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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

In an interesting article dealing with unemployment, the "National-Zeitung" points out that Switzerland can boast of practically the lowest percentage of unemployed. Statistics compiled to the end of March last exhibit a percentage of 3.6 (1.7% of the total population) which compares strikingly favourable with countries that have deserted the gold standard. In England for instance 107 out of every thousand workers are idle. Here are the figures for other countries (per mille): America 220, Sweden 61, Denmark, 76, France 58, Belgium 56, Italy 52, and Austria 140. Only countries with a predominantly agricultural population and production can show a better record, thus Finland 25, Estonia 10, Latvia 25, Poland 28, and Hungary 18. The democratic character of our country and institutions have not undergone any radical changes, and we are, to a much larger extent than other industrial countries, dependent upon our foreign trade, yet more employment has been secured for our population than dictatorship, currency experiments and other tentative methods have achieved elsewhere.

THE RE-ORGANISATION OF THE S.F.R.

The Board of Management of the Swiss Federal Railways publishes an extensive report advocating a total re-organisation in the management of our railway system. It is stated that the natural development of the system is handicapped by antiquated laws and regulations — some of them 60 years old — which impede and even prevent the administration from adapting itself to modern requirements. With a view of re-establishing the financial equilibrium at the earliest possible date the report recommends that, during the period of re-organisation, the Federal Council be invested with powers to suspend any existing regulations judged to be detrimental or prejudicial.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS BUILDING.

The exterior construction of the League of Nations palace is now completed, and the countries which are still members, have undertaken to contribute to its inner decoration. The Federal Council has voted a credit of Frs.60,000 for the ornamentation of a committee room.

A FEDERAL MOTOR BOAT.

In order to counteract the thriving smuggling trade across the Lake of Constance (Bodensee) the Federal Council has sanctioned the acquisition of a motor boat.

A MOTORING INCIDENT BEFORE THE FEDERAL COURT.

A motorist in Bienne collided last May with a lorry; he was endeavouring to overtake a couple of cyclists when a business friend, sitting next to him, gripped the steering wheel to alter the course as he thought an impact was imminent, with the result that the car dashed against a lorry. The driver subsequently sued his passenger in the Bernese courts for the damage obviously caused by the latter's interference; the courts held, however, that the driver alone was responsible for the management of a car, and in addition, inflicted a fine for careless driving. Against this decision the litigant appealed successfully to the Federal Court which ruled that it was not permissible for a passenger to correct the steering of the driver.

THE "TOUR DE SUISSE."

This seven-day cross-country cycle race came to an end last Saturday. "An unconditional success" in every respect is the general verdict. The Swiss competitors have done rather badly, a somewhat unexpected result ascribed chiefly to bad team-work. In the national grouping Germany is well in the front, Italy being a good second, then follows Belgium, France, Switzerland and Spain. The best individual points were secured by Geyer (Germany), Level (France) and Camusso (Italy). Of the Swiss, Bossard managed to finish amongst the first eight whilst Egli, who showed up splendidly in the beginning, dropped out in the fourth stage.

O SANCTA SIMPLICITAS.

A German fugitive who had been living in Zurich for the last nine months was befriended by a compatriot; he was induced by the latter to join him in a visit to a local restaurant. A taxi was engaged but the driver, who was "in the know," took the direction to Schaffhausen, crossed the frontier and when it arrived at the German post of Jestetten the fare was arrested whilst the driver and the false friend were allowed to re-cross the frontier.

Enquiries by the Zurich police seem to show that the manœuvre is the work of a gang of spies, members of which were deported a few days before this incident.

LOCAL.

BASLE.

Accompanied by great festivities the "Dreirosenbrücke" was officially given over to traffic last Sunday. The bridge, the fifth one which spans the Rhine at Basle, is close to the harbour and connects two fastly growing industrial quarters. The construction was begun in October 1931, and was, for the larger part, carried out by German firms with local labour. The cost is stated to be about 3.3 million francs.

BERNE.

Col. Paul Kipfer, a well-known authority for physical culture and president of the Federal Athletic and Sports Commission, died suddenly in Bienne at the age of 66. He was the father of engineer Kipfer who, in 1931, accompanied Prof. Aug. Piccard in the first stratosphere ascent.

AARAU.

The "Grosse Rat" is being asked to vote an amount of Frs.280,000 for combating unemployment during the coming winter.

GRISONS.

Another small banking firm, A.G. J. Töndury and Co., in Samaden, has temporarily closed its doors.

Prof. Dr. L. R. von Salis-Guyer died in "Schloss Marschlins" at the age of 71. Formerly, professor at the Basle and Berne universities he was for some years at the head of the Federal department for Justice; he is the author of standard works dealing with the legal and administrative practice of our Federal authorities.

