

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: - (1949)

Heft: 1119

Rubrik: News at random

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED BY A. STAUFFER WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE SWISS COLONY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

Telephone: CLERKENWELL 2321/2.

Published Twice Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 32. No. 1119.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26th, 1949.

PRICE 6d.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council submitted in a message to the Federal Assembly a proposal for part revision of the military penal code as well as an alteration in the court-martial regulations.

In this message the Federal Council points out, that the active service has shown, that on the whole, the administration of the military code in general has worked satisfactorily, but in some cases it was necessary to apply some emergency measures. Some of these will have to be taken over into the normal penal law. Practice has shown that some clauses of the normal penal law also require some revision in order to deal with some individual cases. Any alterations in the civil penal law must also be adopted in the military penal code. The individual articles which in particular to be considered are the articles 29bis and article 46 (imprisonment). The military penal code did up to now not know the penalty of imprisonment, as contained in article 39 of the penal code. By its introduction into the military code, the judge has a more reasonable degree of penalties at his disposal in cases where extenuating circumstances are prevailing.

Of particular importance are article 29, 29bis and 46 (mitigation of penalty in action derived of great distress of mind). In motivation of these articles, the Federal Council points out in its message, that the numbers of objectors to service on conscientious grounds was always negligible. It considers the introduction of civilian service as proposed by National Councillor Oltramare as unpractical, owing to the small number of cases and also to the differences of age and occupations of the objectors, let alone that so small a country as Switzerland where a complete use of all the man-power is of the utmost importance. A refusal to comply with the call to military service when that refusal is intentional must remain punishable. Any other solution must be considered as granting a privilege to a group of citizens. The abandonment of punishment would be equal to a declaration of powerlessness by the state in one of the most vital

points of its interest spheres. For objectors from genuine religious reasons, article 39 (imprisonment) from the civilian penal code is now adopted. This imprisonment is limited to three months and is to be served in particular institutions, certainly not in penitentiaries nor with other prisoners. Neither are the objectors to don prison-garb, but will wear their own clothes. By this mitigation the demand for forbearance against objection to military service on religious grounds is given full consideration.

The articles regarding court martial regulations are dealing with court-martials, extraordinary court-martials, the exclusion from the army, costs and compensations by cessation of proceedings and by acquittals and cessation proceedings.

* * *

The customs receipt in July, 1949, reached 43.2 million francs, i.e. 1.4 millions less than in July, 1948. In the first seven months of the current year the customs receipts amounted to frs.268.3 millions as compared with frs.327.6 millions in the same period of last year, which represents a drop of 59.3 million francs.

Cantonal

The old penitentiary in Lucerne, situated in the Baselstrasse, was, after 100 years service, closed. It did no longer come up to the requirements of present day prison conditions. The prisoners were taken to the new penal settlement at the Wauwilermoos. At present there are 50 prisoners who under the supervision of 10 warders are working on already cultivated land or are occupied on melioration works in other parts of the country. The state estate, about 160 acres is the largest agricultural establishment in the canton of Lucerne. With the proceeds of the sale of the property in the Baselstrasse, the new penitentiary and administration buildings in the Wauwilermoos will be erected,

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which then afterwards will have to serve as such for the whole of central Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The administrative council of the canton of Zurich has elected Dr. jur. Alois Crendelmeier, barrister-at-law, from Zurich, residing in Kusnacht as a member of the National Council in place of the resigning National Councillor Gottlieb Duttweiler in Rueschlikon. [A.T.S.]

* * *

Sixteen animals in the Zurich Zoo have up to now been the victims of foot and mouth disease. They are 4 Bisons, 7 Yaks, 3 Watussis, 1 Watussi-Zebu and 1 Watussi cow. Of the Bison and the Yaks the whole families were involved. The damage is estimated at about frs.40,000.—. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The foot and mouth disease which broke out in the Zurich Zoo has now spread to the stable of a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood. A case was discovered and the whole of the beautiful live-stock, consisting of a two-year old bull, 34 selected milk-cows and 78 pigs had to be destroyed. The damage amounts to at least frs.85,000.—. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A party of two, Ernst Lanz from Zurich, and Emil von Allmen, guide in Muerren, were able to climb for the first time the difficult north-wall of the Lauterbrunnen Breithorn. The 1,300 m. (about 4,300 feet) high rock-wall was conquered in 8½ hours without using wall-hooks. The descent went over the Breithorn glacier to the Oberhornsee. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The administrative council of the canton of Zurich has decided to grant a states contribution of frs.63,000 towards the building of eight one-family houses and twenty-four houses containing several flats which are estimated to cost about 6.3 million francs to build. The contribution of the commune towards these buildings will amount to frs.530,000. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A few days before reaching the age of 78 years, Dr. Ernest Jung, a barrister-at-law, died in Winterthur after a short illness. From 1911-1917 he was a representative of the democratic party in the cantonal council. 1923-1938 he was a member of the cantonal

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appeal commission. In the army Dr. Jung held the rank of Lieut.-Colonel of Infantry and in the first world war he was in command of the 1st reserve battalion No. 153 (Zurich). [A.T.S.]

