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# The Swiss Observer

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## TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

With this number we resume publication following the short period during which the issue of the paper was suspended for the purpose of enabling the Editor to enjoy a well earned and much needed holiday, free from all extraneous interruption or distraction.

It has been a source of profound satisfaction to us to receive so many notifications from our readers that they had not received their copies of the paper for certain weeks. Some of these reminders even conveyed a more or less gentle reproof. We have all along been convinced that the S.O. supplies a felt want, and we are strengthened in this conviction by finding that it is so much missed. We did at first have a sneaking suspicion at the back of our minds that our paper was not quite so carefully read as we had supposed, as otherwise the prominent notice at the top of the front page of our issue of July 26th, regarding the temporary suspension of publication and the reason for it would not have been overlooked. We conclude, however, that those of our friends who have written us regarding the non-delivery of the paper were themselves on holiday, and that the announcement in question had thus escaped their notice.

We may say that the Editor has returned to duty greatly refreshed, and we look forward to a period of deepened interest and extended influence for the S.O.

THE PUBLISHERS.

## HOME NEWS

Col.-Div. Roost, chief of the general staff, and Col. Bardet will be present as the representatives of Switzerland at the forthcoming English army manoeuvres.

It is stated semi-officially that the foreign letter postage will be reduced on October 1st from 40 cts. to 30 cts.; at the same time the colour of the present stamps may be slightly modified, so as to bring them into line with the international convention. Two special stamps (20 cts. red and 30 cts. blue), to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Universal Postal Union, will be issued on the 9th of October. Other new stamps, which will shortly be put into circulation, will be of the denominations of 90 cts., 1 fr. 20, 1 fr. 50, and 2 fr.

Since the 1st of August certain post-offices in districts, frequented by tourists and not served by a railway station, are undertaking the functions of a cloakroom for the deposit of hand luggage.

In the first seven months of the present year the Swiss Post Office has realized a net profit of 2½ million francs (½ million last year), and it is anticipated that by the end of the year this figure will have swelled to the neighbourhood of five million francs.

In order to more closely supervise the frontier traffic along the Jura, the French and Swiss customs authorities have come to an arrangement under which the respective officials will be allowed to cross the frontier where the topographical configuration of the local country and hidden roads and ways render supervision difficult.

By a large majority the electors of the canton Baselland have abolished the necessity of a medical man possessing a university degree in order to practise in the canton. From now on herbalists

and quacks will compete with the qualified practitioners without hindrance.

After five years' experience, proportional representation is to be submitted to a new plebiscite in the canton of Thurgau, an initiative request having been signed by nearly a third of those entitled to vote.

The cantonal authorities of Glaris have refused to accede to a strongly supported petition which demanded the opening of the roads for motor traffic on Sundays; the matter is now to be submitted to the Landsgemeinde in 1925. Glaris is the only canton in which on Sunday afternoons automobiles are not allowed to run.

Out of the fifteen cantons, containing more than 100,000 inhabitants, only six closed their 1923 accounts with a surplus (Aargau, Basle-Town, Lucerne, Solothurn, Thurgau and Zurich); the largest deficit—over 12 million francs—is recorded by Geneva.

The question as to whether vivisection is to be disallowed in the canton of Zurich is to be submitted to the electors to-morrow (Sunday). Under a previous law, dating from 1894, experiments on live animals for medical research are permissible and regulated.

An important conference of bishops of the Old-Catholic Church will take place in Berne on Sept. 14th, when dignitaries from Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Poland will be present.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the declaration of the Great War, demonstrations against war were held in most of the industrial centres in Switzerland; Communists of foreign extraction were the chief speakers.

An Italian paper, the *Popolo d'Italia*, has recently published instructive statistics, showing the high prices of foodstuffs ruling in the adjoining canton of Ticino as compared with Italy. The prices for bread, flour, potatoes, rice and pork are from 40 per cent. to 80 per cent. higher, the only exception being sugar. The causes of this comparatively high cost are said to be the customs duties, monopolies and excessive transport charges.

Considerable activity in the watch industry has followed the abolition of the McKenna duties; factories in the canton of Neuchâtel, especially La Chaux-de-Fonds, have been able to reopen, thanks to numerous orders for the English market.

