

News at random

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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council was represented at the wedding festivities of Prince Rainier of Monaco and Mlle. Grace Kelly, by Monsieur Carl Stucki, formerly Swiss Minister in Greece, and Monsieur Joseph Birchler, Swiss Consul in Nice.

* * *

At the end of 1955, the number of civil servants employed by the Confederation numbered 96,131 (1954: 94,441).

* * *

During the year 1955, 1,144 foreigners were accorded Swiss nationality, out of 1,431 applications. The total number, including wives and children, amounts to 1,898 persons, of whom 887 are Italians, 415 Germans, 124 Austrians, and 87 French.

* * *

The personnel of the Federal Military Department on June 30th, 1955, numbered 15,246 (1954: 15,148).

* * *

The Swiss Federal Railways have carried during February, 1956, 16.8 million passengers. Receipts: 21.1 million francs.

Goods traffic is returned as 1.49 million tons, or 184,000 tons less than in February, 1955. Receipts 31.3 million francs (February, 1955: 34.5 million francs).

* * *

Prince Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein has paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Markus Feldmann.

Cantonal

The accounts for 1955, of the canton of Schwyz show a surplus of 264,325.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Mlle. Ida Hermann, the oldest inhabitant of the commune of Wädenswil (Ct. Zurich) has celebrated her 100th birthday. [A.T.S.]

Two people were killed and one seriously injured when a motor-car on the road between Schönbühl and Mossedorf (Ct. Berne) collided with a lorry. The names of the victims are: Paul Spychiger, a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Berne, and his 2-year-old child. His wife, Mrs. Spychiger was seriously injured. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Government of the canton of Berne has accepted the accounts for 1955, which close with a credit balance of 1,188,462.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A serious accident occurred on the Fribourg-Berne road when a motor-cyclist crashed. The driver, Peter Schweizer (24) of Thörishaus, and his passenger, Willy Grandjean (24) of Ueberstorf, were killed. [A.T.S.]

[A.T.S.]

* * *

The accounts of the canton of Fribourg for 1955, show a credit balance of 124,646.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A furniture warehouse at Biasca (Ct. Ticino) employing 75 workmen, was totally destroyed by fire. The loss is considered to be high. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Three workmen buried by a fall of rock in a tunnel of the Aphix hydro-electric power station near Martigny were freed after having been buried for more than 54 hours. [A.T.S.]

* * *

During the year 1955, 961 traffic accidents have been reported in the canton of Neuchâtel. 886 persons were injured of whom 26 succumbed to their injuries. [A.T.S.]

[A.T.S.]

CITY SWISS CLUB

Notre Assemblée du mois prochain aura lieu le **Vendredi 11 Mai** au Dorchester Hotel (Orchid Room), Park Lane, W.1.

C'est avec grand plaisir que nous annonçons que le Dîner (6.30 p.m. pour 7 p.m.) sera suivi d'une conférence par Monsieur OLIVER REVERDIN, Rédacteur en chef du "Journal de Genève", qui a choisi comme sujet :

DESTIN de la SUISSE et DESTIN de L'EUROPE."

Le Comité.

The accounts of the canton of Neuchâtel for 1955, close with a credit balance of 2,180,874.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The account for 1955, of the canton of Valais close with a credit balance of 412,375.—frs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

DEATHS.

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Dr. med. F. Cuny, for over 40 years in practice in Basle as an oculist, in Basle at the age of 73.

Félix Braun, from 1920-1952, "chef de service" at the "Agence Télégr. Suisse, Berne, in Berne, aged 77.

Josef Imholz, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Zurich, in Zurich, at the age of 98.

Massimiliano Guidi-Defilippis, civil-engineer, and author of a lexicon of Ticinesi artists, in Lugano, aged 70.

Henry Mayr, civil-engineer and Manager of a large industrial concern, in Lausanne at the age of 75. The deceased was a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Vaud from 1933-1949, and from 1950-1953. From 1943-1956, he held the post of President of the Board of the "Comptoir Suisse", he was also President of the Chamber of Commerce of the canton of Vaud.

Robert Loder, a member of the Superior Court of the canton of Berne, in Berne, aged 69.

Johann Kehrli-Huber, at one time a well-known mountain guide, in Gadmen, at the age of 81.

Léon Liengme, from 1912-1945, Prefect of the district Courtelary, in Courtelary, aged 78.

Jacques Le Fort, at one time President of the Swiss Lawyers Association, in Geneva, at the age of 65.

