

News from Switzerland

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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

FEDERAL The customs agreement between the Common Market and Switzerland has been published in detail. The EEC (European Economic Community) has granted concessions to Switzerland covering a trade volume of 649 million Swiss francs. It has also reduced customs duties towards Switzerland on 65 items, mostly by 20% or more. On the other hand, Switzerland has granted new customs concessions to EEC affecting trade to the value of 541 million Swiss francs. The new agreement should start on 1st January 1963. The Swiss Chamber of Commerce comments that this result of the so-called Dillon-Round cannot be considered fully satisfactory, although the Swiss delegates at the negotiations tried their utmost to bring about a better solution.

The Federal Council has published its half-yearly report on economic measures vis-à-vis foreign countries. This statement covers trade relations with individual countries, GATT (agreement on customs and tariffs), as well as economic co-operation in Europe. The report also gives information on the state of discussions with the Common Market countries. Though Switzerland has taken up tentative negotiations with the EEC, she has remained in close contact with her EFTA partners (European Free Trade Association).

During the first six months of 1962 the various commissions of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) continued their studies of how to raise by 50% the real gross national income of the twenty member states. In order to reach this goal by 1970 great difficulties have to be solved in economic fields.

The Federal Council also reported on its attitude to "dumping". From various interested quarters, "dumping" imports had been notified during the past few years of such goods as shoes, furniture, paint brushes, glass, china, matches, and certain foodstuffs. In none of these cases could any "dumping" be proved, as these goods were imported either from economically less developed countries, where low wages and lack of welfare contributions by employers and state kept production costs down, or from countries whose trade is state controlled and where prices of exports are fixed arbitrarily and often with a political aim. These two forms of "dumping" are not internationally acknowledged as such. The federal authorities have the power to deal with genuine cases of "dumping", viz., where goods are brought on to the Swiss market well below production cost in their country of origin. The Federal Council points out that as our country depends on imports to a marked degree it is not easy to introduce measures which have a restraining influence on imports.

The Federal Council asked Parliament to accept a proposal for a cost-of-living grant for federal employees, including those of the railways. These correspond to an increase of roughly 4.5%. The message stresses that these increases were merely intended to balance the sudden rise of the cost-of-living index. In 1962 the proposed increase would cost 73.2 million francs (63.3 for employees and 9.9 for retired staff).

An increase has also been awarded to military pensioners.

As the Referendum period has expired for seven federal decrees and four resolutions the Federal Council

is now empowered to put them into operation. Among the subjects covered are civil defence, commercial enterprise, protection of birds, and adjustment of postal tariffs and telephone charges. Family allowances for agricultural workers and smallholders of low income are now payable.

In order to prepare the parliamentary autumn session, forty-two meetings of special commissions and conferences are planned for the next two months. About half of these will take place in Berne, the remainder in other parts of the country.

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The Swiss Ambassador in Morocco and a representative of the Foreign Ministry in Rabat have signed an agreement on regular air traffic between the two countries.

The Federal Council has published a message to the Algerian people in which it takes cognizance of the declaration of independence and wishes the new state and the whole people a happy and prosperous future after the many years of suffering. This message amounts to an official recognition of Algeria as an independent state.

The Federal Council has also recognised the Republic of Ruanda and the Kingdom of Burundi. These two new states have emerged from the UN trustee territory of Ruanda-Urundi.

The Federal Political Department announces that Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Libya have agreed to establish diplomatic relations. The post of Swiss Ambassador in Tripoli will be filled at a later date.

Dr. Fernand Bernoulli, Swiss Ambassador to Mexico since 1958, has also been appointed Minister Extraordinary to the Dominican Republic.

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A petition with nearly 400,000 signatures from most Cantons was handed to the Secretariat of the Federal Assembly. It asks for chiropractors to be included in the provisions of the federal sickness and accident insurance. The petitioners maintain that scientifically-trained and state-examined practitioners give considerable help to patients which has already been recognised by most Cantons, and it therefore follows that they should be included in state insurance legislation.

