

News at random

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The Swiss Observer

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FRIDAY, 13th APRIL, 1962

NEWS AT RANDOM



Federal

The Swiss electorate, in a referendum, rejected by roughly 537,000 votes to 286,000 a proposal to add to the constitution a paragraph that would prohibit on Swiss territory "the manufacture, importation, transit or storing of nuclear weapons and of their constituent parts".

Fifty-five per cent of the all-male electorate voted. The proposal was rejected by twenty-one cantons and accepted by only the three French-speaking cantons of Geneva, Vaud, and Neuchâtel, and the Italian-speaking Ticino.

Monsieur Walter Jaeggi, at present permanent Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of Bulgaria, has been appointed Head of the Federal Information and Press Service, in succession to Minister Alfred Fischli, now Swiss Minister to the Republic of Uruguay.

The newly appointed Israeli Ambassador, Monsieur Schmuël Bentsur, has presented his credentials to Monsieur Paul Chaudet, President of the Swiss Confederation, and M. F. T. Wahlen, Foreign Minister, at the Palais Fédéral in Berne. He held until recently a post in the Israeli Foreign Office. Previously he was Chargé d'Affaires in Bucharest and Ambassador in Vienna.

Monsieur Bentsur was born in Cluj (Rumania), and emigrated to Israel in 1943.

The Swiss Federal Railways carried in February 1962 18.5 million passengers, or 200,000 more than in February 1961. Receipts: 29.8 million francs (February 1961: 28.7 million francs).

Goods traffic is returned as 2.34 million tons, or 170,000 tons more than in February 1961. Receipts: 48.7 million francs (February 1961: 44.4 million francs).

Cantonal

Twelve skiers were buried by an avalanche in the Maenlifuh district (Niesen-kette). Eleven of them were able to extricate themselves, the other lost his life. [A.T.S.]

An International Dog Show will be held in Berne on 2nd and 3rd June 1962. Over 1,000 dogs, both from Switzerland and from abroad, will be shown. [A.T.S.]

M. Jacques Bulet (Conservative Christian Socialist) has been elected president of the commune of Estavayer-le-Lac. [A.T.S.]

The French Ambassador in Berne, Monsieur Philippe Baudet, paid an official visit to the town of Basle. He was received at the Town Hall by the members of the government of the canton Basle-Town. A luncheon was offered to the distinguished guest at the "Wildtschen Haus", which was followed by a visit to the Basle port. [A.T.S.]

Mr. Jakob Stricker (Steinen) has tendered his resignation as a member of the government of the canton Appenzell A.Rh. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Otto Stamm, of Schleithem, has been appointed chief surgeon of the Women's Clinic at the cantonal hospital in St. Gall. [A.T.S.]

Dr. Willi Schohaus, for 34 years head of the Teachers Seminary Kreuzlingen (Ct. Thurgau), has retired from his post. He is the author of the well-known book, "Schatten über der Schule". [A.T.S.]

National Councillor Enrico Franzoni, President of the commune of Muralto (Ct. Ticino), was acquitted by the Locarno tribunal on a charge of ballot rigging. [A.T.S.]

During the year 1961, 79 persons were killed and 1,043 were injured in traffic accidents in the canton of Valais. [A.T.S.]

Three patients lost their lives in a fire which broke out — owing to one patient having dropped a lighted cigarette — at the municipal hospital "Les Cadolles", Neuchâtel. Those who died were: Paul Ryser (41), Alois Leisli (80), Charles Meran (50). The damage caused to the building is in the neighbourhood of 100,000 francs. [A.T.S.]

M. Jean-Paul Benoît has been elected manager of the municipal traffic office in Neuchâtel, in succession to the late M. Oscar Bovet. [A.T.S.]

356,219 visitors went through the turnstiles of the "Salon de l'Automobile" at Geneva, which closed its doors on 24th March. This is 25,000 visitors more than last year. Amongst the distinguished visitors were Lord Home and Mr. Dean Rusk, British and American Foreign Ministers. [A.T.S.]

During 1961, 7,761 traffic accidents have occurred in the canton of Geneva. 44 persons lost their lives and 1,514 were injured. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS

The following deaths are reported from Switzerland:

Charles Oederlin, for thirty years general manager of the "Cercle des agriculteurs de Genève", in Geneva, at the age of 72.

François Fleury, manager of the "Publicitas" office, St. Imier, in Porrentruy, aged 73.

Dr. Ernest Demieville, the oldest member of the Vaudois medical practitioners, in Villars s/Bex, at the age of 86.

Raoul Alster, actor, and since 1935 director of the "Atelier Theater" Berne, in Berne, aged 63.

Mme. Marie Collombin, the oldest female inhabitant of the canton of Valais, at the age of 102.