Dr. Thalmann, Manager of the "Helvetia-Unfall, Schweizerische Versicherungsgesellschaft", Zurich in Zurich, aged 63.

Johannes Näf, from 1936-1947, a member of the Superior Court of the canton Appenzell a. Rh., and from 1947-1954 a member of the "Kantonsrat".

Ludwig von Moos, in Lucerne, at the age of 79. The deceased was from 1904-1911, technical manager of the von Moos'schen iron works, and from 1911-1941, General Manager, and afterwards President of the Board. He was for many years President of the

Chamber of Commerce, Lucerne, and a member of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce. In the army, he held the rank of Colonel of Artillery.

Alexander Maurer, notary, and since 1930, Prefect of the district Berne-Town, in Berne, aged 67.

F. de Rutté, for many years Manager of the Suchard Chocolate works, and afterwards a member of the Board. He was for a number of years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, and founder of the Rotary Club, Neuchâtel. He died in Neuchâtel at the age of 96. [A.T.S.]

* * *

ANNIVERSARIES.

Dr. Walter Heuberger (70) of Aarau, for 28 years "Staatsschreiber" of the canton of Aargau.

Fritz S. Gautschi (80) of Davos, a former Bank Manager, and Hon. Portuguese Consul.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

LEGACIES.

The late Mlle. Berta Osterwalder of Müllheim (Ct. Thurgau) has left an amount of 67,000.—frs. to church and school institutions in Müllheim and Matzingen.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES.

Mr. and Mrs. Langel-Glas of Bienne, Mr. and Mrs. A. Roth-Obrist of Basle.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Weder-Schreiber of Diepoldsau (Rheintal) have celebrated their iron-wedding anniversary (65).

[A.T.S.]

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Among the many interesting but little-known facts which came to light as a result of the recent printing dispute is that there exists in Switzerland an Order of Nuns whose main work is printing.

These nuns, who call themselves "Les Petites Soeurs de Saint-Paul", printed the "Economist", one of the most influential British weeklies, during the dispute.

At Fribourg, the lovely old French-speaking Swiss town which is only 15 minutes by rail from Berne, the federal capital, the Little Sisters of St. Paul have first-class equipment which is completely up-to-date. The nuns themselves are extremely efficient and versatile, we learn from a member of the "Economist" staff who used to live in Chiswick.

The Order was founded in 1873 to "print to the glory of God". Their only convent in this country is at Chelsea. The main work of the Order is to produce "La Liberté", the Roman Catholic newspaper for the canton of Fribourg. They also print books and pamphlets.

Editorial staff of the "Economist" acted as couriers and took the copy over to Switzerland by hand.

* * *

Swiss watch retailers are to give President Eisenhower a novel gadget for counting strokes at golf — one of the President's favourite sports.

The machine, encased in gold, is in the form of a wrist watch and does away with the bother of marking a golf card. A button is pressed after each stroke is played, and two dials record the number of strokes from one to 99.

* * *

The Zurich Cantonal Government is to spend about £15,000,000 on the Zurich international airport of Kloten to get it ready for jet aviation by 1960.

* * *

The Swiss Parliament has rejected a claim for 200,000 francs (about £16,000) damages brought against five presidents of the Confederation by a gaoled Swiss Nazi.

Franz Burri, who lived in Austria during the war under the protection of the Nazi authorities, claimed that the Austro-Swiss extradition treaty does not apply to political criminals.

The five presidents replied that there were no diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Austria immediately after the war.

The United States occupation authorities brought Burri to the Austro-Swiss frontier at St. Margarethen in May, 1946, and he was arrested by the Swiss police.

Two years later, he was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for treason and he is still in prison.

* * *

Switzerland will send 41 athletes for the Olympic Games at Melbourne.

* * *

The following Swiss football teams played in London over Easter: F.C. Lengnau and F.C. MuttENZ. Lengnau lost against Wimbledon by 2-1, and against Ilford 4-1; MuttENZ lost against Chertsey-Town 7-1.

* * *

Swiss Regional and Local Season Tickets will again be issued during the Summer Season 1956. Prepaid vouchers and folder containing full particulars are obtainable from the Swiss National Tourist Office, 458, Strand, W.C.2.

* * *

Skiing Feat in the Jungfrau Region.

Two skiers from Neuchâtel have recently achieved a remarkable skiing feat, by negotiating a difference of altitude totalling about 33,300ft. in one single day. They made the same periple four times, following the itinerary: by train from Grindelwald to Kleine Scheidegg, thence by skilift to the Lauberhorn, from which they descended on to Wengen. From there, they took the aerial cableway to the Maennlichen, whence they skied all the way down to Grindelwald, thus completing what may be the longest "downhill only" skiing run ever carried out in one day, and an achievement which many skiers regarded until now as impossible.

