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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

FULL POWERS FOR SWISS GOVERNMENT.

The Federal Assembly met on Wednesday afternoon in Bern and without opposition voted the full powers for which the Federal Government had asked. It then appointed Colonel Henri Guisan Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army.

The highest rank in the Army is that of Colonel, but in war-time, or in case of emergency, the two Chambers of Parliament are called upon to elect the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, who has the rank of General. It is the fourth time since the new Constitution was adopted in 1848 that a General has been elected. General Henri Guisan, now Commander of the First Army Corps (1, 2 and 3 division) is a native of Canton Vaud, and the Chief of the General Staff will be Colonel Labhard.

General Guisan was sworn in, and the chairman of the National Council delivered a short speech in which he declared that Switzerland will communicate to the other countries that according to her traditions and particular situation, she will remain neutral in any possible conflict and will defend her neutrality to the last.

SWISS CLIMBERS' SUCCESS IN HIMALAYAS.

The members of the Swiss Himalayan expedition have reached the summit of Gauri Parbat, according to a message from Ranikhet.

SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION.

The authorities of the Swiss National Exhibition in Zurich have decided to keep the Exhibition open.

FIVE FRANC NOTES AGAIN IN CIRCULATION.

The National Bank has again put five franc notes into circulation.

SWISS GOVERNMENT'S WARNING.

The Swiss Federal Government broadcast an appeal to the population saying that the international situation is serious, but that all hope of a peaceful settlement has not been abandoned.

Nevertheless (the appeal continued) the possibility of an armed conflict should be borne in mind. The Swiss should, therefore, be ready without any fear and all officers and soldiers must prepare themselves so as to respond on the call of the Government should a general mobilization be decided.

PROMISE TO SWITZERLAND.

Dr. Otto Kocher, German Minister to Berne, called on the Foreign Minister, Dr. Motta, and informed him that in case of war Germany will respect the neutrality of Switzerland.

SWISS AIR SERVICES CURTAILED.

The flying of civil aircraft over French territory being prohibited, the Swiss Air Company announced that the air services from Zurich, Basle, and Geneva to Lyons, Paris, London, and Amsterdam are suspended.

The Swiss Federal Railways have organized numerous special trains for transporting to the borders the French, British, Dutch, and Italian tourists who want to return to their own country.

The Swiss Federal Government has issued a decree prohibiting the export of certain classes of foodstuffs, metals, and raw materials, but at the same time announced that the prohibition is

only temporary and will be cancelled as soon as circumstances permit.

TOSCANINI'S LUCERNE HONOUR.

On the proposal of Dr. Zimmerli, the "Stadtpräsident" of Lucerne and principal organiser of the musical festival there, Arturo Toscanini was recently offered the freedom of the town. He accepted in the following terms:

"Mon cher Président et ami,

"La bonne nouvelle que le Grand Conseil de la Bourgeoisie de Lucerne a voulu me conférer la Bourgeoisie honoraire de cette belle et chère ville m'a rempli le cœur de joie. Je suis fier et ému à la fois de ce grand honneur, qui m'est très-cher — et je vous prie, mon cher président et ami, d'être fidèle à l'interprète de mes plus vifs sentiments et de ma profonde gratitude près les messieurs du Grand Conseil. . . . Dévouement et sympathie!"

It is hoped that next year, as well as concerts, Toscanini will conduct a production of Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande" at the Lucerne theatre.

SWISS-SOVIET RELATIONS.

The Swiss Parliamentary Commission for Foreign Affairs has decided by a small majority that there is no reason for resuming diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, but that an effort should be made to develop trade relations.

SWISS PRIVATE RAILWAYS IN 1939.

Most of the Swiss private railways record reduced earnings during the first half of 1939, a period in which the revenue of the Swiss Federal Railways increased by 3.7 per cent., as compared with the first half of 1938. Passenger traffic on all railways declined, particularly on the mountain and tourist lines, the only exception being on the Coire-Arose Railway where earnings increased by 5 per cent.

HOT-AIR BALLOON.

The Aero Club of Switzerland is about to take delivery of a Marek and Emmer hot-air balloon. In this modern hot-air balloon a scientific petrol burner takes the place of the crude fire of the Montgolfier brothers. The envelope is of fireproof material and weighs 600 pounds. Heating apparatus and fuel weigh about 400 pounds, and a crew of four can be carried. The balloon has reached a height of 30,000 feet.

CITY OF BUDAPEST LOANS.

