

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1936)

Heft: 779

Rubrik: Home news

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 9595.

Published every Friday at 23, LEONARD STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

Telegrams: PREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 15—No. 779

LONDON, OCTOBER 17, 1936.

PRICE 3d.

PREPAID SUBSCRIPTION RATES

UNITED KINGDOM	{	3 Months (13 issues, post free)	3/6
AND COLONIES	{	6 " " (26 " ")	6/6
SWITZERLAND	{	6 Months (26 issues, post free)	Frs. 7.50
		12 " " (52 " ")	14.—

(Swiss subscriptions may be paid into Postscheck-Konto
Basle V 5718).



HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

SWISS ARMY TO BE INCREASED.

A stronger army, greater mechanisation, and strengthened defence against "sudden attacks," are some of the new rearmament measures to cost 235 million francs (£10,500,000 approximately) provided for in a Bill which has been passed unanimously by the Swiss Parliament.

The reorganisation of the country's defences will take effect from January 1st, 1938.

The present army of six divisions is to be increased to nine divisions, and in addition three mountain brigades and special "frontier protection" brigades will be formed.

It will be the latter's task to protect the frontiers while mobilisation is proceeding.

The "Landwehr" (Reservists) will be divided into first and second classes. Battalions of the first class, men from 32 to 36 years old, will be incorporated in the crack regiments, comprising men within the age limit 20 to 32.

Further measures envisaged are:

(1) The provision of many more machine guns to increase firing power.

(2) The creation of light mechanised units.

The prime object of the re-organisation is to increase the Army's mobility, and at the same time ensure rapid mobilisation by a system of decentralisation when need occurs.

The programme represents the third stage in the re-organisation of national defence instituted after the failure of the Disarmament Conference.

SWISS UNIONS' REBELL TO COMMUNISTS.

The Congress of Swiss Trade Unions, at its annual meeting at Berne, decided almost unanimously against the creation of a united front with the Communists and against any other form of collaboration with them or with organizations under their influence. The Congress voted a resolution to the effect that it is firmly resolved to defend Swiss democracy by all means, and that it will not collaborate with any anti-democratic organization.

THE VILLA LAMMERMOOR FOR GENEVA.

The Swiss Federal Council accepted the bequest of the Villa Lammernmoor, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva made to the Confederation by the late Mrs. Barton. The possession of the villa and grounds will be given to the town of Geneva for 15 years.

Mrs. Barton, a granddaughter of Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, and widow of a former British Consul in Geneva, died last December in Brussels.

Mrs. Barton had established at the Villa Lammernmoor a "salon" which was a meeting place for diplomats, League delegates, and members of the League Secretariat.

B.I.S. AND DEVALUATION.

The Council of the Bank of International Settlements discussed the situation resulting from the devaluation of the French, Swiss, Dutch and other currencies.

The Council unanimously passed a resolution which took note of the recent steps taken and the declarations made by Governments relating to the modification of a certain number of monetary systems, and called attention once more "to the urgent necessity of assuring general stability of exchange."

The Council will next meet on November 9.

SWISS BANK IN DIFFICULTY.

It is announced that the Spar-und Leihkasse des Amtsbezirks Laufen (Laufen Savings and Loan Bank) has stopped payment. The bank's difficulties are attributed to embezzlement by a manager. A moratorium has already been applied for.

The bank has a share capital of Frs. 200,000 (about £9,400 at current rates). The balance-sheet total at 31st December, 1935, amounted to Frs. 1,539,000 (£72,400).

CHEAP SWISS RAILWAY TICKETS.

The Swiss Government has decided notwithstanding the devaluation of the Swiss franc, to continue the reduction of 30 per cent. on railway tickets to foreign tourists.

SWISS RADIO WEEK.

We observe that the Swiss broadcasting authorities have organised an interesting series of programmes under the heading "Swiss Radio Week." Most of the broadcasts are taken by all three Swiss stations, and include a number of items which are characteristic of the part of Switzerland whence they emanate. On Sunday the principal evening transmission is entitled "Rivers rise at the St. Gotthard and flow into the world." This is followed by a concert of Tessin popular music. In Tuesday's programmes there is a transmission illustrating the latest developments of broadcasting in general and of Swiss broadcasting in particular. The programmes have been made still more interesting by the addition of a novel feature. The authorities have arranged for a broadcast to be taken by all three stations from a different country on each day throughout the week (except Saturday). That of Sunday comes from the Deutschlandsender, Monday's from U.S.A., Tuesday's from France, Wednesday's from Great Britain (Regional Programme), Thursday's from Vienna. The country of origin for Friday's broadcast had not been made known at the time of going to press. The Swiss broadcasting authorities are to be congratulated on having arranged a week's broadcasts which, in addition to being original, should certainly be full of interest.

NEW CHIEF OF THE SWISS AVIATION CORPS.

The Federal Council has appointed Colonel H. Bandi to be the new Chief of the Swiss Flying Corps.

