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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS



FEDERAL.

SWISS ARMY MAKES INSTRUCTION FILMS.

For some time the Swiss Army Authorities have been studying the possibility of employing the film for the instruction of its soldiers.

A film, specially produced, was recently shown before the Society of Army Officers at Berne. It presented the principal technical elements of army defence, and had been produced under the direction of an infantry officer instructor. The company manoeuvred in the region of Zweisimmen and Saanenmoser.

The final verdict of the Army representatives is that the film, produced with care and precision, will be an invaluable aid in army training.

Two categories of films are suggested—the technical film and the tactical film, and the authorities have decided to form a special section which will be responsible for the provision to each group of projecting apparatus and suitable films.

SWISS BANK RATE LOWERED.

The Swiss National Bank has reduced the official discount rate by one half per cent. to 2 per cent., and the rate for advances on security by one half per cent. to 3 per cent.

SWISS DIESEL ENGINE.

It is officially reported that in pursuance of their policy of adapting their Scotswood works to new industries, Sir W. G. Armstrong Whitworth & Co. have entered into an agreement with the Saurer Company, of Switzerland, to manufacture here diesel engined motor lorries. For this purpose a new company has been registered under the title of the Armstrong Saurer Company.

FASCIST "CENSUS" IN SWITZERLAND.

The *Squilla Italica* ("Italian Bell"), the organ of the Italian fascists in Switzerland, is reported to have addressed a circular to Swiss local authorities asking for lists of Italians living in their locality, adding that some municipalities have already supplied these lists, and that they are only required in order to send copies of the journal to Italians throughout Switzerland.

The newspapers suggest that this is only a ruse by which the Italian legation at Berne is endeavouring to obtain a full list of Italians in Switzerland, and it is recalled that a Government circular was sent out to police departments in 1920 saying that such requests should not be complied with, but that inquirers should be referred to the Federal Department of Justice and Police.

SWISS BANK REPORTS.

For the year ending 1930, the directors of the Crédit Suisse propose to pay a dividend of 8 per cent. on the share capital of 150,000,000 francs. The net profit is returned as 16,419,924 francs (1929—18,589,391 francs). The Handwerkerbank Basle earned net profit of 1,190,000 francs for 1930, a slight increase over 1929. The dividend is repeated at 8 per cent. The net profit of the St. Gallische Creditanstalt declined from 1,021,000 francs in 1929 to 969,000 francs in 1930. The dividend has been reduced from 10 per cent. to 8 per cent.

A DIPLOMAT'S JUBILEE.

Monsieur Frédéric W. Barbey, Swiss Minister in Brussels, celebrated last Saturday his 10th anniversary as diplomatic representative of the Swiss Confederation to the Belgian Court. On this occasion the Swiss Colony of Brussels, in conjunction with the various Swiss Societies in Belgium, offered a banquet to Monsieur Barbey.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

The latest figures to hand show that there are at present 23,045 persons unemployed.

LOCAL. ZURICH.

The Italian Consul-General in Zurich, Signor Bianchi, was on Tuesday seriously wounded by an Italian, who fired three revolver shots at him in his office at the Consulate.

The assailant—a young soldier named Bassi—

had presented himself already twice at the Consulate asking for assistance during his period of military service, which had been refused. To-day Bassi called at the Consulate and insisted on seeing the Consul-General himself, who received him and explained that the Italian authorities did not see their way to grant his request.

Thereupon the young man fired, hitting Signor Bianchi in the hand, the left lung, and the lower abdomen. He then ran out into the street, where he was speedily arrested by the police with the assistance of some passers-by. The attack had no political motive. Signor Bianchi is lying in a serious condition.

D.T.

The Canton of Zurich proposes to issue a new Four per Cent. Loan of Frs. 25,000,000 to provide funds for the conversion or redemption of various loans which will be maturing shortly. These are the three 1916 issues totalling Frs. 18,000,000 and the 1917 loan of Frs. 8,000,000, while Frs. 1,000,000 will be available out of current funds.

The new loan will be issued at 99 per cent., plus Federal stamp tax of 60 centimes per cent. It will be redeemable on 31st March, 1946, or after 1943 at the option of the Cantonal authorities.

F.T.

BERNE.

A memorable gathering took place in Berne last week. Through the initiative of the Society of Army officers, an invitation was sent out to the veterans of Berne's regiments, who took part in the occupation of the frontier during the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71. Well over three hundred persons answered this invitation. M. Joss, a member of the State Council, was in the chair, and amongst the visitors were the colonels Wildbolz, Guisan, Schaubli, Roost, Bridel, Schmid, Hartmann and Buhmann. During the dinner, the 99 years old veteran Schmid was presented with a bunch of flowers. One of the participants was the trumpeter Gasser, who accompanied the officers with a flag of truce to ask for the surrender of the Bourbaki army before crossing the frontier. Many patriotic speeches were delivered, and a message was sent to the widow of General Herzog, who lives at St. Gall.

B.

