

The deserter

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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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