A.T.S.]

The new railway station La Praille was inaugurated in the presence of Federal Councillor Dr. Celio and high officials of the Swiss Federal Railways. [A.T.S.]

### Economics

British exports to Switzerland during November show an appreciable increase of Frs.3.8m. to Frs. 23.8m., compared with October. The figures for August and September were Frs.20.7m. and Frs.18.3m. respectively.

Swiss exports to Britain during November show an even more pronounced advance, supplies having risen by Frs. 6.1m. to Frs.18.1m. against October.

The Swiss National Bank return for the week to December 23 again showed an influx of gold, amounting to Frs.19.5m., bringing gold stocks to a total of Frs. 6,230m. On the other hand foreign exchange holdings declined by Frs.1.1m. to Frs.256m. Due to Christmas requirements the fiduciary issue showed an unusually high increase of Frs.160.6m. to Frs. 4,508m., a rise of Frs.44m. having already been recorded during the previous week.

Switzerland announced the terms of a five-year trade and payments pact with Czechoslovakia, and a compensation agreement for Swiss holdings in nationalised Czech industries and banks. The agreement operates from January 1st.

Compensation payments will amount to 71 million Swiss francs (£5,917,000 sterling), 28 million francs of which is already lodged in Swiss banks, and 43 millions to be paid in half-yearly instalments.

The trade pact fixed Swiss exports to Czechoslovakia in 1950 at 115 million francs (£9,583,000 sterling) in return for goods worth 125 million (£10,417,000 sterling.)

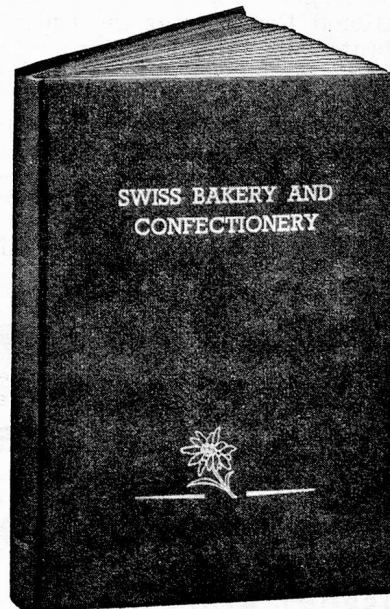
Czechoslovak exports to Switzerland will include iron, sugar, machinery, coal, ceramics, glass, textiles, porcelain, malt, hops, and fodder.

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The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. Ernst Graf, a member of the Government of the canton of St. Gall, in St. Gall, at the age of 65 The deceased was elected a member of the Grand

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Council in 1912, over which he presided in 1935/36. In 1941, he entered the cantonal government in succession to Dr. Kobelt, who was elected a Federal Councillor.

Pierre Bridel, a former Swiss Consul in Mülhausen and Lyon, in Lausanne, at the age of 57.

Ernst Knellwolf, for many years chief cashier of the Cantonal Bank Appenzell A.Rh. in Herisau, aged 63. The deceased reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the army.

Dr. Walther von Bonstetten, a pioneer in the Boy Scout movement in Switzerland, in Berne, at the age of 83.

Hermann Schmid, Manager of the Bellevue Palace Hotel, Berne, in Berne at the age of 56. The deceased was formerly Manager of the Hotel Baur au Lac in Zurich.

Edouard de Morsier, Journalist, in Geneva, at the age of 84.

Robert Hibbert, Merchant, in Liestal, aged 84. The deceased was the oldest British national in Switzerland and for many years a leading member of the British Chamber of Commerce. (The late Mr. Hibbert was the father of Mrs. P. A. Moehr, whose husband is President of the City Swiss Club, London.)

Roger Jeanmairet, a well-known painter in Geneva, at the age of 45.

Edouard Zimmermann, a noted sculptor, in Zollikon (Ct. Zurich), at the age of 77.

Dr. Ferdinand Rothpletz, Engineer, in Aarau aged 77. The deceased was born in 1872 in Venice and was a citizen of Aarau. He studied engineering at the

Technical Universities of Zurich and Dresden. At the age of 28, Rothpletz was appointed assistant to the chief engineer who was in charge of the construction of the Simplon tunnel. Seven years later, he was nominated chief engineer of the construction of the Weissenstein tunnel; he was also in charge of the construction of the Lötschberg tunnel.

The University of Zurich (ETH) honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*. From 1919-1922, Rothpletz was a Member of Parliament (National Council). In the army he reached the rank of Colonel (Artillery).

Professor Rolin Wavre, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Geneva, aged 54.

Dr. Jakob Elsler, for 25 years Director of the "St. Gallisch-Appenzellischen Kraftwerke" at the age of 62.

Claude, Louis Chavannes, formerly Professor of Philosophy at the University of Geneva, aged 85.

Victor Abrezol, since 1936 Director of the Electricity works Joux and Orbe, in Lausanne, at the age of 71.

Mme. Anna Späti-Späti, the oldest inhabitant of Switzerland, in Gerlafingen (Ct. Solothurn), at the age of 105.