The Bernese Government has issued a proclamation to the population acquainting them with the fact that 100 years ago the introduction of the new constitution (Staatsverfassung) took place. In order to celebrate this important event, the Grand Council and the cantonal authorities will meet in solemn conclave at the Town Hall in Berne. All the schools will be closed that day.

N.Z.

M. M. Flückiger (liberal) has been elected President of the Municipal Council, as first Vice-President M. Berger-Stalder (Bürgerpartei) and as second Vice-President M. Fritz Marbach (socialist) have been elected.

B.

GLARUS.

Bartholomä Tschudi-Streiff, the last "Ratsherr," has died at Glarus at the age of 86. St.T.

A meeting of the population of Linthal, which was evacuated some few weeks ago owing to the danger of an alandslide at the Kilchenstock, took place. Professor Heim from Zurich acquainted the meeting with the position, saying that, owing to the cold weather, no further movements have occurred, but that the danger was by no means obliterated. M. Hauser, Landamann, assured the population of the support of the whole canton. A collection in aid of the sorely tried inhabitants, which was started some time ago, has yielded so far 33,000 francs, but as the distress is great and help urgently wanted, a committee has been appointed in order to make a wider appeal. J.S.P.

BASLE.

The death is reported at a nursing home in Basle of Colonel H. Keller, formerly commander of the St. Gotthard fortress.

N.Z.

(Continued on page 2245.)

CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st

for the

LAST DINNER AND DANCE

of the Season at the

MAY FAIR HOTEL, Berkeley Square, W.1.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

A Campaign in the Alps in 1799—continued.

So matters stood at the end of the second day of operations, the 15th of August, with the Austrians cleared completely out of the Reuss valley below the Devil's bridge. For the description of what happened on the following day, it is necessary to go back and to consider the events which took place in the Rhone valley during the previous days.

The assistance which Turreau's Division was directed to give to Lecourbe consisted in an attack on the Austrians under Strauch in the upper Rhone valley (the Goms) from Brig. The Antrona and Monte Moro passes had been occupied by the French on the 12th of August to prevent the possibility of the French flank being turned from that direction. On the 13th of August a column consisting of the 1st and 2nd/89th and the 3rd/110th attacked the Warasdin Battalion which was stationed at Rosswald and formed the liaison between Strauch's Brigade in the Goms and Rohan's on the Simplon pass. The Austrians retreated, pursued by the French, and a certain interest is attached to the location of the place which the French reached. It is known that the Warasdin Battalion retired on the Binnenthal where its support (a battalion of regiment Wallis) was posted, and the French are stated by Stutterheim (quoted by Günther) to have taken up a position on the "Safnitzer Alps." The Archduke Charles gives "Safnitscheralp (Safnismatt)" as their position, and Hennquin states that it was on "the heights of the Safnischalp." The interest arises from the fact that there is a valley, the Safnischalp, which runs parallel with the Rhone, from the Binnenthal to the pass of the Safnischjoch (8,467 feet) close behind Rosswald. Safnischmatten is in this valley close to the Binnenthal. The only other way by which the French could have reached this place is by going up the Rhone valley and then up the Binnenthal, but this would have necessitated their passing positions which were still held by the Austrians at this time. It seems, therefore, impossible to avoid the conclusion that these operations took place over the Safnischjoch, resulting in complete severance of the communications between Strauch and Rohan.

At all events, in the evening of the same day (13th of August) the French column fell back on Rosswald. On the following day, Turreau again attacked Strauch. One column under Jardon attacked on the (northern) bank of the Rhone and drove the Siegenfeld battalion back from Ried to the Teischberg, where its support (Battalion Carneville) held up the French advance. The French column on the left bank pushed up as far as Bister.

Seeing that his left flank was seriously compromised, Strauch ordered four companies of the Wallis Battalion which was posted at Münster to march down the Rhone and assist in stemming the tide of Turreau's advance, and to retake the lost positions. This they partially succeeded in accomplishing. But in so doing, Strauch fell completely into the subtle trap which the French had laid for him, for Strauch now had only two companies left in reserve with which to support his two battalions on the Grimsel pass, and it was precisely at this moment that Gudin's Column attacked the Grimsel pass and took it.

On the 13th of August Gudin had concentrated his Column at Guttanen, at the entrance to the Haslital, and he did not relish the task which was appointed for him on the morrow. Patrols which had reconnoitred the Grimsel pass had found it to be strongly held. One Austrian battalion defended the rock called the Nollen at the foot of which the old Hospice stood, while another battalion held the summit of the pass itself (7,135 feet). It appears that while the French officers were in the inn at Guttanen which was kept by a certain Fahner, they overheard him boast that he knew of a way by which the French could get at the Austrians from behind. Gudin jumped at the chance, and by persuasion and coercion determined Fahner to lead a detachment by the way of which he had spoken.

Accordingly, a column of four companies of the 2nd/25th light demi-brigade started off in the middle of the night, and, early on the morning of the 14th of August, Fahner led it across the Bögel-