

Cessation of active military defence in Switzerland

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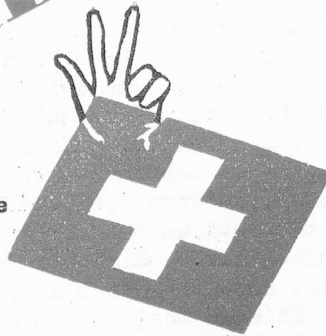
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CESSATION OF ACTIVE MILITARY DEFENCE IN SWITZERLAND.

In great moments in history, the nations and their leaders by their actions, reactions and demonstrations afford the students of history and other spectators a genuine picture of the spirit and greatness of a country. It is the purpose of this bulletin to record one such recent event in Switzerland, namely,

THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY MARKING THE END OF ACTIVE MILITARY DEFENCE.

In Berne on the 19th August, 1945, at 10 a.m., religious services were held in the Cathedral for the Protestants and in the Trinity Church for the Catholics. There was not enough room in either church for all the worshippers who desired to attend. In the afternoon, in the public square in front of the Federal Building, a large crowd assembled to witness the final parading of the flags of all the military units.

Ernest Zaugg, an American journalist who attended the ceremony, wrote:-

"This afternoon in the square in front of the Swiss Parliament Building, the Swiss people celebrated the demobilization of the Swiss Army and the return of the Swiss soldier to civilian life. The Swiss soldiers have been standing guard over the borders of their small mountain republic while cities and nations around them have sunk into ruin and defeat. Now, the Swiss men can return to their farms and businesses, to their wives and children, with the proud feeling of duty done. My impression of the Swiss people during these ceremonies is that here amidst the Alps and plains and busy factories live one of the happiest and most contented people in all Europe. I have just returned from the ruined cities of Germany and Austria. I have seen people amidst the ruins waiting in bread lines, hungry and ragged. I have seen refugees wandering over the highways, tasting the bitter fruits of war and defeat. In Switzerland, people are clean and well fed. Their government and economy run with the precision of a Swiss watch. They owe their condition in no small part to the strength of their army and the loyalty of their soldiers.

Those of you who know the pretty little City of Berne, the Swiss Capital can picture to yourselves the ceremony which I witnessed. The people lined the streets for several hours before the official parade and speeches. A grandstand had been erected for the Federal Parliament. The windows of the houses were decorated with flowers and flags. In the courtyard of the Parliament, the Federal Council of seven, including the President, Mr. de Steiger, gathered with the highest Government officials. As civilians they were dressed in black dress suits with top hats. Then came the Commander-in-Chief General Guisan and his staff. Together they marched to their places in the grandstand. Near them stood the foreign military attaches and representatives of the Allied governments.

The ceremony opened with the playing of the Swiss national anthem. The troops marched past to receive the salute of the General. First the cavalry, then the infantry in their gray uniform and black helmets, and finally the air corps. They carried the banners which they have been guarding for five years, their beloved white cross on a red field. The soldiers then formed a block in front of the Parliament to hear the farewell speech of the General, who in time of peace returns to the rank of the soldiers. After the General's speech, Federal President de Steiger expressed the thanks of the Swiss Government and people to the army and its General. "Today", he said, "the banners are neither torn nor covered with blood as in previous battles in Swiss history. Nor have they seen their guards sink beside them. Almighty God has preserved us from the horrors of war. Other armies have this time led the fight against tyranny and paid the price of freedom. This we must not forget." Glancing into the future, President de Steiger said: "Great tasks await us. The Swiss democracy, small as it is, will try to be a useful, independent and valuable member of the family of nations. When the victors assume new tasks for the well-being of a shaken world, our little country will show itself worthy of the respect of the nations." After the ceremony the flags of the Swiss army were deposited in the Parliament building. The crowd sang the national anthem and cheered the General as never a departing official has been cheered in this undemonstrative country."

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During the last parliamentary session, the Chambers approved a project of the Federal Council concerning the extension of our diplomatic service abroad. This project provides for the setting up of new Legations, especially in various countries of Central and Latin America, Canada, South Africa and Australia. Putting into practice this decision the Federal Council appointed Dr. Victor Nef as Swiss Minister to Canada. The ability displayed by Dr. Nef during his long stay in the United States as Swiss Consul General in New York is sufficient proof that in his new functions he will render valuable service not only in the diplomatic interests of Switzerland and Canada but also in their economic interests.

The Canadian Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs declared that his country greeted with satisfaction the creation of a Swiss Legation in Ottawa and that his government had agreed to the appointment of Dr. Victor Nef, former Swiss Consul General in New York to the post of Swiss Minister. He added that Canada lacking sufficient qualified personnel at the moment would wait for a while before sending a Minister to Switzerland.

The Federal Council furthermore decided to open a Swiss Legation in China, and appointed Mr. Henri de Torrente from Sion as Swiss Minister plenipotentiary to China. Minister de Torrente will hold a post which may become of paramount importance to our country. So far the Swiss Confederation has been represented in China by the Swiss Consul General in Shanghai who also acted as Charge d'Affaires. Minister de Torrente born in 1893, entered the Federal Service in 1922. Three years ago, he was appointed Minister and delegate of the Federal Council to commercial negotiations. In this function, Minister de Torrente participated in the preparation of the important commercial agreements which were recently concluded between Switzerland and a number of other countries.

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MESSAGE FROM GENERAL EISENHOWER TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RED CROSS.

American Headquarters in Germany handed to Dr. Marti, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Frankfurt am Main, on October 1 a message signed by General Eisenhower. The following is the text of the message:

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
GENEVA SWITZERLAND

To you and your workers all over the world, on behalf of the Allied Expeditionary Force, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks.