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SWISS NATIONAL DAY - AUGUST 1st

1291



1950

In a time full of anxiety, political and economic upheavals and universal distress, when the spectre of war is threatening once more the peace of a tired and torn world, our country is celebrating, on Tuesday next, the six hundred and fifty ninth's anniversary of its birth.

It behoves us, who are far from home, to let our thoughts wander back to the land of our fathers; alas! we shall not see the fires lit on the mountain tops at eventide, nor shall we hear the church bells ringing, but deep down in our hearts we shall, share the emotions of our kinsmen, across the sea. —

Whilst a divine Providence has granted us a long term of peace, other countries have seen their territories destroyed and ravaged and their destinies determined by trouble and war, but no blood has stained the bonds which have knit together our free and order loving population for many years past.

We are a small nation, composed of the most heterogeneous elements — Protestants and Catholics, French, German, Italian and Romansch, speaking Swiss, everyone, let it be remembered, with his traditions, with his prejudices. In each of these conflicting antagonistic elements, however, there is a common bond of patriotism and the only true policy is that, which reaches that common patriotism and makes it vibrate in all toward common ends and common aspirations.

To this country of ours, which has given us its material, moral and intellectual wealth, to this country which affords to all its children its protection, we owe everything, all that we are, all that we have. And if this day, we have tried to find out what it means to us, it should be, that we may feel and understand better what we owe it.

What then is our duty to our country?

We shall serve it best by defending it, by accepting willingly all the obligations entailed by that. We

must, with all our might, support the efforts of our Government for peaceful solutions of the world's troubles, so that future generations be spared the horrors of wars. This country of ours, we shall also serve by defending it against interior foes, against those cynics who will tell you that love for one's country is nothing but a myth.

We Swiss abroad are unable as yet, to take an active part in shaping the destiny of our homeland, but we can also serve our country by upholding the prestige by individual efficiency and industry, by faithful and honest work, and by respecting the institutions of the country which has given us hospitality.

Patriotism is the vital condition of national permanence, no Government is safe unless it is protected by the good will of the people. Patriotism means: One country, one constitution, one destiny.

More than ever, our national motto: "Un pour tous — tous pour us," should be our *Leitmotiv*, and this should lead us to happier and more prosperous times. It is not enough to make on every possible occasion speeches, emphasizing that we are all children of one large family, and therefore should stand together, this is after all an obvious conclusion, deeds should now follow words, we should show in a practical way, that we mean what we often so freely proclaim. Let us then, dear compatriots, make this our resolution on the 1st of August, 1950.

Sweet messengers of heaven, may we entrust you to deliver our humble and fraternal greetings to the dear old country? Please carry our homage to the Swiss mountains in all their majesty and glory, to the beautiful lakes nourished by the eternal snow, to the torrents, rivers and streams, the lofty alps and the peaceful valleys. Let us hope that you may finally descend on the Rütli, the birthplace of Swiss Liberty and Independence, to deliver our unanimous and fervent message.

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