By decision of the Federal Council, two Communists have been expelled from Switzerland; one was Mr. Thoma, a deputy of the German Reichstag, and the other Mr. Ibert, secretary of the French Communist party.

M. Hermann Schopé, a former central secretary of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, has been nominated to the chair of German Literature at the university of Neuchâtel.

M. Vincent Kolly, a retired watch manufacturer, who died on August 4th, bequeathed Frs. 100,000 for the construction of a new church in Bulle and considerable sums to local charities. The remainder of his fortune he left to the parishes of Rochel et Pont-la-Ville, of which he was a native.

The Aletsch glacier has given up the body of a Basle student (Levy), who three years ago failed to return from an unaccompanied climb on the Aletschhorn.

Special astronomical instruments were transported by a party of guides on Monday, July 28th, to the Jungfraujoch, one of the highest observatories in the world. These giant instruments, the cost of which has been defrayed by the Jungfraubahn and other interested bodies, are to assist in observing the planet Mars, which at present is nearer to the Earth than it has been for the last hundred years, i.e., only 34 million miles away. The observations are directed by Dr. Emile Schaefer, of Geneva, who is assisted by Messrs. Koller and de Quervain. — The phenomenon is, of course, keenly watched by all the world's scientific stations, but nothing new or startling has been discovered yet, though the astronomers on the Jungfraujoch claim to have detected snowclad polar regions and recognised the famous canals, and clouds bearing snow or rain round Mars.

## EXTRACTS FROM SWISS PAPERS.

Warum das Basellietervolk sich für Freigabe der ärztlichen Praxis erklärt hat.—(Die Meinung eines alten Basellieters.) Im Baselliet gibt es nur wenige Orte, wo nicht irgend ein Naturheilkundler, oder Homöopath, oder sonst ein Mann, oder Frau lebt, die etwas vom Doktor verstünde. Ganz abgesehen von den weiterum bekannten sogen. Quacksalbern weiß jede Hausmutter irgendwie Bescheid über wunderbare Hilfe, die dieser oder jener Naturdocteur geleistet habe. Und es lässt sich nicht leugnen, dass tatsächlich von dieser Seite schon geholfen worden ist. Beispiele lassen sich viele anführen.

Das Verhältnis der patentierten Aerzte und der Quacksalber zum Volke lässt sich vergleichen mit dem Verhältnis der Pfarrer und Prediger der Gemeinschaften zum Volke. Den Pfarrer muss man haben, den Herrn Doktor auch, aber der Naturdoctör und der Prediger haben eben auch ihren Anhang. Wer im Baselliet daheim ist, der weiß, dass neben der Medizinflasche des Herrn Doktors in vielen Fällen, wenn auch ganz versteckt, das Götterli, oder der Tee eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Zuerst geht man zum A. oder P., zum P. oder B., man lässt sich beraten von der Grossmutter, oder Gottebäsi, und wenn das Uebel nicht weichen will, dann will man es nicht an der Rede haben, dass man nicht einmal den Herrn Doktor geholt habe. Ja, der Herr Doktor! Erstens kann er auch nicht allen Leuten helfen, die Kranken sterben oft einweg, dazu kommt dann die Doktorrechnung, die man zwar für einen Verstorbenen noch gerne bezahlt, weniger gerne aber für die Lebenden, wenn sie doch nicht gesund geworden sind.

Zu Tausenden zählen die Basellieter, die im Stilien schon vom P. oder A. gebraucht haben. Die einen genieren sich, das zu sagen, andere aber gar nicht.

Was grüsli viel Geld kostet, das soll unfehlbar helfen. Wenus ums Probiieren geht, so riskiert man ja von den harmlosen Götterli auch nicht viel. Es sei daran wenigstens noch Keiner gestorben, so sagen die Leute. Die Medikamente der Aerzte seien "Gift," behaupten viele, und dies versichern auch die Wunderdoktoren. Wir haben es also um alte Vorurteile zu tun. Der Basellieter ist etwas misstrauisch von alters her und lässt sich nicht gern übers Ohr hauen.