Colonel Bandi was born in 1882 in Oberwil near Büren, he entered the Federal Instruction Corps in 1908 (Artillery). On reaching the rank of captain, he was appointed to the command of the 20th Field Battery, and soon after was transferred to the General Staff, in which capacity he acted as a member of the Hauenstein fortress staff. In 1924 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, taking over the command of the 2nd Heavy Artillery Regiment. Six years later, on reaching the rank of Colonel he commanded for two years the 4th Artillery Brigade. In 1930 he acted as chief of staff of the 3rd manoeuvre Division. During the war he was sent to the Italian-Austrian front and in 1920 he spent some time with the German "Reichswehr."

TWO SWISS AVIATORS KILLED.

Ernest Moret, Manager of the Motor-car works Schneiter & Cie in Berne, and H. Lauri photographer also from Berne were killed during a flight to Berlin, arranged by the "Sportflieger Club," which is an amateur Association. Their machine crashed in the "Thüringer" forest near Schleiz. Engine trouble seemed to be the cause of the disaster.

DIPLOMATIC NEWS.

M. Meyer, President of the Swiss Confederation, accompanied by M. Motta, head of the political Dept. received the newly appointed Greek Minister, Monsieur Konstantin Psaroudas, on the occasion of the presenting of his credentials. M. Psaroudas was formerly Greek Minister at Moscow.

THREE SOLDIERS KILLED.

Three gunners were killed at Bière, during bomb throwing exercises, their names are: Ph. Saussaz, (Bex); Samuel Krähenbühl (Colombier) and W. Hauenstein (Neuchâtel).

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. Ernst Haegi, from Affoltern, has been elected President of the "Bankrat" of the "Kantonal Bank," in succession to Dr. H. Ruegg who recently resigned.

BERNE.

A terrible tragedy occurred in Berne last Friday, when a certain Willi Herzig shot his wife, and severely wounded three other members of the family, one of whom has since died. The murderer then took to flight pursued by the Police; after having fired several shots at them, he was killed by a shot from one of the Policemen.

URI.

An explosion took place at the Munition works in Altdorf, costing the life of three workmen, two men were more or less seriously injured.

BASLE.

Dr. Hans Rupe, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Basle has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The oldest inhabitant of the canton of Schaffhausen, Mme. Margarete Gysel-Hediger, has died at Wilchingen. Two months ago, the deceased celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary.

ARGAU.

The cantonal government has decided to erect a new library building in Aarau at the cost of over half a million francs.

ST. GALL.

Mme. Anna Marie Brändle in St. Gall has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary.

VAUD.

M. Maurice Lugeon, Professor of Geology at the University of Lausanne, has been made a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Liège. Professor Lugeon is already a doctor honoris causa of the Universities of Paris, Louvain and Strasbourg. In 1935 he received the "Prix Benoist."

* * *

M. Edouard Savary, Director of the 1st District of the Swiss Federal Railways has died in Lausanne at the age of 52.

* * *

In Lausanne, died after a long illness, in his 56th year, Colonel René-Charles Hauert of Wangen, near Büren. Colonel Hauert, was during the last 20 years, manager of the "Brasserie de Beauregard" in Lausanne, he was at one time Commandant of the 1st cavalry brigade.

VALAIS.

The death is reported from Sitten, of M. Joseph Dufour, architect; the deceased was one of the founders of the Chamber of Commerce of the canton of Valais, over which institution he presided from 1920-1930.

NIDWALDEN.

M. Gaston Guex, Manager of the Stans-Engelberg Railway, has died in Stans at the age of 58. M. Guex, who had held his post since 1924 enjoyed a great reputation in his profession. In the army he reached the rank of colonel. (Engineering corps).

LA NEUTRALITE.

Au point de vue international, la Suisse est neutre.

Elle est neutre de sa *propre volonté*. Cette neutralité est conforme à d'anciennes traditions, inaugurées après la défaite des troupes mercenaires suisses à Marignan en 1515 (guerre de l'Autriche et de l'Espagne contre la France). Ce fut le fruit de la défaite essuyée en terre étrangère. Depuis lors, les Confédérés se tiennent à l'écart des conflits entre puissances étrangères. C'est à cette attitude de neutralité devenue un principe directeur de leur politique extérieure, que nos ancêtres durant de ne pas être entraînés dans la guerre de Trente Ans.

Cette neutralité fut érigée pour la première fois en principe de droit public formel, en 1647/48, l'année où l'indépendance de la Confédération fut reconnue par le Congrès de Munster en Westphalie. Dès lors, la Suisse s'est toujours abstenu de toute combinaison politique contraire à la neutralité.

La situation stratégique du pays, au cœur de l'Europe, au carrefour des races latines et germaniques, a engagé les puissances à s'interdire l'accès du territoire suisse, qui autrement serait devenu un objet de compétition et une pomme de discorde.

La neutralité suisse a été reconnue à la demande de la Confédération au Congrès de Vienne. La Convention de Paris du 20 novembre 1815 "portant reconnaissance et garantie de la neutralité perpétuelle de la Suisse et de l'inviolabilité de son territoire" fut signée par les grandes puissances : Autriche, France, Angleterre, Russie et Prusse. Plus tard, l'Espagne, le Portugal et la Suède y adhérèrent. Quand éclata la guerre franco-allemande, en 1870, l'Empire allemand notifia au gouvernement suisse qu'il se considérait comme lié par la signature de la Prusse.

Depuis lors, neutralité suisse est un des facteurs de l'équilibre européen.