

The obsolete legal system of the Valais

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erecting a dam at Mattmark because of the danger of a rupture of the glacier. These and numerous other unresolved points give ground to the "Schweizerischer Beobachter's" demand for a serious inquest on the responsibilities of the disaster: "Under all circumstances must an action now be brought forward, so that the question of possible guilt be clearly laid out. 88 people have died. It is not for the information media to find out whether they have been the victims of an unforeseeable natural catastrophe, or of a legally punishable negligence."

THE OBSOLETE LEGAL SYSTEM OF THE VALAIS

Whatever happens, the "information media" will have to be involved in this affair. The judge of enquiry is equally judge of first instance. Such a cumulated responsibility of gathering evidence and passing judgement is a curiosity of the Valais legal system. In the eyes of many a legal expert, this is directly inherited from the past and distinctly outdated. The judge of enquiry has to touch on everything within his jurisdiction (the next instance being cantonal) he has to deal with a vast range of cases, both criminal and civil, and is well known to be overburdened. Due to these exaggerated duties, a supplementary judge of enquiry had to be commissioned to deal with the Mattmark disaster. How long the Valais' judiciary will still be bent on the case, — that is a question to which not even those directly involved have an answer. (Basler Nachrichten)

A GAME-KEEPER FIRES AT TWO POACHERS

Two inhabitants of the village of Praz-le-Fort in Valais, one in his twenties and the other in his thirties, were caught in the act of poaching. In the middle of the night, they shot down a stag in a forbidden-game zone, two hundred yards away from two game-keepers, who promptly barred their way. The two men stopped their car for a moment and then "charged" the two game-keepers who were thrown to the ground and wounded. One of them had time to take out his pistol and shoot at the tyres of the fleeing car. One of his bullets burst the rear window, whose glass debris wounded one of the poachers slightly. The two men covered two kilometres before abandoning their vehicle and were very soon arrested by the cantonal police, who brought them to the jail of Martigny.

AN EVENTUAL INTERCANTONAL POLICE FORCE

After the Council of state of Solothurn had presented a motion to the Great Council concerning the Canton's participation to an eventual intercantonal police force, M. Josef Jeger, councillor of state, has informed the press on the effects the creation of such a mobile police force would have.

The Confederation bears all the costs required by the training and

equipment of a corps of 600 men. The Canton would receive complete compensation in costs and salaries for the 8 to 10 men it would contribute to this force. The intercantonal mobile police would comprise a general staff detachment and three companies, one of them formed of contingents from Central Switzerland. In the main, the consequences of the mobile force on the personal and financial plane would be very small. Mr. Jeger thought the set-up was an excellent way of testing intercantonal cooperation.

(A.T.S.)

DIPLOMATIC RESIDENCES

In its opening Autumn session, the Council of State has voted, with fairly good grace, 11.3 million francs of credits already spent on buildings for the diplomatic missions in Geneva, Madrid, Copenhagen, New York, Mexico and Bruxelles. Mr. M. Luder (radical socialist) complained at the urgency that had been put forward to elude the normal procedure of budgetary credit allocation with pre-consultation of the financial delegation. Federal Councillor Spühler replied by deploring the fact that conditions in property market abroad called for very quick action and that this precluded the possibility of abiding to normal procedures.

THE ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYERS AGAINST THE ANTI-FOREIGNISATION INITIATIVE

Following its latest reunion, the committee of the central union of Swiss employers' associations has made the following communiqué:

"As regards foreign man-power policy, the committee unanimously approves an energetic struggle to defeat, in the interest of the country, the xenophobe initiative launched by national councillor Schwarzenbach. The majority of the population is in any case becoming more aware of the very serious consequences the adoption of such an initiative would have. As they have already proclaimed in the past, employers rally without reservation to the federal policy of stabilising foreign labour effectives in the best national interest. They are willing to cooperate in devising adequate regulations. The employers will back every effort made in view of improving mutual understanding and contacts with foreign workers, so that tension and misunderstanding may be reduced".

(A.T.S.)

THE SOCIALIST GROUP OF THE FEDERAL CHAMBERS IN FAVOUR OF SWISS ADHESION TO THE U.N.

The socialist group in the Federal chambers, gathered in Berne under the presidency of the national councillor from Vaud, Pierre Graber, has expressed the wish that Switzerland may soon be an acting member of the United Nations.

Just as the commission for foreign affairs of the National Council, the socialist group declares itself in favour of Swiss adhesion to the U.N. and will shortly be making proposals to this end.

(A.T.S.)

304,000 SWISS ABROAD

Following information received from our 229 consular districts in 135 countries, the total population of "5th Switzerland" was 304,516 at the beginning of the year, 7,014 or 2.4% more than at the corresponding time the year before. To this figure must be added an estimated 3,850 Swiss nationals undeclared at the consulates.

Almost 30% of this population resides in France, where 92,700 Swiss have their domicile. Then comes North America, with approximately 34,200, Germany with 34,000, Italy and Canada each with 18,450 and Britain, with 14,250 compatriots. In 1950, 30% of the Swiss abroad were double nationals. Today, this proportion has more than doubled to 46%. Swiss population has increased the strongest in the United States, where its effectives have risen by 4,133 or 13.7% since 1950. Next comes Australia, with a 9% increase, Algeria with 7.6%, Canada with 6.4%. The sharpest decrease in Swiss population during that period is found in the Congo, —5.5%, and then Chile, —3.6%. While the Swiss population abroad has increased by 2.4%, the number of citizens who are Swiss only has decreased in 56 countries, remained constant in seven and increased in 72 others.

On emigration from Switzerland, the only figures available concern exclusively Swiss citizens. 17,732 left the country in 1968 and applied at consulates abroad. 54% of them went to European countries, 26% to America, 10% to Africa, 5% to Asia and 4% to Australia and New-Zealand. Against those 17,732 out-goers, 14,667 Swiss returned home, so that the emigrant balance is 3,065, a figure 1,100 smaller than the year before. 11,140 left for professional reasons, and 72% were men. In turn, 20% were either students or in highly qualified professions, 26.6% in industry and 22.7% in banking, commerce and insurance. In the first group, specialists in the exact sciences—engineers, technicians, chemists etc.—were the most strongly represented. Out of 1,013 persons in that category, 252 looked for work in the U.S. and 106 in Canada. The emigrants with responsible jobs in trade preferred the European countries. 1,705 purely Swiss members of 5th Switzerland have died last year against 1,068 births. This means that the increase in the strength of the Swiss population abroad is solely due to emigration from the motherland.

(Basler Nachrichten)