* * *

On August 6th the opera singer, Wilhelm Beckholt, citizen of Zurich, celebrated his 80th birthday. He was for over three decades connected with the Stadt-theater of Zurich, first as a lyric baritone, then in character and hero parts and later in bass buffo roles. He retired from the stage in 1935. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The police have arrested Emil Steiner (58) inspector at the general telephone and telegraph office in Berne, after having found out that he transmitted copies of telegrams to a foreign power. Steiner has confessed that during the war and up to his arrest he was in the intelligence service of some foreign principals who paid him for his dirty work. According to the result of the investigations, military, political and economic treason acts, as well as infringements of official secrets will have to be considered. The Federal Council has according to art. 221 handed over the whole investigations to a court martial for judgment. [A.T.S.]

* * *

A few weeks ago the papers reported the disappearance of Dr. Eugene Guillods of Cossonay, where he was in practice as general practitioner for many years. His body was found not far from the Otasses pass (district d'Entremont). This pass attains a height of nearly 9,000 feet (2550m.). It connects Panossier hut with the alp Bonatchesse. Dr. Guillod, whose age

was 72 years, fell whilst descending into a couloir some 300 feet deep. [A.T.S.]

In the night from 6th to 7th August, some unknown person opened a valve in the steamer "Jungfrau" which was built in 1898, but which for some years has been moored at the landing station Inter-laken-Brienz. The water entered the ship which on Sunday morning was found to be laying on its side and sinking. The employees at the wharf were able to close the valve (sea-cock) and the water was pumped out with a motor-pump. The police are investigating the matter. [A.T.S.]

Two young men from Wallenstadt, Franz Cassani and Josef Mazzolini, both members of the S.A.C., section Piz Sol, mastered for the first time the south wall of the Scheibenstollen (the third peak of the Chur-firsten chain) after 7 hours of difficult climbing.

[A.T.S.]

Traversing the Aare by a section of the Pontonier recruit school at Brugg, a steerman of one of the boats lost his balance, fell into the river and disappeared in the floods. The instructor, directing the exercise saw the accident, jumped into the river and was able to save the man from drowning. [A.T.S.]

Mrs. Sumner-Wells, who accompanied her husband to Lausanne where he is recuperating from an illness, died at her hotel where they both were staying. Mrs. Sumner-Wells, the wife of a previous American under secretary for foreign affairs, reached the age of 60.

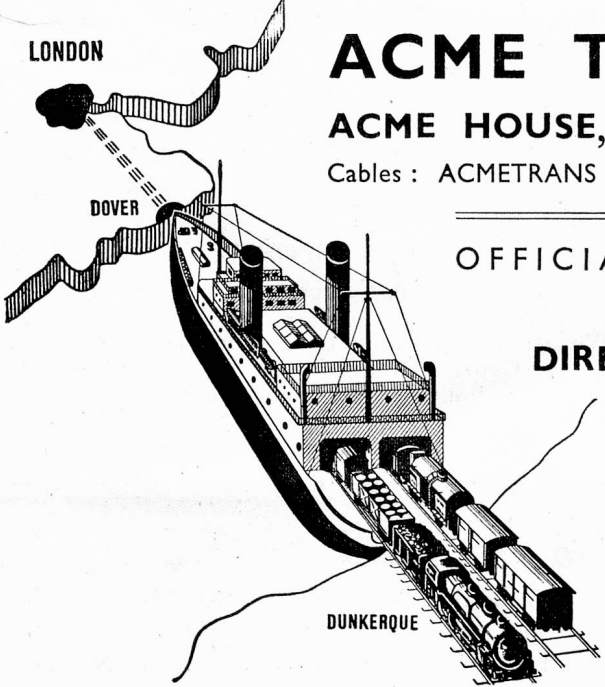
[A.T.S.]

Army

Army corps commander Colonel Jakob Labhart died at his home in Merlingen on August 6th last at the age of 68.

He was born at Steckborn in 1881. After passing through the progymnasium in Berne and the cantonal school in Frauenfeld, he continued his studies at the technical academies of Charlottenburg and Munich as engineer. He began his military career in 1902 as Lieutenant of Artillery. As such he served for a time in a Prussian artillery regiment and then entered the corps of instructors. After the first world war he returned into industry and was later on vice-director of the federal labour office. In 1923 he became chief of a section of the General chief staff at the same time as he was promoted to Lieut.-Colonel. After attaining the rank of Colonel (1929) he was placed in charge of the 13th Infantry brigade in 1932. Two years later he was promoted to Division Commander and Chief of the Cavalry, whereupon in 1936 he was elected as Chief of the General Staff Department. On January 1st, 1937, the Federal Council appointed him Corps Commander and at the mobilisation of the Swiss Army in September, 1939, he was promoted to Chief of Staff of the Army. In this office he was followed by Corps Commander Huber, when he was appointed Commander of the 4th Army Corps. In spring, 1947, he retired on reaching the age limit.