Dr. H. Mauerhofer, president of the "Schweizerischen Filmkammer", in Berne, aged 57.

Deacon Theodor Sieber, in Weinfelden, at the age of 72. The deceased was from 1927 to 1957 a preacher in Weinfelden, and for many years president "der Synode der evangelischen Landeskirche des Kanton Thurgau".

Paul Chretien-Stutz, head of the firm Chretien & Co., "Eisen- und Metallgiesserei" Liestal, in Liestal, aged 77. The deceased had been since 1940 vice-president of the Superior Court of the canton Basle-Country.

Silvio C. Anselmi, from 1921 to 1957 chief engineer of the "Radio Schweiz A.G.", in Berne, at the age of 71.

Johann Faessler, in Steinegg nr. Appenzell, aged 75. The deceased was for eighteen years "Hauptmann" of the Rüti district. In 1941 he entered, as "Landeshauptmann", the government of the canton Appenzell I.Rh., of which he was a member until 1945.

Frau Louise Osterwalder-von Arx, in Aarau, at the age of 100.

Dr. phil. Johann Kaiser, priest, and professor at the "Kantonsschule" Zug, in Zug, aged 71.

Hans Bieri, building contractor, and for thirty years a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Neuchâtel, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, at the age of 81.

Dr. Franz Meyer, in Zurich, at the age of 73. The deceased had been since 1940 president of the "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kapitalanlagen", and since 1920 a member of the "Aufsichtsrat der Schweizerischen Lebensversicherung- und Rentenanstalt" Zurich, of which he was elected in 1958 as president. Dr. Meyer was also a member of the board of the "Bank Leu & Co., A.G." Zurich.

Dr. jur. Josef Ebner, lawyer, and from 1924 to 1936 a member of the Grand Council of the canton of Schaffhausen, in Schaffhausen, aged 76.

Dr. Max de Saussure, "Privatdozent" for Astronomy at the Universities of Neuchâtel and Geneva, in Solothurn, at the age of 61.

Dr. h.c. Alfred Willener-Schmid, in Lenzburg, aged 62. The deceased was a partner in the firm Willener, Rupp & Co., Lenzburg. He held various posts in the commune of Lenzburg and in educational institutions. In 1956 the University of Berne honoured him with the degree of *doctor honoris causa*.

Frau Ida von Steiger-Hofer, the widow of a former Mayor of the town of Berne, and a member of the States Council, in Berne, at the age of 99.

[A.T.S.]

ANNIVERSARIES

Professor Dr. Arnold Heim (80), of Zurich, eminent geologist and author of many scientific works. The "Jubilar" was from 1929 to 1931 *Ordinarius* of the Geological Institute of the Sun-Yat-Sen University, Canton, China.

* * *

Arnold Bolle (80), of La Chaux-de-Fonds, lawyer. He has played, and is still playing, an important role in the life of the Protestant Churches in Switzerland.

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Robert F. Denzler (70), of Zurich, for many years musical adviser of the "Stadttheater" Zurich, and noted composer and conductor.

* * *

Dr. Josef Riedener (70), of St. Gall, from 1936 to 1960 a member of the government of the canton of St. Gall. He sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1939 to 1947.

* * *

Julius Amman (80), of Trogen, writer on Appenzeller folklore.

* * *

Rudolf Maurer (90), of Rieden nr. Wallisellen, from 1920 to 1939 a member of the government of the canton of Zurich.

* * *

Frau Anna Reinhart-Meier (95), of Winterthur, widow of Dr. h.c. Alfred Reinhart, co-founder of the "Landeserziehungsheim" Albisbrunn.

[A.T.S.]

LEGACIES AND DONATIONS

The late Carl Stucki-Holenstein, merchant, of St. Gall, has left various legacies amounting to 150,000.— francs. Beneficiaries are principally churches, charitable institutions and hospitals.

The president of the Church Council of the canton of Basle-Country has received an anonymous donation of 30,000.— francs for the "Aktion Brot für Brüder".

The late Robert Rosset, of Morges, bequeathed various sums totalling 65,000.— francs to hospitals and medical institutions.

[A.T.S.]

DIAMOND WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Mr. and Mrs. E. Wenger-Gysi of Innertkirchen, Mr. and Mrs. L. Vesco of Neuchâtel, Mr. and Mrs. R. Schibli-Schlatter of Otelfingen (Ct. Zurich), Mr. and Mrs. J. Doucet-Domejoz of Epalings (Ct. Vaud), Mr. and Mrs. P. Saladin-Martischang of Grellingen (Ct. Aargau), Mr. and Mrs. J. Notz-Schibli of Bulach.

