

# News at random

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# The Swiss Observer

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## The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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### NEWS AT RANDOM

#### Federal

West Germany and Switzerland have signed an agreement on the liquidation of the pre-war Swiss-German clearing pact.

German creditors will receive D-mark compensation, amounting to two-thirds of their Swiss franc claims. Claims for Reichmark payments will be converted on a one-for-ten basis.

For Swiss creditors Reichsmark claims will also be converted on a one-for-ten basis.

Germany is expected to require about DM.21.5m. (£1.84m.) to cover the claims, while Switzerland will need between 28m. and 30m. Swiss francs (about £2.38m.).

The agreement still needs Parliamentary approval in both countries.

The Federal Council has appointed Minister Jean de Rham to the post of Chief of the Division for International Organisations at the Federal Political Department in Berne, in succession to Minister Pierre Micheli, who has been appointed Swiss Minister in Paris.

Minister de Rham was born in 1907 at Geneva, and is a citizen of Giez. (Ct. Vaud). He studied law at the Universities of Lausanne and Munich, and entered the Diplomatic Service in 1934. In 1937, he was sent to the Swiss Legation in London where he remained until 1946 in which year he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation. From 1946-1947, he held the post of Consul-General in Hamburg, and afterwards was transferred to the Foreign Office in Berne. In 1950, he went to Rome as 1st Counsellor of Legation, and two years later (1951) he was appointed permanent Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of South Africa, and in 1955, was promoted to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary in Pretoria. (M. de Rham was well known to the Swiss Colony during his nine years *séjour* in London.)

Dr. Guido Keel has been appointed by the Federal Council to the post of Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to the Republic of Czechoslovakia, in succession to Minister Charles Humbert.

Minister Keel was born in 1906, and is a citizen of Rebstein and Oberbüren. (Ct. St. Gall). He studied at the Universities of Vienna, Zurich, Bordeaux, Rome, and Berne. In 1934, he entered into the service of the Federal Political Department, where he occupied several posts. He was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation, and Head of the Press and Information Department in 1946. Five years later (1951), Dr. Keel was transferred to the Swiss Legation in Rome as first collaborator to the Swiss Minister.

\* \* \*

The Federal Military Department has appointed General-Staff Colonel Hans Raeber to the post of Military and Air Attaché at the Swiss Legations in Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, and Helsinki, with residence at Stockholm.

\* \* \*

Monsieur Markus Feldmann, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Monsieur Hans Streuli, Vice-President, have received the Ministers of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Panama, on the occasion of the presentation of their credentials.

\* \* \*

Dr. W. C. Naude, now Chargé d'Affaires in Berne, will be accredited as Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of South Africa, to the Confederation.

### CITY SWISS CLUB

Will members kindly note that the next

#### MONTHLY MEETING

will take place on **Tuesday, September 11th, 1956, at 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.** at the **Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1 (Stanhope Room).**

The Dinner will be followed by a game of Jass, Bridge or Canasta.

Members wishing to be present should send their card to the Manager of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, to reach him not later than Monday, September 10th, 1956.

THE COMMITTEE.

The Swiss Government has announced that Switzerland will take part at the International Exhibition, which will be held at Brussels in 1958; an amount of 5.8 million francs has been earmarked for this purpose.

Customs receipts for the month of June, 1956, amounted to 74.4 million francs, or 6 million francs more than in June, 1955.

Mr. Earl Warren, President of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, accompanied by the American Ambassador, Miss Willis, paid a courtesy visit to Monsieur Markus Feldmann, President of the Swiss Confederation, at the Palais Fédéral in Berne.

The Swiss Federal Railways carried 16.4 million passengers during June 1956, about the same number as in June, 1955. Receipts: 26.3 million francs.

Goods traffic is returned as 2.22 million tons, or 190,000 tons more than during the same period in 1955. Receipts: 40.5 million francs. (June, 1955: 37.1 million francs.)

### Cantonal

During the first six months of the current year, 318 traffic accidents have been reported in the canton of Fribourg. 160 persons were injured, and 16 persons succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

Mgr. Louis Waeber, Vicar-General of the dioceses Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg has celebrated his 50th jubilee as a priest. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Franz Wicki (59) of Root, (Ct. St. Gall) was killed when his car collided with a train at a level-crossing near Laegenbold. [A.T.S.]