600 JAHRE BERN-OBERHASLI.

Sonntag, den 2. September 1934, waren es 600 Jahre seit Oberhasli zu Bern gekommen ist. Zu jener Zeit kämpften die Hasler gegen die Truppen der Freiherren, erlitten aber trotz tapferer Gegenwehr eine vollständige Niederlage, 18 Tote. Die meisten, die sich in die Berge flüchten konnten, wurden gefangen genommen, darunter 50 der Angesehensten, welche in den Kerker von Unsprungen geführt wurden. Auf die Weigerung des Freiherrn die Gefangenen frei zu geben, wendeten sich die Hasler an Bern, das alsdann mit einer Heeresmacht ins Oberland rückte und den Freiherrn zwang, nicht nur die 50 Gefangenen freizugeben aber auch das Pfandrecht auf Hasli gegen 1600 Pfund Entschädigung an die Stadt Bern abzutreten.

Diese Begebenheit wurde am Sonntag mit einer würdigen Feier wieder in Erinnerung gebracht. Schon am frühen Morgen brachten Extrazüge eine Anzahl Besucher und die Herren Obrigkeit von Bern nach dem schönen Meiringen und wurden am Bahnhof empfangen. Auf dem Längenacker wurde nach dem Vortrag "O mein Heimatland" die Festgemeinde mit passenden Worten von Herrn Regierungsratshalter Marti begrüßt. Nach einer Ansprache von Herrn

Regierungsrat Dr. Guggisberg wurde in feierlich würdiger Weise das neue Haslibanner übergeben.

Der Festzug bot ein eindrucksvolles Bild der alten Gebräuche, Kleider und Berufe und auch Frau Sonne riss die Wolken auseinander um auf die bunte fröhliche Schar hinunter zu blicken.

Am Nachmittag wurde auf dem idyllischen Platz am Fusse der Ruine Resti Fritz Ringgenberg's Festspiel "Bilder aus der Vergangenheit Hasli's" in sehr ergreifender Weise aufgeführt.

H.B.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

If ever we should want to have a Sicilian Vesper or a St. Bartholomew's Night in Switzerland, the German speaking part of Switzerland I mean, our pass-word could not be better than "ölgütterli." Just ask one of your friends, be he German, French, Italian or English to pronounce that word and you will see that he will find it utterly impossible to do so. It may sound all right to his or her ears, but your own German-Swiss ears will detect the difference, try as he or she may. The other day I even asked a young Scotch friend of mine and she made various attempts and was quite satisfied that she had got it right, but all the time, the difference from what it ought to sound like, was there, easily detectable by me.

The reason for making me think and write of the above is the following little bit of knowledgeable news, called

Swiss Link with Scotland:

"The Bulletin and Scots Pictorial," 28th Aug.

Apropos my paragraph about the meeting of an artist correspondent with a Swiss gentleman on a special pilgrimage to Iona, a reader wonders if the latter came from either of the beautiful little villages of Stäfa and Jona, on the northern shore of Lake Zurich. According to tradition both these villages were named after the Hebridean islands of Staffa and Iona by Gaelic missionaries who had studied under St. Columba on the "sacred isle" — an interesting Swiss link with Scotland that is not generally known.

I certainly did not know, and I bet a good many of my Readers did not either. It's funny too, how the Scotch and German-Swiss can pronounce gutturals which nearly break the average Englishman's neck, such gutturals as found in "Crianlarich, Stronachlachar" etc. I well remember the delighted surprise of a very old Scotchman some 25 years ago, when I was visiting the Highlands and proved to him that those fearsome sounds had no terrors for me. Maybe, I don't know, but perhaps, the Scots also know some words of theirs which even we could not pronounce as they do, so, perhaps, it will be just as well if we drop all idea of holding one of the sanguinary festivals mentioned at the beginning of this article.

In very old times, so old that even the proverbial oldest inhabitant cannot remember, Europe was welded together by Nature much more than now. I mean during the Glacial periods. I bet in those days, human beings, if there were any, did not trouble about local patriotism and Nationalism. Nature saw to it that they were just content to live and let live, and to overcome the tremendous difficulties "Nature in the raw" presented them with.

In those far off days, Glaciers united the Mainland of our Continent with outlying Districts like present-day Great Britain and those Glaciers left their mark so well that their formation can even to-day be traced. In the "Yorkshire Post" Aug. 28th, I find the following:

Glaciers:

The Swiss Meteorological Office, less concerned than our own with depressions off Iceland, has found other tasks. It makes it its duty to publish an annual report of the variations of the glaciers of Switzerland. From the careful measurements recorded it is clear that there was in 1932, as for many years, a widespread though slow dwindling of the glaciers. Those who have studied topographically the magnificent water-colour painting of the Chamonix valley and Mont Blanc by J. M. W. Turner, which is one of the treasures of the collection at Farnley Hall, must have noticed how strikingly different in shape and magnitude were the glaciers as drawn by Turner and