* * *

Aerial Cableway Scuol-Motta-Naluns.

The famous spa and health resort of Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, nestling between the majestic summits of the lower Engadine and the gently ascending spur of the Silvretta Massive, recently added a gondola-type aerial cableway to its many attractions. Starting near the Rhaetian Railway station, it makes accessible the sunny slopes of the splendid Motta Naluns towering 6665ft. above sea level. Its total length is

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2,530 yards, the difference in altitudes of the two terminals 2,550 feet. The trim red cabins, seating two persons, on busy days can convey 200 tourists per hour up to the lofty heights. The trip lasts a quarter of an hour. Scuol-Taras-Vulpera, due to its ideal climate, breath-taking scenery and natural carbonate springs is especially well-known as a summer resort. It has now turned into a bustling winter sports centre, which offers a Swiss Ski School, skating and curling rinks, a variety of paths for winter hikers as well as plenty of snow and sunshine.

* * *

50 Years of Winter Service on the Vitznau-Rigi Cogwheel Railway.

In the year 1906 the cogwheel railway Vitznau-Rigi for the first time made its way up the steep mountainside in winter. Today, 50 years later, the Rigi ranges amongst the most popular skiing centres in Switzerland. Since that modest beginning half a century ago great progress has been achieved: In January, 1907, the cogwheel trains conveyed 757 tourists, and in the same month of 1955 the number of passengers reached the astounding total of 11,000. The Rigi boasts many rewarding ski descents, its own Ski School, as well as a toboggan run, a superbly located curling and ice rink, and an extensive network of well-tended paths. At Rigi-Kaltbad, Staffelhoeh, Staffel and Kulm an array of famous and excellently managed hotels has sprung up, and Rigi-Kaltbad, with over 50 chalets on sunny and fog-free sites, has grown to be a booming resort.

* * *

The Lucerne International Festival of Music (15th August — 6th September, 1956).

The long list of events which have made Lucerne a tourist mecca as well as a cultural centre, every year culminates in the International Festival of Music, held in the month of August. Classical and modern masterpieces performed by first-class orchestras, famous conductors and soloists of world-wide reputation are featured in this coming summer's musical programme. Highlights of the Festival are five concerts by the Swiss Festival Orchestra (August 15th to 29th) and three concerts by the Philharmonic Orchestra of England. The traditional serenades in front of the Lion Memorial, chamber music sessions, choral concerts and a series of drama performances at the Municipal Theatre will supplement the calendar of events.

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The Zurich June Festival 1956.

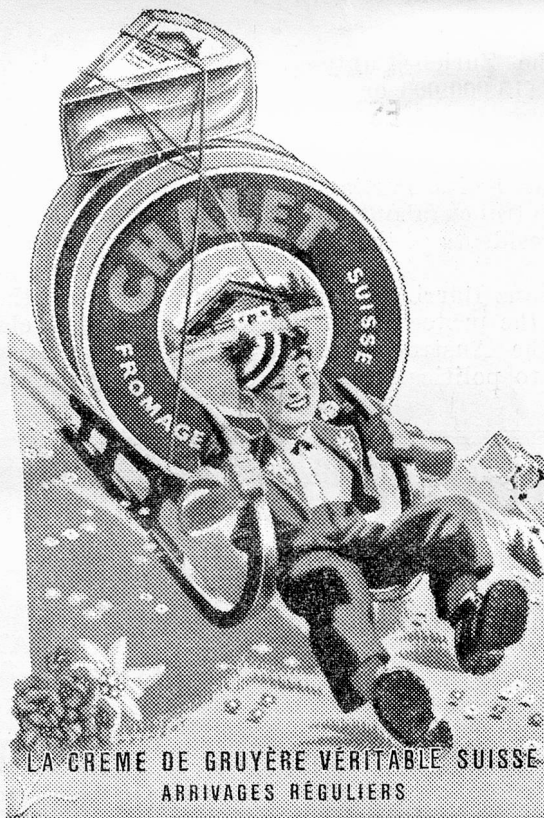
The annual Zurich June Festival is an impressive testimonial of the cultural vigilance of Switzerland's metropolis. An abundant programme of shows and concerts has again been scheduled for this coming summer. Five well-known theatrical troupes from England, Italy, France and Switzerland will present their best productions in their own languages: June 9th, "El Nost Milan" (Il Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano); June 11th/12th, "Don Juan" (Le Théâtre Populaire National de Paris); June 20th-22nd, "The Rivals" (The Bristol Old Vic Company); July 1st/2nd, "Amphitryon" (La Compagnie Madeleine Renaud-Jean-Louis Barrault, Paris); and "King Henry V" (Troupe of the Zurich Playhouse). Among

the conductors who will direct the five symphony concerts of the June Festival are Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and Hans Rosbaud. The participation of numerous world-renowned soloists has been secured. In addition to the musical and theatrical highlights, an exhibition of paintings by unknown masters of the 15th to the 19th centuries has been scheduled at the Zurich Museum of Fine Arts.