During lunch time burglars entered the premises of a jeweller's establishment in the "Stadthausstrasse", Lucerne, and decamped with the contents of the till amounting to 5,000.—frs. [A.T.S.]

The village of Thalwil near Zurich, has topped the 10,000 population mark, and has become a town. It is a centre of the silk industry. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Hermann Wettstein has been appointed Director of the "Aargauischen Versicherungsamtes" in succession to National-Councillor Dr. Renold, who has vacated his post. [A.T.S.]

Fernand Duvoisin (19) of Lausanne lost his life when descending from the Ecaudies Grat above the Trient glacier. [A.T.S.]

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The "Pontonierfahrverein" Rheinfelden, numbering thirty-one members, undertook an exercise on the Rhine towards the "Bodensee". Near Truebbach the pontoon smashed into a pillar of the Rhine bridge and split in half. Twenty of the crew swam to safety or were rescued by men in boats, but eleven of them were drowned. The disaster is described as one of the worst in pontoon training history. [A.T.S.]

### DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. med. Gustav Maurer, formerly Surgeon-in-Chief of the Sanatorium Schatzalp, in Zurich, at the age of 61.

Professor, Dr. Walo Koch, since 1939, Professor of Botany at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, in Zurich.

Fritz Haenggi, for 27 years a member of the editorial staff of the paper "Basler Volksblatt" and author of a number of plays in "Solothurner Mundart", in Basle, aged 67.

Bruno Terribilini, a judge of the Appeal Court of the canton of Ticino, in Faido, at the age of 31.

Colonel R. Chavannes, Head of the Transport Service of the Swiss army during the first world war, and co-founder of the Swiss Automobile and Aero Clubs, in Vevey, aged 92.

Louis Laurens, President of the Board of the cigarette manufacturing concern, Ed. Laurens, S.A., Geneva, in Geneva, at the age of 72.

Maurice Galland, formerly Director of the Bank

## metropolitan

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Galland, Lausanne, and from 1937-1949, British Consul at Lausanne, aged 69.

\* \* \*

**ANNIVERSARIES.**

Professor, Dr. Eduard Ruebel (80) of Zurich, formerly Professor for "Pflanzengeographie" at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, author of several scientific works, and a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Zurich.

Dr. h.c. Karl J. Luethi (80) of Berne, well-known collector of old books, and a founder of the "Gutenberg Museum".

Johann Gasser (101) of Lungern, a former "Kantonsrat of Obwalden."

Pietro Chiesa (80) of Sagno (Ct. Ticino), eminent painter. Many of his works can be found in Swiss Museums and collections.

Robert Marchands (80) of Geneva, initiator of the International Automobile Salons, Geneva.

\* \* \*

**LEGACIES AND DONATIONS.**

The late Fritz Aebli of Mollis, a member of the police force, has left an amount of 11,200.— frs. to the communes of Mollis and Bilen, to be used for charitable purposes. [A.T.S.]

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**DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.**

Mr. & Mrs. Vollenweider-Kuenzli of Faellanden, Mr. & Mrs. J. J. Utzinger-Ratgeb of Duebendorf. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The number of divorces in Switzerland has doubled in the last 30 years, according to official statistics issued in Berne.

In 1926, a total of 2,213 divorces were granted. In 1954, the last year for which complete figures are available, the total was 4,437 divorces. Only 175 divorce petitions were not granted in 1954. In the same year there were 38,247 marriages in Switzerland.

The only reasonably reliable international comparison may be based on the number of divorced women per 10,000 in 1950.

Switzerland counted 42, Belgium 30, England and Wales 28, Scotland 20, Sweden 50, United States 104, Denmark 67, West Germany 66, Finland 45, Norway 31, Netherlands 44, and France 41.

These comparisons must be seen in the light of differing national divorce laws.

\* \* \*

Swiss civilian airports are to get more federal financial aid in future in order to cope with the increasing demands of jet aircraft.

In a Bill sent to the National Assembly, the Swiss Government has requested authorisation to increase the federal contribution towards construction costs of larger airports and costs of improved air security from 30 to 35 per cent.

Pointing to "the revolutionary changes" in inter-Continental air travel since the introduction of jet passenger planes, the Government requested Parliament not to limit this increased aid to the Zurich airport as in the past, but to permit the Government to grant it to any Swiss civilian airport becoming a centre of inter-Continental air traffic.

The announcement comes at a time when both Zurich and Geneva are planning to modernise and considerably enlarge their airports.

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