Das Volk auf dem Lande sucht sich auch viel mehr selber zu helfen. Der Städter hat's bequemer, er ist in der Kasse, er geht zum Kassenarzt. Er bekommt meist auch den Lohn für Krankheitstage. Der Doktor verschreibt ihm Ferien. Aber was soll der Bauer und Posamenter tun? Er ist nicht in der Lage, in die Ferien zu gehen. Er hat keine Zeit, krank zu sein. So lange er kriechen kann, so buggelt er. Es ist meist die Geldknappheit, die ihn drückt. Und die Doktorrechnungen? Das ist etwas Schreckliches! Und wenn heute die Herren Aerzte auf dem Lande gar ein Auto haben, so findet man das sicher fein, denn kaum hat man dem Doktor telefoniert, da rast er schon daher. Aber die Autifahrten, die versteuern die Rechnungen. So argumentiert der einfache Landmensch. Es wäre ein Unrecht, wollte man den Basellietern Rückständigkeit und Borniertheit vorwerfen. Man ist froh um die Aerzte und Spitäler. Man schätzt die Chirurgen, aber man hält die Naturärzte für harmlose, nützliche, billige Helfer, die von Urgrossmutter's Zeiten her schon geschäftig waren, von denen man auch manch gutes Theerezept bekommen hatte.

Dazu kommt noch etwas. Der Wunderbalsam findet sich fast in allen Basellieterhäusern. Er kostet nicht viel, aber er sei für alles gut. Dann die "Harlämer," die sollen auch so wunderbar wirken. Dann allerlei Salben. Vielleicht mögen gefürchtet haben, dass man dann am End nicht einmal diese wunderbaren Heilmittel ins Land bekomme, wenn die Initiative verworfen würde.

Alles in Allem ist zu sagen. Das Volk wusste, was es wollte. Freiheit. Man traut sich auch noch den nötigen Verstand zu, wenn es gilt; zu entscheiden.

Die Herren Aerzte werden nach wie vor zu tun genug haben, und alle, die dem Volke helfen wollen, wird man willkommen heißen.

Ob der Volksentscheid ein so grosses Unglück bedeutet? Kaum! Es wird sich nicht viel ändern. Tüchtige Aerzte sind allezeit hochgeschätzt.

(*National-Zeitung*.)

**Berufsunteroffiziere.** — In der "Schweizerischen Militärzeitung" wird von deren Redaktor in einem ausführlichen Artikel die Frage aufgeworfen, ob nicht für die Rekrutenausbildung wieder, wie einst vor dreissig Jahren, Berufsunteroffiziere anzustellen seien. Diese würden ermöglichen, dass die neuernannten Korporäle von dem Dienst der Rekrutenausbildung befreit würden.

ausbildung entlastet und in besonderen längeren Unteroffiziersschulen ausgebildet werden könnten. Die Zahl der nötigen Berufsunteroffiziere schätzt der Verfasser auf einige hundert. Nach einer bestimmten Dienstzeit wären sie in der Bundesverwaltung zu verwenden. Der Verfasser des zitierten Artikels meint: "Der alte Unteroffizier fehlt uns in manchen Beamtenkategorien ohnehin sehr." Wie weit dies wirklich ein Unglück ist, möge der Leser selbst entscheiden. Die Notwendigkeit der gründlicheren Ausbildung des Unteroffiziers wird wie folgt begründet: "Als die Infanterie noch in geschlossener Ordnung auf dem Gefechtsfelde evolutionierte, die Schützenlinie und das Feuer noch durch Kommando des Zugführers geleitet wurden, als die Batterie noch ausschließlich unter den Augen und auf Kommando des Batteriechefs auftrat und schoss, diente der Unteroffizier im Grunde doch fast nur als Pfeiler in der Mauer, ohne wesentlich aus ihr herauszutreten. Wenn er durch sein Beispiel als Mustersoldat, Weitergabe der Befehle und Kontrolle ihrer Ausführung den Zug zusammenhalten half, war man schon sehr zufrieden. Besondere selbständige Aufgaben waren relativ selten, und dafür fand man schliesslich meistens den geeigneten Mann. Das Haupttätigkeitsgebiet des Unteroffiziers war der innere Dienst, und dafür konnte er in der Rekrutenschule allerdings viel lernen. Das ist nun anders geworden; heute sind die Anforderungen des Truppendedienstes an den Unteroffizier wesentlich höher als die der Rekrutenschule. Er muss viel selbständiger, unter viel weniger intensiver Aufsicht arbeiten, muss selbst taktische Entschlüsse fassen, oft ohne Befehl oder Instruktion handeln, seinen Leuten in ganz andern Sinne Vorbild und Führer sein, als in der Rekrutenschule oder in früheren Zeiten. Es hilft nichts, es zu verschweigen; wir müssen uns damit abfinden, dass heute vom Unteroffizier nicht viel weniger verlangt werden muss, als noch vor zwanzig Jahren vom Leutnant; folglich braucht er auch nicht wesentlich weniger Ausbildungszzeit, als diese damals; daraus folgt wiederum zwingend, dass wir die Ausbildung anders einrichten müssen, als man damals für zweckmässig oder doch genügend hielt."