* * *

Switzerland's Stability of Prices.

Switzerland has in recent years become even more of a bargain for tourists, after being described as expensive compared to other nations right after the war. The reason for this is that in numerous European countries, whose economy had suffered during the war, the boom of the post-war years was accompanied by a tremendous boost in the cost of living. Therefore, many tourist countries, which on account of their low prices, proved particularly attractive for tourists in the transitional period of past years, are by no means better bargains than Switzerland nowadays. A look at the cost of living index (1948 = 100) of some Western European countries in 1955 reveals interesting hints as to this boost: Switzerland's cost of living level rose to only 106, Western Germany's to 110, Italy's to 124, Great Britain's to 137, France's to 144, Austria's to 207. Judging from these figures, it can be concluded that Switzerland, in comparison to other nations, has maintained a much better stability of prices during the past seven years, which consequently makes her one of the most advantageous tourist and holiday countries.



Famous all the World over for Quality and Tradition

The Engadine Concert Weeks will make the resort villages in Switzerland's picturesque Engadine Valley echo with exquisite music from July 17th to August 15th. Sixteen concerts by the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet, the 22 musicians of Bold Neel's English Chamber Orchestra, the 100 singers of the fabled Dom Choir of Strasbourg and other musical performers have been scheduled.

* * *

New Pilatus Cable Railway.

On March 9th, 1956, the new aerial cable railway from Fraekmuentegg to Pilatus Kulm has been inaugurated. A new excursion is now available to holiday makers of Lucerne and other surrounding resorts. The circular ticket from Alpnachstad by the steepest cogwheel railway in the world to Pilatus Kulm, by aerial cable railway (Luftseilbahn) to Fraekmuentegg and cabin railway (Gondelbahn) to Kriens costs Fr.14.— or Fr.7.— in conjunction with the Holiday Ticket.

* * *

Six Day Holiday Courses in Photography at Pontresina.

Mr. B. Schocher, a local professional photographer and cameraman, is organising, from mid-May to mid-June, 1956, six-day holiday courses, which will consist of lectures on the various aspects of photography and excursions during which practical work will be carried out. The programme will be completed by film and slide shows in the evening. A fee of

between Fr.147.— and Fr.168.— (for seven days) covers all lectures, excursions and shows, including full board at the Hotel Mueller, an establishment of the best repute.

* * *

News from the Seiler Hotels Concern, Zermatt.

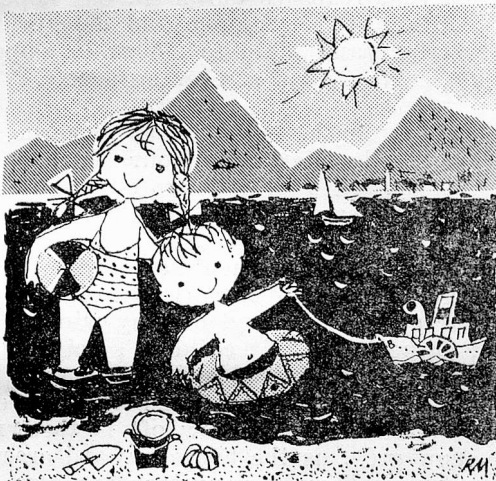
The Seiler Hotels concern in Zermatt, with approximately 700 beds, has been in existence for just over a hundred years. A programme of renovation has recently been initiated. Improvements to the various hotels are being carried out, and a new building, planned in collaboration with the PTT, will be of the greatest importance to the resort. Apart from a spacious Post Office, which will cover the needs of the constantly expanding resort, and several large shops, this ensemble of buildings will be erected on the site now occupied by the Seiler Tea Shop, at the very heart of the resort. A new tea shop, equipped for up-to-date catering, as well as first-class hotel-rooms with balconies and facing south, worthy of the most exacting clientele, will be incorporated. The work should begin shortly, and it is hoped that the premises, which will be called "New Seiler House", will be ready by Whitsun 1957. To complete the project, the Villa Margherita, a dependency of the Hotel Mont-Cervin and situated opposite, will undergo a complete transformation both inside and outside. Special attention will be given to the installation of private bathrooms and showers.