The following have celebrated their iron wedding anniversaries (65): Mr. and Mrs. J. Seppele-Buechi of Zurich, Mr. and Mrs. A. Dufour of Cully, Mr. and Mrs. J. Bernhard of Fribourg, Mr. and Mrs. Fitz-Preisig of Gais, Mr. and Mrs. J. Jaeger-Stricker of Herisau.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

VARIOUS

Switzerland will for the first time be represented at the Film Festival in Cannes. Two films, "Nur ein Stück Brot" (Kern Film) and "Unter die Lupe genommen", will be shown.

* * *

The Swiss Consul-General in Algiers has informed the Federal Political Department that two Swiss citizens have lost their lives in the recent disturbances. They were André Fague (28), of Trey (Ct. Vaud), and Walter Kaufmann (37), of Wallbach (Ct. Aargau).

* * *

Switzerland exported in February 1962 3,506,000 watches, to the value of 99.4 million francs. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The Board of Directors of CIBA Basle have nominated Dr. Samuel Schweizer, Chairman of the Swiss Bank Corporation, Basle, as Vice-President of the Board.

[A.T.S.]

SWISS BANK CORPORATION

(A company limited by shares incorporated in Switzerland)



In SWITZERLAND there are offices in Basle, Geneva, Zurich and all the principal centres.

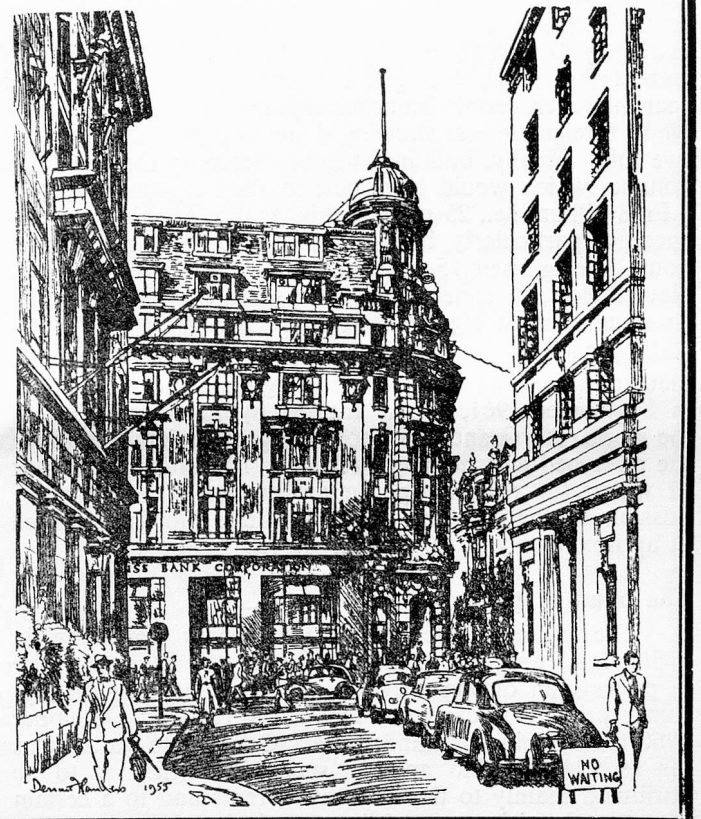
In LONDON the City Office is situated at 99 Gresham Street, E.C.2, and there is a WEST END BRANCH, specially equipped for the convenience of visitors, at 11c Regent Street, S.W.1, close to Piccadilly Circus.

In NEW YORK there is an Agency at 15 Nassau Street, and a Branch at 10 West 49th Street.

In CANADA the Bank is represented by its affiliated Company the Swiss Corporation for Canadian Investments at 360 St. James Street West, Montreal.

In MOROCCO there is another affiliated Company, the Banque Franco-Suisse pour le Maroc, Casablanca.

CAPITAL AND RESERVES — S.Frs.367.000.000



Pater Timotheus Bitterli, a member of the Benedict Order, and at present apostolic administrator in Hemeung (Korea), has been made a Bishop by the Pope. He was born in 1905 in Rohr near Olten.

* * *

The curators of the Martin-Bodmer Foundation have awarded the Gottfried Keller Prize (10,000.— francs) to Professor Dr. Emil Staiger of Zurich.

* * *

The accounts for 1961 of the following cantons have just been published:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ct. Appenzell A.Rh. | credit balance 194,000.— frs. |
| Ct. Glarus | credit balance 310,862.— frs. |
| Ct. Vaud | credit balance 26.8 million frs. |
| Ct. Nidwalden | credit balance 4,282.— frs. |
| Ct. Schwyz | debit balance 12,477.— frs. |

[A.T.S.]