The body was carried to the cemetery by non-commissioned officers, in a coffin covered by the Swiss flag. Amongst the mourners were to be seen Federal Councillor Kobelt, old Federal Councillor Minger, General Guisan, eight active and past Corps Commanders, a number of Division Commanders and other high rank-



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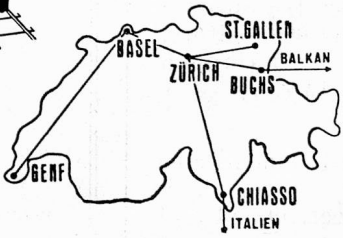
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ing officers. In the name of friends of the dead officer, the past Minister Dr. Feisst addressed those present, whereas Federal Councillor Kobelt, as Chief of the Federal Military Department and a past Chief of Staff of the deceased, spoke of his qualities as a military educationist, organiser and as a commander. He further stated that with the death of Colonel Labhart one of the foremost military leaders of the last world war has passed away, who as Chief of the General Chief Staff had done his utmost to put the defence of our country before the outbreak of war into such a condition which gained the recognition and respect of foreign powers. The whole Swiss people were mourning the passing of a great and meritorious confederate. The local clergyman of Sigriswil, Pfarrer Kraemer, gave the final address. [A.T.S.]

Traffic

As compared with the previous month, the goods turnover at the Basle Rhine ports has increased from 197,716 tons to 280,424 tons in July. The total traffic from 1st January to 31st July, however, is still 500,000 tons less than at the same period of 1948. The goods were transported by 232 canal barges, 134 Rhine-boats and 437 goods carriers. 221,502 tons arrived in Basle by way of the Rhine and 31,000 tons by way of the canals. The main goods handled upstream were grain, coffee, sugar, coal, coke, briquettes, benzine, oils, mineral raw materials, cellulose, iron and steel. Downstream were sent various kinds of pyrites, other ore, dross and cinders, natural stone and machinery. [A.T.S.]

* * *

The traffic accounts of the Rhatian Railways for the first part of 1949 prove the difficult financial position in which the transport undertaking of the Grisons is at the present moment. The passenger and goods traffic for the first five months of this year show a noticeable retrograde movement. Only the month of June showed slightly increased takings in passenger traffic, compared with last year. The running expenses from January to June are about frs.10,000 higher than for the same period of 1948. The balance sheet makes sorry reading; for the first half-year 1949 shows a deficit of frs.66,000.— compared with a profit of frs. 661,712.— in the first half of 1948. [A.T.S.]

—oo—

The influx of foreign visitors via Basle is continuing uninterruptedly. Over the week-end of August 6th-7th about 20,000 visitors by rail and motor-car descended on Basle, so that Swiss connecting trains had to be run in several sections. As the school holidays for Basle are ending in a fortnight, many Basle families are returning from their vacations, a fact which shows itself in the increased number of visitors to the Zoo and the bathing places. Since the opening of the season, the lido "Eglise" had 244,000 visitors. In July over 260,000 foreign visitors passed through Basle for some places in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

* * *

On Saturday, 6th August, Professor Himmel-Peter and his wife celebrated the rare occurrence of a diamond wedding. The couple are respectively 84 and 80 years of age.

THE DESERTER.

(Another version)

Zu Strassburg auf der langen Brueck' . . .

In Strasbourg, as I crossed one day
The bridge that spans the Rhine,
My eyes turned southward, — there it lay,
A grey and misty line.
"Ah! if I could but pierce the haze,"
So did my fancy roam,
"The snowy peaks would meet my gaze,
And Switzerland, my home."

I thus stood musing, all forlorn,
Upon this prospect fair,
When, far away, played on a horn,
I heard a homely air.
My eyes grew dim; confused and stirred
I watched the waters gleam
And, by a sudden impulse spurred,
Plunged boldly in the stream.

But for the sergeant's watchful eye,
How different my lot.
For he had raised the hue and cry,
And now . . . they'll have me shot.
"Oh! gentle Sirs, believe my word,
The fault lies not with me,
I lost my senses, when I heard
That Alphorn's melody."

"So take me to the city wall
And measure out the ground.
Grant me one wish before I fall,
Then load and fire your round:
Let that sweet melody once more
Rise up to heaven's dome,
And send my love, I you implore,
To Switzerland, my home."

Translated by J.J.F.S.

SWISS SPORTS.

(A Correction.)

We are informed by one of our regular readers, that the "George Dimier" Cup has been won on a previous occasion by the Unione Ticinese.

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