(*National-Zeitung*)

### THE TRIPPER'S PARADISE.

Several of our subscribers have drawn our attention to an article which appeared under the above title in the *Evening Standard* on August 15, written by Stacy Aumonier, who is an occasional contributor to that journal. There is nothing remarkable or worth reproducing in his observations were it not for an idiotic reference to our country, when he says that with all our beautiful mountains and "the most concentratedly spectacular scenery" Switzerland has produced nothing but a nation of waiters. Everybody is, of course, entitled to his own opinion, based on what he sees or is able to see, and people who visit our fashionable mountain resorts for the sake of continuing their acquired habits of drinking cocktails in the morning and exercising their minds and limbs in the afternoon and evening under the guidance of jazz bands must be pardoned if their vision is somewhat limited. After all, they fulfil a necessary mission in enabling those who minister to their wants to earn an honest living. That the calling of a waiter should be synonymous with a certificate of low breeding and weak intellect is a gratuitous compliment not made for the first time; it has struck us, however, that waiters have often exhibited an infinitely higher standard of education and tact than some of those lucky ones who command their services.

The writer draws comparisons with Holland, which country, he opines, is on a par with Switzerland as regards size, population and antiquity; it has, of course, "no scenery," but has produced painters, pioneers, colonisers and sailors. The ordinary tourist cannot be expected to visit our museums and picture galleries, but we believe the name of the Holbeins is familiar to every public school boy in England, and we fancy any modern art student will know and value the works of Calame, Böcklin, Koller, Hodler, Segantini, and Wieland. As regards "colonisers and sailors," we suggest to Mr. Aumonier to look up any old textbook on geography, when the ridiculous nature of his statement will become apparent to him.

### NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

#### Mars and the Jungfrau.

A thrilling narration of a recent accident on the Jungfrau is published in the *Daily Mail* (Aug. 25th) from the pen of G. Ward Price. Incidentally he gives some interesting details about the work and personality of the astronomers engaged at the observatory for getting more closely acquainted with the mysterious doings of the planet Mars. Here is the article:

Last night the Jungfrau saw two tragedies. One cost a man's life; the other a man's life's work.

At the place where I write this message, the body of the dead Alpinist lies in the next room, while the astronomer whose lifelong hopes have been wrecked sits at the same table.

Last night, when Mars was closer to the earth than at any time during a century (being only 34,000,000

miles away), was one to which Professor Schaefer had looked forward through his entire career as an astronomer. His great opportunity has come at the age of 62—and gone by, unavailing, wasted through the weather's whim.

When he was the young son of a Swiss carpenter, Professor Schaefer instinctively set his heart on owning the best telescope in Europe. That ambition has made of him a world-famous grinder of great lenses and a specialist on Mars.

To study his favourite planet he has travelled far into Africa. There, at Setif, in the south of Algeria, a brother-astronomer, M. Jarry-Desloges, equipped with one of Professor Schaefer's lenses, is observing the planet from among the hot sands at the same moment as Schaefer from the green ice of the Aletsch Glacier. The heat-vibrations of the African air in summer are probably preventing the desert astronomer from seeing any more than the Alpine one.

For one of the three nights since I joined Prof. Schaefer at his 11,600 ft. observatory—the highest in the world, the first was the only one in which he caught a glimpse of Mars. During the last two the air has been filled by a wild blizzard of frozen snow, which shut out the sky like a roof.