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Economy in 1961

The boom continues

For Switzerland, 1961 was yet another record year with regard to economic expansion. The net national income, for example, which amounted to S.Fr. 34 billion in 1960, might well, according to the first estimates, approach the 37 billion mark. Most industrial sectors benefited greatly from the general state of intense activity. In the electro-technical industry, orders increased by 25 per cent, compelling this industry to lengthen its delivery dates, as a result of the acute shortage of manpower. A similar trend and identical problems were met in other sectors of the engineering industry. The watchmaking industry — whose products must now pass a compulsory technical check — as well as the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, also profited from the prevailing extremely favourable conditions. In textiles, the situation was almost stable but good. Towards the end of the year, however, certain branches experienced a slight falling-off in foreign orders, allowing them to expect a comparative lull. Finally, building, without reaching the expected volume, which would have cost in the neighbourhood of S.Fr. 8 billion, i.e., 25 per cent higher than in 1960, experienced a particularly busy year, the number of working hours having risen 15 per cent above the figure for 1960. Nevertheless, in spite of this intense activity, the housing shortage in most big towns remains acute.

In the field of large-scale projects, mention must be made of an extraordinary engineering feat: the completion, in September 1961, of the highest hydro-electric dam in the world, the Grande-Dixence, rising some 935 feet above the river bed and holding back over 14 million cubic feet of water; the net average annual output of power made possible by the construction of this huge dam is estimated at approximately 1,600 million kW/h.

The trend of prices —

The present state of intense activity prevailing in Switzerland was accompanied, in 1961, by a sharper rise in prices than during previous years. The index of consumer prices, for example, rose from 184.7 in December 1960 to 191.3 in December 1961. One has to go back as far as 1947 to find another such rise, which is to be attributed mainly to the increase in rents and to a certain extent to the rising cost of home agricultural produce.

— and wages

Another result of the 1961 boom is the particularly strained position of the labour market. Not only is unemployment non-existent, but in most sectors the number of situations vacant greatly exceeds the number of workers in search of jobs. Such a situation is all the more remarkable when it is considered that during August 1961 the Swiss economy employed the record number of 550,000 foreign workers, a figure exceeding that of 1960 by 26 per cent and representing some 22 per cent of the working population! The labour shortage is one of the main concerns of employers wishing to avoid an excessive rise in production costs, especially as profit margins tend to be growing smaller. It is leading to a continual increase in wages — which have been rising even more sharply than consumer prices. Thus, in 1961 the *effective* wages of workers in industry and the building trade rose 1.1 per cent. Wage-earners having thus derived certain material advantages from the general state of prosperity, it is not surprising that the social climate is excellent: 1961 was the first year, since statistics concerning labour conflicts have been kept, during which not a single working day was lost as a result of such a conflict.

Foreign trade

In 1961 Swiss imports and exports broke all previous records, amounting to S.Fr. 11,644 million and S.Fr. 8,822 million respectively. But whereas the former rose 20.7 per cent from one year to the next, the latter rose only 8.5 per cent. But whereas the former rose 20.7 per cent from one year to the next, the latter rose only 8.5 per cent. The deficit has therefore increased. The figure for 1961 leads observers to fear that the overall balance of trade, which has been a favourable one for the last ten years (with the exception of 1957), will be heavily in the red.

The deficit was particularly large in trade with EEC (S.Fr. 3,625 million) and especially with Federal Germany (S.Fr. 2,086 million). With EFTA, the balance was a favourable one, as with most overseas countries, except the U.S.A. and Canada. The Common Market has further strengthened its position as Switzerland's biggest trade partner. Trade as a whole (imports plus exports) between Switzerland and EEC (without Greece) represented 53.3% of this country's total foreign trade (as opposed to 51.8% in 1960. These figures were respectively 25.6% (24.4%) for Federal Germany alone, 13.8% (13.5%) for EFTA (without Finland) and 10.7% (9.8%) for the U.S.A. This geographical distribution shows why Switzerland has always been actively in favour of a European market without, however, being able to sacrifice her neutrality and her trade with countries overseas. In accordance with this policy, in December 1961, together with Sweden and Austria, she proposed starting negotiations with a view to an eventual *association* with the Common Market.

The *structure* of Switzerland's foreign trade, by *categories of products*, shows a steady rise in trade in machinery, apparatus and instruments (imports: S.Fr. 1,920 million, i.e., plus 37%; exports: S.Fr. 2,927 million, i.e., plus 13.3%). Such a trend is typical of a comparatively small economy with a fast-expanding industry and a high degree of technical development. Enjoying an excellent reputation abroad for her numerous original achievements and her high quality products, Switzerland is nevertheless obliged to turn to her neighbours for certain specialities indispensable to the development and rationalisation of her industries.

(OSEC)