Swiss Association of Bankers, as trustee for the City of Budapest external loans, announces that in respect of the half-year to July 1st, 1939, bonds amounting to 4 per cent. Loan of 1910, nominal £8,620; 4 per cent. Loan of 1911, nominal Fr. Fcs. 440,580; and 4½ per cent. Loan of 1914, nominal £21,380 have been purchased in Hungary and cancelled for the sinking fund.

FEDERATION OF SWISS EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION.

The annual report of the Federation of Swiss Employers' Associations states that without any legal obligation or pressure from the trade unions, Swiss industry granted, in 1937, holidays with pay to 238,000 workers out of the total of 360,000 covered by the Factory Act — that is to say, to 66 per cent. of their total staffs. In addition, practically all salaried employees in wholesale trade, banking and insurance are granted paid annual leave. At the same time, it is pointed out, the Federation is opposed to the generalisation of holidays with pay through legal channels, as to do so, it is argued, would be an injustice to many firms.

ALL SWISS MINISTERS AT THEIR POSTS.

The annual conference of the Swiss Diplomatic representatives abroad with the head of the Swiss Foreign Office in Berne, was arranged to take place on September 1st. Many of our Ministers had already arrived at the capital for this annual meeting. Owing to the international situation, however, this conference has been cancelled, and all the diplomatic representatives of the Swiss Confederation are at present at their posts.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.

The International Red Cross celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Convention on August 22nd.

The Villa Moynier, the headquarters of the Red Cross, was draped with a large Red Cross flag and the building was floodlit. A reception was given at the Palais Eynard by the Red Cross and the cantonal and municipal councils. An account of the Red Cross from its first foundation by Henri Dunant after the Battle of Solferino down to the present day was broadcast, and an exchange of messages took place between the president, M. Max Huber, and Mr. Norman Davies, president of the American Red Cross.

Part of the task of the Red Cross is to prepare in time of peace for the duties it will be faced with in war. Profiting by its experiences in Abyssinia, China, and Spain, the International Red Cross has perfected and amplified the machinery for its special work in regard to aid for prisoners of war, evacuation of the disabled, and the inspection of prison camps. Most of this machinery is in readiness for immediate application. It has added to its duties the provision of providing safety zones for the wounded and civil populations, on which full agreement has not yet been secured. Modern warfare has rendered many of the provisions of the Geneva Convention inadequate, and for some years past the work of revising it has been in progress.

SWISS MOUNTAINEERING FEAT.

M. Ernest Huber, a member of the Swiss Himalayan Exhibition, succeeded in his second attempt to climb the 20,100ft. Rataban Peak. An attempt to climb Hatiprahabat is now to be made by the expedition.

100,000 MEN GUARDING SWISS FRONTIERS.

The mobilization of the Swiss frontier defence force, which began on Tuesday, is completed, and about 100,000 men are guarding the borders, which are closed to traffic except on a few important routes.

The Federal Government have by decree prohibited the flying of foreign aeroplanes over Switzerland. The prohibition includes also Swiss civil aircraft. Civil foreign aeroplanes which may be compelled to come to Switzerland must report themselves beforehand and will be allowed to land on the aerodromes of Geneva, Basle, Saint-Gallen, and Lugano. Any foreign machines which fail to obey the order of the Swiss authorities may be compelled to land and even shot at.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

M. von Goeyen, Minister of Home Affairs in the Dutch Government, has paid a visit to the Swiss National Exhibition at Zurich.

BERNE.

Mme. Marchand in Landeron has celebrated her 100th birthday, she was presented on this occasion with a bath chair by the authorities.

* * *

Mme. Joséphine Clark-Goller, who recently died in Sydney (Australia), has left her entire fortune to the University of Berne. A "Fonds Joséphine Clark-Goller" has been created by the medical faculty. A first remittance of 44,000frs. has already been received.

LUCERNE.

On Sunday last a monument to the memory of the late Federal Councillor, Dr. Joseph Zemp, the father of the Swiss Federal Railways, was inaugurated in Entlebuch.

A daughter and a son, as well as a brother of the late statesman, were present at the inauguration.

BASLE.

The 495th Anniversary of the battle at St. Jakob an der Birs, was celebrated in Basle on Saturday last. More than 20,000 people took part in the procession which took over two hours to pass.

GENEVA.

A fire broke out at the "Musée Rath" in Geneva where a number of the Masterpieces of the Spanish Prado Exhibition are on view. Fortunately no damage was done to the exhibits. The damage caused to the building are estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 60,000frs.