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Switzerland is Training Shock Troops

Switzerland, resolutely opposed to war, and unscathed through two world conflicts, is nevertheless busy tightening her defences in case of future invasion, Reuter's correspondent in Locarno reports.

Soldiers are encountered in many parts of the country, and there are frequent signs of the preparations going on beneath the surface in case this tourists' paradise one day becomes a battlefield.

The Swiss do not expect to be so lucky again if there was another world war. They expect, in fact, to be invaded—an indirect attack aimed at others, coming in possibly the second phase of the war, in a sudden movement to outflank the Rhine defences.

The Swiss Army—only 500,000 combatants, plus 300,000 auxiliaries and Home Guards—would then play the role for which it is now being reorganized.

Coming from the north, the invaders could pour into Switzerland at many points between Lake Constance and the Basle bridges which lead from France and Germany.

They might then pass along the Aar Valley to Lake Neuchatel and Lake Geneva, occupying the Berne-Lausanne plateau. But they would have to fight every foot of the way. The strategy held in reserve in the last war—to fight the main battle from the elaborate fortifications in the Alps—has been considerably improved today.

Shocks for the invaders would begin at the frontier and continue all along the line. As they fell back across well-planned defences in depth, the Swiss Army could inflict great damage.

The narrowness of the midlands would favour the defence, making it difficult for an invader to use his full strength, especially tanks, in the fluid wide-ranging manner of modern war. The defence could be stubborn, with shock troops fiercely fighting on their own soil, though they might still be without the 550 tanks they want from abroad.

It would, however, be difficult for the enemy to get out of Switzerland. The Western nations against whom the attack might really be directed would man the mountains of the Jura and all the hills and ridges to the west of Lake Geneva. Whatever happened, the progress of the invading army would be slowed down.

"This is the main reason," a staff officer said, "why we are trying to show how strong we are. Our attitude towards a potential enemy is: 'Invading would cost you so much in men and materials—and above all, in time—that it would just not be worth your while.' "

The two great dangers to the Swiss in the event of an invasion would be tanks and paratroops. That is why the Swiss Army is now specialising in commandos with a tank-destroying and liquidating mission. The cream of the country's youth are being turned into shock-troops at the school for grenadiers.

Final Report about the 37th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle

The success of the 37th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, which took place from 11th to 21st April, and in which 2228 exhibitors took part, exceeded all expectations in most lines of business. The total number of visitors to the Fair, some 700,000, was about 20,000 more than in the previous year, and in the course of the Fair opinions were expressed indicating that further developments in the economic situation are awaited with confidence.

For this reason the general demand was good and business generally satisfactory, considerable interest being shown in the various novelties exhibited.

The wide range of goods displayed by Swiss export industries, amongst which the watch industry, the textile industry, the machinery industry, the electrotechnical and precision tool industries made a particularly fine show, did not fail to exercise its usual attraction on foreign visitors, of whom some 13,000 from 64 different countries were received at the Foreign Visitors' Office. However, it is known from experience that the total number of foreign visitors was considerably higher, because only about 50 per cent. of all foreign visitors register at the Foreign Visitors' Office.

Large new buildings are now going to be constructed for next year's Fair, and that will mean that the area available for exhibition purposes will be increased from about 1,000,000 square feet to something like 1,250,000 square feet.

In view of the very considerable extensions being made to the Fair premises the 38th Swiss Industries Fair will take place somewhat later than usual, from 8th to 18th May, 1954.

RAIL AND ROAD TRAFFIC IN THE SWISS MOUNTAINS

By H. O. ERNST, Manager, London Office, Swiss National Tourist Office and Swiss Federal Railways.

(Continued from last issue.)

Most of the standard gauge system of the Swiss Federal Railways, except the Gotthard Line, lies at a fairly low altitude, in the foothill of the alps and the central Swiss plain. There, winter weather and other operational difficulties peculiar to the mountains do not call for extraordinary measures. Nevertheless, even at less than 2000 feet above sea level, mist, frost and snow can be very troublesome. Precautions are therefore taken long before the onset of the winter, and plans are made to assure smooth running under all condi-

tions. All outdoor signal installations are kept clean and well oiled. Special tools for snow and ice clearance are reconditioned and made available in sufficient quantities. A supply of dry sand for use on platforms, running boards, etc., is kept ready. Water pipes and tanks are protected against frost and bursts with insulating material. High and low tension electrical installations are carefully examined. Motive Power Sections check the good working order of snow ploughs and centrifugal rotary snow sweepers. Alarm rotas for additional personnel required day or night in case of emergency are prepared.

(To be continued)

LEGAL NOTICE

The District Court of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, decided on February 27th, 1953, to institute proceedings in order to declare the following missing person legally dead:—

Sigmund GRAZER, born on March 8th, 1886, son of Josef Marian and Josefa nee Schonbachler, a native of Einsiedeln. Mr. Grazer emigrated to New Zealand in 1912, and has been missing since 1918. The last news of him was received in 1918.

Anyone who is in a position to give information about the above-named is requested to inform the Record Office ("Gerichtskanzlei") of Einsiedeln, within a year, i.e., by March 7th, 1954. If within this year's term no information concerning the missing person should be received, he would be declared legally dead.

Any information may be conveyed to said Court through the medium of the Consulate of Switzerland, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, C.1.

Einsiedeln, March 3rd, 1953.

OFFICE of the DISTRICT COURT of EINSIEDELN.

CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES SUSTAINED IN GERMANY DUE TO SECOND WORLD WAR

The new German law called **"Gesetz ueber den Lastenausgleich"** has come into force recently. Swiss citizens who sustained damages in Germany due to the Second World War can claim compensation by virtue of said law. They would have to make application on official forms before **August 31st, 1953,** for assessment of their damages. The Swiss Consulate in Wellington would assist such nationals in procuring the necessary forms from abroad. Consequently, Swiss citizens who wish to present a claim to the German authorities, or desire to obtain further information, should immediately contact the Consulate of Switzerland, Wellington.

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