Here are the two great telescopes which Prof. Schaefer tends like twin babies. Each has a small petrol engine to keep it moving along the right ascension of the star. They are nearer the zenith than any lenses on earth, and laid out by them are records of all former Mars observations, so that the least new feature may be at once recognised.

But the long night has passed, and Mars has marched across the sky at the closest range of the century, completely hidden by his screen of cloud.

Yet the night was by no means uneventful. Early yesterday three Germans, arrayed with climbing boots, rope and alpenstocks had arrived at the hotel at the Jungfrau-Joch, which is shortly to be opened as the highest hotel in the world.

All three were sturdy figures in the later thirties, and they announced that they were going on alone to climb to the top of the Jungfrau, 2,000 ft. above our observatory. Steuri, the well-known Grindelwald guide, was at the Jungfrau-Joch and warned them against the threatening weather. He urged them not to go on without a guide, but they replied complacently that they were experienced mountaineers and needed no guide.

So off they started in the forenoon and passed out of sight across the broad Aletsch Glacier, roped together in single file and ploughing their way knee-deep in fresh-fallen snow.

All afternoon the clouds were massing densely round the Jungfrau, and by the time darkness fell a snow blizzard was raging fiercely.

There is a picturesque little wooden restaurant in this curious hotel where I had dined with the two astronomers. It juts like a pigeon-cote out of a precipice that falls to the glacier 700 feet below. Several guides, with faces peeled and tanned to the colour of an old saddle by the sunshine and snow-glares, had been with us there. While the storm howled and rattled outside, these men were playing the accordion and smoking big pot-hook-shaped pipes.

About eight o'clock, while the accordion was silent a moment, one of them, in his odd Swiss-German, suddenly started, "Wasn't that a shout from the glacier?" he exclaimed.

In a moment the lean frames of his weather-beaten companions stiffened to strained alertness. They knew well how closely danger and death lurk on an Alpine peak even so familiar as the Jungfrau.

Somebody threw open one of the double windows. A swirl of stinging, frozen snowflakes burst into the warm room, bringing with it, faintly but unmistakably, a wailing, despairing cry like the distant howl of a dog.

Not a word was spoken by the Swiss mountaineers around the table, but they sprang into instant action. They four guides snatched down coils of rope from the hooks on the walls. M. Werner Sommer, the manager of the hotel, wrapped a table-napkin round his throat and picked up an ice-axe from the corner—for in the buttonhole of his black morning-coat he wore the badge of the Swiss Alpine Club.

Lanterns were hurriedly lighted. What had been one moment before a cheerful company, enjoying wine, tobacco and music, had become a rescue party facing danger.

Again the plaintive wail came from the foot of the precipice below. In answer, a lighted lantern was waved from the window.

And then the four guides and the hotel-keeper set out into the bitter, buffeting storm on their climb down the precipice. The jerky light of their lanterns, sometimes hidden by snow-flurries, marked their gradual descent.

It was half an hour before two of them returned, roped together with two strangers.

Drawn-faced, with bloodshot eyes and utterly exhausted, these were two of the German climbers. The third was still on the glacier below, unable to move, said the guides. They were going back to help carry him up the precipice.

That climb of 700 ft. took them two hours, and, when they arrived, it was half-carrying, half-dragging a man whose eyes were fixed and glazed. "He's dying!" exclaimed M. Kolliker, the astronomer-explorer, and two hours later the German was dead.

It was only next morning that we heard from the two survivors the strange story of their climb. They had reached the top of the Jungfrau safely, but, on the way back, the storm caught them, and, in the baffling blizzard, they lost all sense of direction. Till it was dark they halted. Then, in a lull, they saw the distant lights of the hotel and struggled on again.

The third man, Herr Fiege, who came from Breslau and was newly married, missed his footing on the steep slope, and all three, roped together, half-fell and half-rolled several hundred feet. Two were unhurt, but the Breslau man had hit his head badly. After lying a while he said he could go on.

So, in constant danger of falling into the green crevasses of the Aletsch Glacier, they plodded painfully through the snow as far as the foot of the steep cliff to which the hotel clings. There the injured man collapsed entirely. The others had almost lost hope when the keen-eared guide in the room far above heard their shouts.

Yet this morning it is hard to realise that the mountaineer took a life last night, for the sun shines gloriously about the gleaming head of the Jungfrau, while below in the valleys the whole world looks like one gigantic washing-day.

