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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

On two nights during the past week a number of Swiss towns — Berne, Zurich, Basle and Geneva — had air raid alarms. The first alarm sounded shortly before mid-night on August 13th when foreign planes flew over Switzerland. The alarm in Berne lasted from 11.45 p.m. to 12.21 a.m. and in Geneva from 11.41 p.m. to 12.41 a.m. According to the Swiss General Staff's report quoted by Reuter and the Geneva correspondent of the "*Times*," about 30, probably British, aircraft flying at a height of 10,000 feet, passed over Swiss territory when proceeding to Italy and returning from there. A few isolated machines were heard in the Jura and Ticino regions, but no bombs were dropped.

The Swiss General Staff announced on August 15th that in future foreign aircraft flying over Switzerland would be fired at. The same communiqué added that no black-out would be imposed for the time being but that the population was advised to go to shelters during air raid alarms.

During the night of August 15th/16th foreign aircraft again flew over Switzerland on their way to and from Italy and the sirens sounded in several places in northern and central Switzerland. The third violation of Swiss territory by foreign aircraft occurred in the night of August 18th/19th when the alarm was again given in various places. It was announced by the Swiss radio on August 19th that bombs had been dropped in the Canton Thurgau at Diessenhofen and Schlatt between mid-night and 1 o'clock in the neighbourhood of a railway line. Telephone and telegraph cables were put out of order, but no serious damage was done to the railway line.

The Federal Council instructed the Swiss Minister to protest against these repeated violations of Swiss territory with a view to obtaining assurances against further incidents of the same kind.

This was done at the end of last week and a satisfactory reply has since been received.

The Committee of the Catholic Conservative and Liberal Parties have decided to explore ways and

means for a more intimate co-operation between the political parties in Switzerland.

The enlargement of the Rhine port Birsfelden near Basle, which was suspended for some time, has been resumed.

The Swiss radio announces that the frontier between Alsace and Switzerland has been re-opened and that all Swiss who were domiciled there before the war have been able to take up their residence again.

The Postal authorities announce that postal services between Switzerland and the French Mandates and Colonies have been resumed. As from August 21st onwards, telephone communication between Switzerland and unoccupied France will again be possible.

A new film, produced by the Swiss Military Film Service, entitled "Fête Nationale" was accorded a warm welcome on its first presentation this week.

It is with regret that we announce the death of the recently retired Federal Councillor Obrecht, who passed away in Berne. Hermann Obrecht was born on the 26th of March, 1882, at Grenchen (Solothurn). Originally intended to be a schoolmaster he soon took a keen interest in local public affairs and occupied important posts in the cantonal government; for a few years he was in charge of the political side of the Solothurner Zeitung. He was elected to the National Council in 1917. His wide experience and business acumen brought him in contact with many of our large industrial and financial undertakings; amongst others he was on the board of the Swiss Bank Corporation. He joined the Federal Council as recently as 1935 but during the last few years he had been in failing health and when our magistrates were sworn in last December he was absent from the ceremony owing to illness. Federal Councillor Obrecht resigned his high office last July and Dr. Walter Stampfli, another Solothurner, was subsequently elected to fill the vacancy.

On July 25th, General Guisan called a meeting of all Commanders of Army Corps Divisions, Brigades, Regiments, Battalions and Companies, at the Rütli and gave then an order to keep on the alert. The General's order mentioned amongst other points that defence against attack from outside and readiness to meet dangers such as defeatism and loss of confidence in the value of resistance, was of supreme importance. He went on to say "I wished to meet you in this