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VARIOUS

In December 1961 the sale of "Pro Juventute" stamps and cards reached Fr.3,512,445, which is Fr.331,035 more than in the previous year and an all-time record.

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An association of officers of the Territorial Army has been founded in Zurich, with General Staff Colonel Goumoens (Lucerne) as President and General Staff Colonel Riva (Lugano) and Lieutenant-Colonel Servien (Yverdon) as Vice-Presidents.

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On 25th June Swissair pilot Pierre Robert piloted his aircraft for the last time on the route from Barcelona to Zurich after spending over 14,000 hours of his life as a pilot. Flight Captain Robert entered the services of Swissair 27 years ago and now, at the age of 59, he retires from active flying, but will remain with the company in another capacity.

*Most news items supplied by
A.T.S. (Agence Télégraphique Suisse).*

PROMINENT VISITORS TO SWITZERLAND

Easily the largest number of distinguished and well-known visitors from abroad arrive in Geneva. This is, of course, mainly due to the many international conferences held in that city. Amongst recent arrivals was Mr. Averell Harrimann, head of the delegation at the conference on Laos. The Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Office, Mr. Chaim Yahil, visited Geneva, where he had important talks with various V.I.P.s, e.g., U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Felix Schnyder. Ex-President of the provisional government of Algiers, Mr. Ferhat Abbas, and Dr. Achmed Francis also visited Geneva, as did the Australian Minister for Immigration, Mr. A. R. Downer, who was on an official tour of Europe. King Hussein of Jordan and his wife spent a few days in Lausanne on their private tour of Western Europe.

Zurich welcomed a number of distinguished visitors, too. Amongst them was the Israeli Minister for Commerce and Industry, Mr. Pinchas Sapir, whose visit to Switzerland was aimed at contacting Swiss industries in connection with industrial and general development projects in Israel. The President of the German "Bundestag", Dr. Eugen Gerstenmaier, visited Zurich as head of the delegation at the fifty years jubilee of the Germano-Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Zurich.

Berne, too, records the visit of some well-known personalities. At the end of May some thirty members of the British Magistrates' Association made a study tour of Switzerland and were received in Berne by Federal Councillor von Moos, head of the Federal Department of Justice. The British Magistrates also visited other parts of Switzerland. Ex-King Umberto of Italy stayed in Berne on his way to the Lake of Geneva. The Chief Medical Officer of the American Air Force, Major-General O. K. Niess, went to Berne in June. Amongst other places he visited in Switzerland were the Aviation Department of the Medical Institute of the Swiss Army and the Research Station on the Jungfrau Joch.

The Senegalese Minister for Technical Assistance and Co-operation, Mr. Karim Gaye, had important discussions in Berne regarding the pending treaty on commerce and technical assistance between Senegal and Switzerland. He was also probing the possibilities of investments within the framework of the Senegalese four-year plan. Another visitor from a country in need of technical assistance was President Hubert Maga from the Republic of Dahomey (Guinea Coast, French West Africa). He was offered a reception by the two Federal Councillors Wahlen and von Moos at the Von Wattenwyl House. President Maga also spent some time at Muttentz near Basle with the management of the "Verband Schweizerischer Konsumvereine" (VSK), which gives technical assistance to the young republic.

St. Gall was visited by a group of cotton experts from the Sudan, headed by the president of the "Gezira Board", the state-managed cotton growers' association of the Sudan. Gezira is the name of the enormous fertile region at the fork of the White Nile and the Blue Nile, whence first-class cotton is exported — some to Switzerland. The delegation showed keen interest in the St. Gall embroidery industry and the production of fine cotton textiles.

The German President Luebke and his wife, as well as some other prominent visitors from Bonn, ended their state visit to Switzerland with a private visit to Schaffhausen and Stein am Rhein.

The former French Minister of Transport, Monsieur Robert Buron, visited La Chaux-de-Fonds, where he was

officially welcomed by the head of the Neuchâtel Cantonal Government, President P. A. Leuba.

Sir William Hailey, editor-in-chief of "The Times", attended the annual meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce in Basle, during which he gave a highly original talk on British mentality.