M. Weitzel, formerly Director of the Commercial School of Lausanne, in Lausanne, owing to an accident.

Louis Zimmermann, "Stadtammann" and "Schulpräsident" of Kaiserstuhl (Ct. Aargau), in Kaiserstuhl at the age of 69, owing to an accident.

Professor Labhardt, formerly Director of the Women's Hospital and Professor of Gynaecology at the University of Basle, in Basle, at the age of 75.

Alfred Moll, from 1908-1919 a member of the National Council, in Bienne, aged 81. The deceased reached the rank of Colonel of infantry in the army.

Carl Thomann, Senior partner in the firm Thomann & Cie, Münchweilen, at the age of 74.

Dr. Alfred Schranz, for many years Mayor of the town of Nyon, and a well-known medical practitioner, in Nyon, at the age of 85.

Colonel J. J. von Albertini, formerly "Landammann" and President of the District Court Oberengadin, in Schauenburg near Thusis, aged 89.

Federico Fillipini, for 30 years Inspector of schools of the Locarno District and the Valle Maggia in Cevio, at the age of 57. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The following couples have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary (60) in Switzerland:

Mr. & Mrs. R. Stierlin-Hangartner, at Buchthalen (Ct. Schaffhausen); Mr. and Mrs. Béda Kessler of Tramelan (Ct. Berne); Mr. and Mrs. A. Bourquin of La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Tissot-Meystre have celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary at Lausanne. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The next Federal Gymnastic Festival (Eidg. Turnfest) will take place in Lausanne on the 7th-16th July, 1951. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The Swiss F.A. have confirmed the "B" international match to be played against England on the Sheffield Wednesday F.C. ground on January 18th, at 2.30.

\* \* \*

The viaduct over the Rhone on the connecting line under construction between Geneva Cornavin, the main

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Pour renseignements et billets, écrivez dès aujourd'hui à MM. A. Renou, Président, 14, St. George Street, W.1 (May. 5977). E. A. Grau, Trésorier, Stone House, Bishopsgate, E.C.2 (Bis. 5911).

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passenger station of the Swiss Federal Railways, and the Eaux Vives terminus of the French system, has been completed. The total length of the three-span viaduct, which spans the Rhone immediately below its confluence with the river Arve, is 717 ft., width 33 ft., and height above the water 80 ft.; the foundations extend 54 ft. below the surface of the ground.

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#### *New Gotthard Locomotives.*

According to a decision taken in the middle of November, two heavy express locomotives of a new type for the Gotthard Line are to be ordered from Swiss firms. Each locomotive is to cost frs.1.625,000 (approximately £132,870). The mechanical equipment will be built by the Swiss Locomotive & Machine Works, Winterthur, and the electric equipment will be supplied by Brown, Boveri, of Baden. The locomotives will be the first of a new type developed during the past twelve months. Each will be 60 ft. 4½ in. long and will have two six-wheel bogies. The hourly rating of the six traction motors will total 6,000 h.p., enabling the locomotive to haul a 600-tonne train over 1 in 37 gradients at a speed of 43½ to 46½ m.p.h. The maximum speed will be 77.6 m.p.h., and the weight 120 tonnes. If these two locomotives prove successful, more will be ordered.

These locomotives are to be placed in service on the Gotthard Line, where the locomotives now in service, though powerful, cannot cope with the increasing weight of the trains. During 1948-49 approximately 50 per cent. of the Gotthard trains had to be double-headed, and in July last the percentage rose to 70 per cent.

#### PETITES CHOSES QUI FONT PLAISIR.

*"Semaine Suisse" (Service de Presse).*

On nous communique des Pays-Bas : à La Haye a lieu une exposition des œuvres peintes par la princesse Wilhelmine. Une grand partie de ces tableaux représente des paysages suisses. Dans une exposition d'eaux-fortes, au musée municipal, on a beaucoup remarqué les travaux de Pauli, Surbeck, Fischer, Carigiet et Max Hunziker. A Amsterdam, le "Cercle des aquarellistes des Pays-Bas" expose des œuvres d'Ernest Morgenthaler; cette manifestation est un grand succès pour ce peintre suisse.

Les villes de Fribourg et de Maestricht ont décidé de nouer d'étroites relations. Une délégation de Maestricht, conduite par le bourguemestre de cette ville, a pris part au dies academicus 1949 de l'Université de Fribourg.

A Arnhem a eu lieu un concert comportant exclusivement des œuvres de compositeurs suisses. On y a joué la "Nuit d'été" et plusieurs chants d'Othmar Schoeck, ainsi que l'oratorio "La vision d'Esaië" de Willy Burckhardt. La manifestation et les solistes suisses Hélène Fahrni, Ernest Häffiger, Félix Loeffel et Ed. Müller ont remporté un plein succès. A La Haye et à Leyde, ont eu lieu les premières représentations en Hollande de "Kornett" du compositeur suisse Frank Martin (qui vit à Amsterdam) avec le concours de la soliste Elsa Cavelti, qui a été très admirée. L'"Utrechter Studenten Tonheelveereniging" a donné récemment la comédie "Valse en la bémol" de Hans Müller-Einigen.

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