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News from Switzerland

Swiss Authorities Take a Stand

The authorities in Lausanne have barred a British hard rock group for alleged racism.

The local police chief said incitement to racial hatred could not be tolerated. The band "Death in June" was due to give a concert later this week.

An anti-racist group had argued that the band had Nazi sympathies and had close contacts with fascists in Croatia.

New Jobs for Swiss Industry

The British telecommunications company, Cable and Wireless, is to create one hundred new jobs in Switzerland.

The company says the move is part of a Europe-wide plan to invest nearly one and a half billion francs in setting up a highspeed data network in the next few years.

The company is due to open an outlet in Geneva later this month with twenty employees.

Most Swiss Happy with Present Politics

The Swiss appear to be happy with the way their government is organised. Sixty percent of people ques-

tioned in a survey rejected proposals made by the government last week to strengthen the 'Federal Bundespräsident', head of federal seven-man-council. Only twenty-two percent supported a presidential system. Besides plans to boost the president's role, the government also proposed either raising the number of ministers in the cabinet, or introducing a new tier of junior ministers.

Official Anniversary of the Swiss Constitution

On Saturday, 12 September, Switzerland officially celebrated the 150th anniversary of its modern constitution. Authored by a group of liberal political figures, and drafted in the record time of only three weeks following this country's last civil war in the summer of 1848, the document was considered the most modern example of an enlightened, democratic constitution in its day. The main festivities were held in Bern, which transformed itself into one huge fairground for the entire weekend, with countless open-air stages and plenty of music and spectacle. About 150,000 spectators were expected to attend the celebrations, which marked the culmination of a series of commemorative events, exhibitions, publications, theatrical productions and films which has been going on since Jan-

uary to mark the birth of Switzerland as a modern, constitutional democracy.

The previous Wednesday, with prominent political figures in attendance, a ceremony marking the "French invasion" of 1798 was held in Canton Nidwalden. The event, which featured an address and the laying of a wreath by Swiss President Flavio Cotti, commemorated the bloody incursion of French troops on 8 September 1798, when about one thousand Nidwalden soldiers fought hopelessly against 12,000 French troops in a vain effort to block the passage of a new, French-inspired Helvetian constitution. In addition to fallen soldiers, the "French invasion" of 1798 left more than 400 civilians dead, mostly women, children and old men.

Swiss Post Office Banking Fees

Holders of accounts with the Post Office will soon lose a perk. As of next April, the Post Office wants to introduce a three franc monthly fee for most postal accounts. At the same time, it's offering savings accounts.

A spokesman said the Post Office hoped the measure would bring in an extra sixty million francs a year.



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