The Valais was toured by a group of some sixty members of FAO representing twenty different countries. The visitors studied local agriculture, especially irrigation and forestry.

Twenty school children from Berlin visited Basle, where an exhibition, "Berlin Children See Switzerland", was held at the Museum for Arts and Crafts. All the pictures had been contributed by West Berlin school-children of all ages in a competition. They had first been on show during the "Basler Tage" in Berlin. The twenty successful competitors each won a trip to Switzerland. Their journey, organised by the Swiss National Tourist Office, took them to Central Switzerland and on to the Pestalozzi Children's Village at Trogen.

Finally 130 special visitors arrived from USA on a five-week holiday in Switzerland. The male choir Helvetia from New York is celebrating its 105th anniversary this year. The previous Swiss tour was made during the centenary of the choir, when they gave concerts in various Swiss towns. This time no concerts have been planned as the choir intends to return in 1964 during the Swiss National Exhibition in Lausanne.

Mariann.

(Based on news items supplied by A.T.S.)

DEATHS

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Dr. Werner Baumann, "Staatschreiber" of the Canton of Aargau since 1953, died at the age of 58. For many years he had been chief secretary at the Cantonal Department of Justice and Police.

Hubert Matthey died in Basle at the age of 88. He had been teacher of French at the High School for Girls, and up to his death correspondent of several newspapers from the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

Walter Huber was 62 when he died in Geneva at the end of last month. He was a former director of the Caran D'Ache crayon company, and a well-known personality in Swiss commercial circles.

Wilhelm Wever died on the eve of his 71st birthday. He was a former director of "Publicitas" in Basle and later general agent and representative of the Geneva Life Insurance Company. He had many public interests in Basle, i.e., the ice rink, "Radio Basel", the association for the development of the "Freie Strasse", the main shopping street, etc.

Frau Dr. Margrith Bosch-Peter, aged 64, died at Zollikon (Zurich). She was a well-known suffragette and member of the SAFFA council (Exhibition of Women's Work). She was also a university lecturer.

Dr. iur. Jakob Otto Kehrlı died in Berne, aged 70. The deceased was a former president of the High Court of Justice, an expert on law, and well known as art lover and politician.

Josef Loser died at Kuessnacht (SZ). He was 64 and a member of the Criminal Court at Schwyz.

Markus Ebnoether, aged 76, died at Vorderthal (SZ). He was a Commune Councillor and well known as a farmer and agricultural judge. His death was caused by an accident.

JUBILEES

It has been established for some time that the average expectation of life has been increasing over the last decades. This seems to be borne out by news of several Swiss reaching a century during the past few weeks. In Uttwil (TG), Mrs. Johanna Annasohn-Rothenfelder has even reached her 103rd birthday — and in good health at that. Mrs. Henriette Bollag reached her centenary in June. She is an honorary citizen of Stein (AG), and she, too, is of good physical health and mental alertness. Johann Traber completed 100 years in Basle. He is a former tailor in the services of the Basle tramways.

Excellent health is also enjoyed by Fritz Frey at Niedererlinsbach (SO), who received the traditional present of an armchair on reaching one hundred years. It has always puzzled me why an armchair should be a desirable gift for a centenarian. It seems to me that either the happy fellow already possesses such a chair or else if he has done without one throughout his eighties and nineties he would hardly require one now. But then I suppose it would be difficult to find a gift to please every centenarian.

Mrs. Margreth Caluzi from Chur has completed her 99th year. For decades she worked in hotels, and up to her 75th year she was "Kaffeeköchin" (coffee maker) at a large hotel at Pontresina.

Hermann Hesse, the famous author, celebrated his 85th birthday in July. German by birth, he has been a Swiss citizen for many years. He lives at Montagnola near Lugano and is a Nobel Prize winner for literature.

Dr. Walther Stuber from Olten celebrated his 80th birthday. His wise counsel as a lawyer is still highly valued. Another octogenarian is the artist, Eugen Ammann, whose paintings are mostly of a religious character.

