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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Every able-bodied man in Switzerland has now been mobilised either for the army or the auxiliary services and it may be said that the state of war readiness has reached its utmost limit. The concentration of large numbers of troops on both the German and French frontiers has created apparent nervousness though the future is faced with calm and confidence. Stringent measures have been taken to counteract possible fifth column activities; an excessively large number of Germans are believed to live in our country, a good many of them in sanatoriums, and means have been devised to deal with them as soon as the necessity arises. Home guards have been formed in towns and villages for this purpose; these territorials are also trained to take charge of parachute invaders. The passive A.R.P. organisation have been armed and are placed under the orders of the army command.

* * *

Most of the schools and universities have been closed and the Students are encouraged to take up agricultural work.

* * *

Steel helmets and rifles with bayonets have been issued to the local police in Basle.

* * *

By the will of Frau Elisabeth Lussi-Zumbach, who died last February in Stans (Nidwalden), local philanthropic and ecclesiastic institutions have benefited to the tune of over Frs. 200,000 in addition to a like amount which she gave during her life-time.

* * *

An admirable article on Switzerland from the pen of Miss Dorothy Thompson was reprinted in the "Daily Telegraph" of May 17th. Unfortunately some of her references spoil the beauty of the otherwise perfect picture, and as it is said that the fair sex in our great sister republic on the other side of the Atlantic will only believe what is stated in black and white by Miss Thompson we may be allowed to lodge a gentle protest. We wish to single out the passage "the Swiss Confederation is composed of Germans, Italians and Frenchmen with the Germans in the

majority;" it runs like a motif through the whole of the article. If the good lady on her European perambulations had found time to look through a primer, she would have found that Switzerland existed centuries before there was any talk of "Deutschland" or the "Dritte Reich" and that Germany as we know it to-day is quite a modern concoction.

As no Swiss papers or official news have reached us during the last few days we have borrowed the following items from English contemporaries.

Severe sentences on Col. Dr. Hans Trüb and his associates who were arrested about a month ago in Berne have been passed according to "The Times" 21.5.40) Geneva correspondent; he reports:

Dr. Trüb, the official of the Swiss Military Department who was arrested on a charge of espionage on behalf of a foreign Power, has been sentenced by the Military Court to eight years' imprisonment, expulsion from the Army, dismissal from his office, and suppression of his citizen's rights for 10 years. His wife was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, and an accomplice named Müller to 10 years' imprisonment and 10 years' suppression of his citizen's rights.

* * *

A Heinkel bomber is stated to have come down last Friday week near the Dübendorf (Zurich) airport. The pilot is supposed to have lost his way and imagining themselves to be somewhere in France the crew put up a fight. However, three were soon overpowered while the remaining two escaped; after an all-night search they were captured the following day.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 4 Juin à 6.30 h. précises au Restaurant PAGANI 42, Great Portland Street, W.1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.

Démissions.

Admissions.

Divers.

Le souper est facultatif et les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).

Le Comité

Business concerns in Basle and Zurich have been officially warned to remove their books and records to the western part of the country. The Bank for International Settlements is now to be found at the little village of Chateaux d'Oex in the Bernese Alps. The League of Nations is leaving Geneva for Bordeaux; other reports say that some place in Portugal is its destination.

* * *

The tone of the articles on Switzerland in the English press vary according to rumours or the fortunes of war. It is generally asserted that our country is well prepared against a surprise attack. The different correspondents have a good deal to say; on the lake of Constance German troops are conducting manoeuvres in boats; in Basle where the railway exits to France and Germany have been bottled up, the public telephone boxes have been closed and the use of telephones in restaurants are being closely watched. A regular stream of cars are moving from Zurich and Basle in the direction of Geneva; the roads are patrolled by soldiers who often stop cars to examine credentials. The following article is taken from "Time and Tide" (18.5.40).

Strong German troop concentrations in the Black Forest and along the Swiss-German border from Basle to the Vorarlberg region are, as we go to press, causing serious concern in Switzerland. Although there have been previous signs of German activity in these parts at different times since the beginning of the war, it is believed in Switzerland that this time Hitler means business. The Swiss authorities have accordingly taken full precautionary measures against a possible German attack on their country.

General mobilization was ordered on the eve of the invasion of Holland and Belgium. By last Saturday morning there were more than 600,000 well-trained men under arms, out of a total population of 4½ millions. In addition there are more than 300,000 men in the anti-aircraft formation, and in organizations which in case of emergency will carry

out evacuation and other measures of civil defence. An army of 300,000 is concentrated along the entire Swiss-German border, from Basle following the course of the Rhine to the district of Ragaz, where the main German push might occur. The whole of the frontier region is guarded by strong fortifications, and a second and third line of defence has been drawn up well behind the actual frontier. The southern front is guarded by 200,000 men. A hundred thousand men are standing by the Swiss midlands, whose primary duty would be to deal with possible fifth column activities. As there are about 130,000 German subjects living in Switzerland, of whom at least 30,000 are known to belong to National Socialist organizations, prompt action will be needed to safeguard the country from their unwelcome attentions. The Swiss Government is determined to deal with them in a drastic manner.

Further precautionary measures, such as the mining of bridges and roads, were taken some time ago. The equipment of the Swiss army is first-class, but the country is not strong in the air, and if she were to be attacked, help from the Allied air forces would be the main need.

There can be no doubt that Switzerland is ready to fight to the last soul for her cherished independence. Whether the challenge comes from Germany or from Germany and Italy in combination, the Swiss nation will take it up.

FROM HONEYMOON TO HELL AND HOSPITAL.

Our very popular friend René Marchand and Mrs. Marchand can be congratulated on the wonderful escape of their son, Roy Marchand, who is a pilot in the R.A.F. Most members of the colony know that young Roy only just got married on the 4th May, and an impressive gathering of our compatriots attended the ceremony and the reception which followed at the Dorchester Hotel.

After a week's honeymoon spent in England, Roy returned to his duty full of that indomitable courage which is covering the R.A.F. with glory. He had only been back two days when he was unfortunately shot down, but his injuries luckily proved of such a nature that, whilst he was invalided home, his life is not in danger. We hear that he is now recovering satisfactorily, and his one aim is to return to the front and carry on with the good work. We hear he has already several enemy planes to his credit.

The best wishes of all our compatriots will undoubtedly go to this young hero, accompanied with our sympathy for his young wife and his Swiss parents who are giving their most precious to the cause of freedom for which the Allies are fighting.

Bee.

CHURCH BAZAAR.

We should like to remind our readers that the bazaar arranged by our two churches for this afternoon will take place as advertised. It has, however, been found desirable to eliminate the tea and the children's entertainment.

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