#### Catholic Congress in Switzerland.

The *Catholic Times* (Aug. 23rd) contains a short report about the Catholic Congress held a short

time ago in the Protestant town of Basle; the writer is very much impressed by the courteous way in which the delegates have been received by the population of this former "stronghold of aggressive Calvinism":—

All along the Rhine the great cathedrals of the riverside cities are in Catholic hands, with one exception, that of Basle. This beautiful church, built in the fourteenth century, has long been devoted to Protestant worship, and its interior presents the aspect of a hall for public meetings rather than a church, for there is no altar, and the chief object in the former choir is a platform for speakers. Another of the churches built in pre-Reformation days is now converted into a museum. The city and the canton is mainly Protestant. But it gives its title to the largest Catholic diocese of Switzerland, which, thanks to its extending to and including most of the Forest Cantons, has a Catholic population of half a million. This is nearly one-third of the whole Catholic body in Switzerland, which at the census of 1920 numbered 1,586,826, or 41 per cent. of the Swiss people. On Saturday, August 9th, the Catholic Congress of Switzerland assembled in Basle. It was a well organised and most successful meeting, and its success was all the more notable because it was held in the city that was so long a stronghold of aggressive Calvinism. It must be said to the credit of the non-Catholics of Basle that they gave a most friendly welcome to their Catholic fellow-countrymen.

Thousands came from all parts of Switzerland, the Catholic cantons of the centre and south sending large contingents. The meeting dealt with practical matters—Catholic organization, mission work, the Catholic press and education, special attention being given to the disabilities under which the Catholic schools still do their work in some of the Protestant cantons. Switzerland is a country where men of more than one race and language have built up a common nationality, and arrangements had to be made for sectional meetings in which four different languages were used—German, French, Romansh and Italian. There was an interesting exhibition of the Catholic art of the country, and, on the Sunday, a procession of the Catholic associations. Professor de Sury of Freiburg, writes to us:—"We have had three memorable days at Basle. On the Sunday, 30,000 men, with more than 500 banners and 50 bands of music, marched through the city streets, saluting the bishops of Switzerland, who looked on from the balcony of a hotel on the bank of the Rhine. The attitude of the people of Basle was that of perfect courtesy. They will remember this day as a demonstration that the most living forces in our country are those that are bound together by unity of belief based on the granite rock of faith."

#### A Model Chocolate Factory.

Some complimentary references to one of our well-known chocolate manufacturers are made in *The Times* (Aug. 23rd) in the course of an article dealing with cocoa imports and British methods and machinery. We call the following:—

The Swiss authorities consider that the Berne factory of the Tobler company is one of the most representative in the country. The visitor is struck with the extreme cleanliness and orderliness of every process, the perfection of the machinery, and the efficiency of the workpeople, and in particular the wide range of age of the employees. Sometimes representatives of three generations are working almost side by side. There is something of the nature of a bonus system in operation, the minimum earnings of the workpeople being 8½ francs a day, rising to 12 or 13 francs in the case of the thoroughly skilled.

The industry has naturally suffered during recent years from the general depression, and has perhaps been more unfortunate than others, because chocolate is largely a luxury trade. A number of countries which were formerly important markets have raised tariff barriers.

In Great Britain, welfare work has long been a feature of the chocolate industry. At Berne, owing to natural conditions, it has perhaps taken a wider form than has been possible in the United Kingdom. For example, land has been acquired by the Tobler Company, partly to secure a regular and cheap supply of agricultural products for the workers' homes.

There is a benefit club which renders help in case of sickness and death, an ambulance service, provision of nurses for the homes, an annuity scheme for provision against old age, infirmity and bereavement. The company has also organized the purchase and distribution of fuel, especially wood, and of provisions of all sorts. Through the medium of the pig farms, which are supplied with the husks of the cocoa beans, excellent meat, lard, and sausage is available at moderate prices.

The firm has adopted with great success an arrangement which some branches of British commerce and industry are endeavouring to introduce, namely, that of eliminating Saturday as well as Sunday work. The Tobler employees work their 48 hours between Monday morning and Friday evening, and thus have a long week-end for home, garden, and recreative pursuits.

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