Four prominent Swiss have recently celebrated their 70th birthdays. The former Federal Councillor, Dr. Hans Streuli, was born in 1892, studied architecture, was later a member of the Zurich cantonal government and chairman of the organising committee of the Swiss National Exhibition in 1939. He was Federal Councillor from 1953 to 1959. In Basle it is Prof. Fritz Lieb, theologian and scientist and member of the curatorial board of Basle University. Another professor, this time a doctor and psychiatrist, Prof. Dr. Jakob Wyrsh, has reached the age of 70 at Stans, where he is well known for his researches into the culture of his native Canton Unterwalden. The fourth septuagenarian is the first French-speaking Town President of Bienne, Edouard Baumgartner, a former teacher and inspector of education.

The last birthday on our list is the 60th of the former Federal Councillor, Guiseppe Lepori, who was a member of the Federal Council from 1954 to 1959.

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Unfortunately Switzerland has a very high rate of divorce, and we hear only too often of broken marriages. Nevertheless, we may report five iron weddings. To have been married for 65 years testifies not only of marital faithfulness, but also of good health on both sides. Mr. and Mrs. Jakob and Elise Zimmerli-Ehrismann live at

Unterentfelden (AG). He is 89, his wife 87. For over fifty years he worked at the Bally shoe factories. Mr. and Mrs. Karl and Bertha Hunziker from Basle are 89 and 90 respectively, and Mr. and Mrs. Jules Parel-Bieli celebrated their iron wedding at Grenchen (SO), where they have been living since 1897. The husband was born in April 1876 and his wife in July 1875. Mr. and Mrs. Kaspar and Anna Hoesli-Feldmann celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary at Glarus. The couple, who are 90 and 87 years of age, go for daily walks and do their shopping together. Finally, there are Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Maroll at Worben (BE), who celebrated their iron wedding on 10th July, at the age of 89 and 90 respectively.

If 65 years of married life are a wonderful achievement, so are 60 years. We have the pleasure of reporting no fewer than six diamond wedding anniversaries, three from Zurich: Mr. and Mrs. Hermann and Sophie Brunner-Baenziger (aged 87 and 82), Mr. and Mrs. Gustav and Elise Birrer-Bader (85 and 84 years old), and Mr. and Mrs. Johann and Verena Oberhasli-Pfeiffer (89 and 90 respectively). The next diamond wedding anniversary was reported from Ruethi (Rhine Valley), that of Mr. and Mrs. Johannes and Berta Buechel-Mattle, who are 86 and 79. Mr. and Mrs. Johannes and Katharina Brunner-Zellweger had been married for 60 years on 15th July. They live at Unterwaldstatt and are 81 and 80 years old. And finally, Mr. and Mrs. Friedrich and Louise Leuenberger-Herr celebrated 60 years of married life in Basle, where the husband, now aged 82, worked as a gardener. His wife is three years younger.

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Now we come to another kind of jubilee, that of fifty years as a member of the same firm. Mr. Walter Knoepfel has worked for half a century as a compositor with Schlaepfer & Co., the printers of the "Appenzeller Zeitung" at Herisau.

Regierungsrat Dr. Urs Dietschi is celebrating his silver jubilee as a member of the Cantonal Government of Solothurn. Another silver anniversary is that of Mrs. Mariann Meier, who has just completed 25 years of representing the Schweizerischer Landfrauenverband on the Executive Committee of the Associated Countrywomen of the World in London.

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So far we have been dealing with individuals. Now let us turn to a remarkable number of jubilees of organisations and institutions. Let us take the "minor" ones first, those of "only" 25 years of existence. On 1st August it will be 25 years since the Hohle Gasse near Kuessnacht, where Tell shot Gessler, the tyrant, was inaugurated. To commemorate this event a youth "Landsgemeinde" will be held on this historic site on our National Day. School-children (they own the Hohle Gasse as well as the Rütli, birthplace of the nation) from all parts of Switzerland will gather for a festive act of remembrance.

Three silver jubilees have been celebrated in Berne. The railway Berne-Zollikofen and the animal park "Daehlhöelzli", very popular with the Bernese youth, are both 25 years old. The third is the movement "Berne