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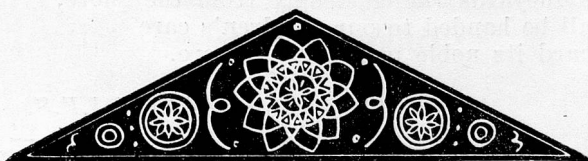
The Simplon Festivities.

Some changes have been made in the official programme of the 50th jubilee of the Simplon Tunnel. According to latest reports the official Italian day for the commemoration has been slated for May 17th in Milan. The Swiss guests of honour, among whom the Swiss President, Dr. M. Feldmann, are to leave Lausanne and Berne in special trains for Brig and Domodossola, from where they will travel together to Milan. The official Swiss day has been scheduled for May 18th in Lausanne. The invited guests will depart in the morning from Milan, and, after stop-overs at Domodossola, Iselle and Brig, where a cele-

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bration has been planned at the Stockalper Palace, will continue their journey to Lausanne to attend a special celebration there. This will be followed by the first showing of the Simplon film and the inauguration of an exhibition of contemporary paintings featuring the following themes: 50 years of the Simplon Tunnel, arrival of the first train in Lausanne 100 years ago, 150 years of the Simplon Road, and 50 years of the postal motor-coach service. The Swiss festivities and the Simplon commemoration as a whole will come to a close with a banquet in the Beaulieu Theatre at Lausanne.

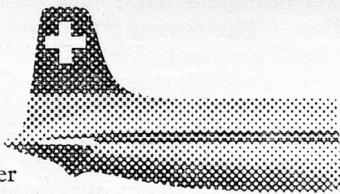
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700 Anniversary of the City of Sursee.

Sursee, the quaint little town in the Canton of Lucerne, commemorates its 700th anniversary this year. A document dated 1256 and treasured in the cantonal archives of the city of Lucerne, reveals that Count Hartmann the Younger of Kyburg donated a homestead to the district and convent of St. Urban, "so that they may build a house in that very place", and on the same occasion admitted the monastery of St. Urban under his protectorate. Authentic relics at Sursee today are evidential of an urban community established under the sovereignty of the Kyburgs which lasted till 1278. The commemorative day, July 8th, will be marked by several popular festivities as well as a historic pageant. An exhibition of paintings, armour and other vestiges of Sursee's colourful history will be an added attraction.

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NEW SWISSAIR APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. Peter R. Clark has been appointed Swissair representative for the South of England. He is succeeding Mr. John Bull who takes up a new position in the Reservations Department at Swissair's London office.

Mr. Clark was formerly Agency Superintendent for a British independent airline.

* * *

Mr. José A. Bay has been appointed Swissair representative for the Spanish-speaking territory of South America. He is now in Buenos Aires to organise new Swissair offices there.

Mr. Bay was formerly General Manager of Wagon-Lits/Cook in Chile and later in Brazil; subsequently he was a manufacturer in Switzerland.

Plans are under active study to extend Swissair's present South America service to Buenos Aires and to increase it to two flights weekly.

HYMNE A LA TERRE.

Pierre Girard.

Soil of my homeland, ever sunlight-fed
And tilled throughout the year, a fruitful loam;
Soil of the vineyard, soil that grows our bread,
That throbs with life, surrounding every home.

All Heaven's breath and energy contrive
By unseen rays to stir the hidden root
And, mingling in your breast, create a life
That slowly rises in each tender shoot.

Soil, you that reabsorb our flesh, our hopes,
Our tears, desires, our triumphs and defeats
So that from lake and plain to mountain slopes
The morning harvest that of evening greets.

It is your strength, O soil, that gives us birth,
Your destiny dwells mirrored in our heart;
Your laws are ours, for everywhere on earth
Death, love and flowering have their part.

We love you in our women's eyes that shine,
And in the golden skin of those who toil,
We love your gift of glowing, dreamy wine
Soil of our fathers and our children's soil.

To you, the dead who rest and softly sleep
Beside the church whose shadow oft is thrown,
Now blue, now grey, as the hours onward creep,
We promise we shall make your task our own.

This land you gave us, land so rich and fair,
With vineyards rising steeply from the shore,
It shall be handed to our children's care
To guard its noble past for evermore.

Translated by J.J.F.S.

December, 1955.