

Home news

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DO NOT FORGET SWISS SPORTS AND GARDEN PARTY

ON SATURDAY JULY 9th.



HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS HIGH-SPEED ENTERPRISE.

Remarkable enterprise is being shown by the management of the Swiss Federal Railways in the use of its high-speed electric units. As distinct from the single-car *Flèches Rouges*, two five-car sets, hauled by locomotives, each day make the journey Zürich — Berne — Lausanne — Geneva — Lausanne — Neuchâtel — Bienne — Basle — Zürich — Berne — Lausanne — Geneva, or *vice versa*, thus connecting up all the greatest centres of population in Switzerland daily on a total itinerary of 559 miles, covered in a running time, excluding stops of about 10½ hrs. Thus to cover 3,354 miles each week at 52 m.p.h. in a country with the configuration of Switzerland is an astonishing achievement. A new streamlined three-car unit is now running in the morning from Rorschach, St. Gall, and Zürich to Berne, returning in the evening, and filling in its midday hours by running first from Berne to Bienne and back, and then from Berne to Basle and back, and so covering 457½ miles daily. The fourth set is reserved for party excursions, in some cases involving extensive tours of the country, and is bespoken practically every day in the summer season. Some handsome new two-car electric sets were also put into service in April by the Berne — Lötschberg — Simplon Company between Berne and Neuchâtel, Interlaken and Zweisimmen, and Berne and Schwarzenburg; these are known as *Flèches Bleues*, to distinguish them from their red counterparts of the Swiss Federal Railways.

NAZIS AND SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

It is reported that the German authorities have appointed a commissioner and a sub-commissioner for the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Vienna, which has thus lost its purely Swiss character. The question is being considered by the Swiss Federal Government, and until a settlement has been arrived all Swiss industrialists have been advised to stop for the present all correspondence with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce. According to latest advices the freedom of action has been restored.

SWISS "BLACK LIST."

A "black list" of Swiss citizens compiled by the German secret police was discovered in a leather brief case left in a Zurich tram.

The documents have been sent to the Swiss Government.

OUR NEUTRALITY.

A somewhat qualified recognition of our Country's neutrality has been expressed in German and Italian Notes addressed to the Federal Council last week. This re-iteration of a similar statement made by Germany in February, 1937, is sponsored by the acquiescence of the League of Nations Council of Switzerland refusal to participate in "sanctions."

AN APPOINTMENT.

Councillor of Legation Eugène Broye, from 1921 to 1925 with the Swiss Legation in Madrid, has been appointed unofficial representatives in Nationalist Spain to look after our commercial interests.

MILITARY SECRETS.

The military tribunal of the 4th division at Basle sentenced the editors of two unimportant

local papers to eight days' imprisonment — the minimum sentence — for having published particulars of certain troop movements along the frontier. The defence was a plea that the information was given with the intention of welcoming the new units and making them feel at home.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

Director Ernest Strahm died in Biel at the age of 50 after a long and painful illness. At the time of the grave 1931 crisis he was placed in charge of the delicate negotiations between manufacturers and banks and successfully organised and strengthened the watch industry.

SOLOTHURN.

Heated controversy has been created by the opening of the municipal lido in Olten. Local social bodies have lodged protests against the "mixing of the sexes."

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In order to cover an estimated deficit in the budget for 1939 the Regierungsrat proposes to raise a loan of two million francs.

BASLE.

Plans are under consideration for enlarging and modernising the municipal hospital (Bürger-spital). The cost will amount to about 22 million francs and the reconstructed building will accommodate 1,050 in-patients.

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The Grosse Rat granted the Basle Fair a credit of Frs.769,000 for acquiring additional land.

BASLE-COUNTRY.

The Colorado beetle has made its appearance in the cantons of Basle Country and Solothurn; in the affected districts the local population including the school-children are searching the fields which if attacked are then treated by experts.

GENEVA.

The accounts for 1937 of the town of Geneva close with a deficit of nearly Frs. 800,000.

SWISS NEUTRALITY AND GERMANY.

The following text is reprinted from "THE TIMES," June 25th, and records the relevant passages in the Notes recently exchanged.

The note of the Federal Council, dated May 21st, stated:

The Federal decision of March 5th, 1920, regarding the adherence of Switzerland to the League of Nations, which was confirmed by a plebiscite on March 16th of the same year, was made only after the League Council in its declaration of London of February 13th, 1920, had solemnly declared that the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland as an international obligation for the maintenance of peace was not inconsistent with any provision of the Covenant of the League.

The London declaration states expressly that Switzerland is not obliged to take part in military undertakings or to permit the passage of foreign troops or the preparation of military undertakings on her territory. As against that, the declaration contains nothing releasing Switzerland from participation in the economic and financial measures envisaged under Article 16 of the League Covenant.

As experience has shown how uncertain is the distinction which was thought to have been made in 1920 between the various measures

envisaged in the article mentioned, the Federal Council sent to the League Council on April 29th, 1938, a memorandum, of which the German Foreign Office was officially informed, and in which there was announced the intention of Switzerland, in view of her perpetual neutrality, no longer to take part in any way in the application of the sanctions provisions of the League Covenant. The League Council on May 14th adopted a resolution which took note of this intention and declared that Switzerland could not be invited to take part in sanctions.

The Swiss Confederation is thereby relieved of every obligation from which there could arise doubt as to its unshakable will to remain neutral in all circumstances.

The relevant passage in the German note reads:

The German Government have noted with great interest that the Swiss Government have been successful in their efforts to release themselves from obligations which, in fact, were liable to endanger the neutrality of Switzerland. The German Government welcome this result, because they see in the unconditional maintenance of the neutrality of Switzerland an important element for securing the peace of Europe.

The Swiss Government can therefore be certain that the *will to neutrality which they have once more declared will meet with a corresponding will to recognize and respect this neutrality on the part of the German Government*. I need only refer to the statements known to the Swiss Government, in which the German Government have expressed with all clarity their standpoint in this connection.

(The italics are ours. Ed. S.O.)

We also reproduce the comment published in "THE TIMES" of the same date:

It is noted with some interest that the formula used in the German Note is not "recognition and respect for the neutrality of Switzerland," but for "the Swiss will to neutrality." The distinction is of some importance, if, as semi-official comment seems to imply, the Reich's undertaking is dependent on the fulfilment by Switzerland of a conception of neutrality embracing Press and publicity in time of peace as well as military deportment in time of war. The German standpoint, applied for the first time in official dealing with a neighbouring State, is explained as follows:—

The fact that Swiss neutrality policy, both as regards the manner in which it was handled, as also through the inter-State influences exerted on it, was exposed, although its principles remained unchanged, to certain vacillations, is in itself enough to show that neutrality is no static condition which maintains itself, but one that must be constantly reinforced by effort of will and inclination. The principle of neutrality demands a mutual adjustment of both the countries concerned with the mutual frontier and a complete objectivity and lack of prejudice in their mutual relations.

That includes also reticence in the expression of opinions which might arise from the different form of the internal régime on the other side of the frontier. Neutrality must be mutual. This is not only a matter for the Governments concerned, but rather the political principle of neutrality must be reflected in the deportment of the two peoples who maintain or are expected to maintain the neutrality.