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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Swiss Parliament (Lower House) recently approved a Government proposal to reorganize the country's defence forces. Voting was 105 for and 5 against, with most of the Socialists and Independent members abstaining.

The Government's reorganisation plan, which will extend over four years, called for the establishment of three mechanized divisions, stronger Air Force ground defences, and an increase in the number of fighter aircraft. A decision to purchase a new interceptor aircraft to re-equip the Air Force is expected in the near future, with the choice still unknown between a number of foreign types which have been evaluated.

To meet part of the cost of the plan, the Government had proposed reducing the infantry strength by 13 battalions and abolishing the cavalry. An opposition amendment, however, defeated the proposal to reduce the infantry and succeeded in the retention of 18 out of the current 25 cavalry squadrons.

At the session some members criticized M. Chaudet, the Defence Minister, on his proposal to buy eleven second-hand Centurion tanks from South Africa because of that country's racial policies. When put to the vote the purchase proposal was upheld by 94 to 44.

* * *

The Federal Chambers, at their recent session, have authorised the Federal Council to prolong a loan, which was granted in 1956 to the World Bank, for a further six years. After part repayments, the loan stands at present at 167 million francs and bears interest at 4 per cent.

* * *

Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco paid an official visit to the Swiss Confederation, from Tuesday to Thursday, 8th to 10th November 1960.

They were welcomed at the Berne station by Monsieur Max Petitpierre, President of the Swiss Confederation, who was accompanied by Madame Petitpierre. The distinguished visitors, on arriving at the Palais Fédéral, were introduced to the members of the Federal Council. In the evening they were the guests of the Swiss Government at a State banquet. On Wednesday, Prince Rainier and Princess Grace were taken on an excursion to Neuchâtel, where they were officially received by members of the cantonal government at the castle of Neuchâtel. The following day they opened an exhibition at the Casino in Berne dealing with the principality of Monaco, and a luncheon offered by the Federal Council at the "Lohn" followed. In the evening, a dinner was given to the members of the Federal Council by Prince Rainier and Princess Grace, after which the national orchestra of Monaco gave a concert at the Casino. On the Friday morning the visitors took leave of Monsieur Petitpierre and Madame Petitpierre.

* * *

Cantonal

The 99th delegates' meeting of the Swiss Alpine Club was recently held at Winterthur. One hundred and sixty-six delegates, representing eighty-five sections, attended the meeting, which was presided over by Dr. Georg Calonder, Central President. It was decided that the Centenary Celebrations — lasting three days — will be held at Interlaken in 1961. The Swiss Alpine Club has a membership of nearly 42,000.

[A.T.S.]

* * *

During a snow-storm, a motor-car got stuck on the rails at a level-crossing between Rätterschen and

Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The high costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Friday, November 25th, 1960, together with remittance for 10/-.

Winterthur-Grüze; whilst the occupants were able to leave the car in time, the latter was totally smashed by a train. [A.T.S.] * * *

Dr. Duerst, "Statthalter" of the Zurich district, has tendered his resignation to the cantonal government. [A.T.S.] * * *

Mr. Fritz Iseli, Notary in Jegenstorf (Ct. Berne), has been honoured with honorary citizenship by the commune of Jegenstorf for forty-five years' service rendered as "Gemeindeschreiber". [A.T.S.] * * *

Mr. Stefan Zehnder has been elected manager of the Furka-Oberalp Railway. He will take up his post on 1st January 1961. [A.T.S.] * * *

Five cultural organisations in Fribourg, of which M. Gonzague de Reynolds — who recently celebrated his 80th birthday — was either the founder or president, assembled at the University of Fribourg to pay homage to him as a writer and patriot. He was presented with a gold commemoration medal. Amongst the many congratulatory telegrams received was one from Pope Johannes XXIII. [A.T.S.] * * *

Mme. Emma Herzog-Früh, of Flawil, has celebrated her 101st birthday. [A.T.S.] * * *

The dial-plate factory "Flückiger & Cie" in St. Imier, employing over 450 workhands, has celebrated its 100th jubilee. [A.T.S.] * * *

The members of the Government of the canton of Fribourg paid a return visit to the Solothurn government. (In October 1959 the Solothurn government was the guest of the cantonal government of Fribourg.) After an official reception at the government house the guests visited various monuments in the town, after which they drove to Dornach, where a luncheon was served. Subsequently they visited the cloister "Mariastein". The visit ended with a joint dinner at the "Bad Attisholz". [A.T.S.] * * *

A train of the Solothurn-Niederbipp Railway crashed into a lorry at a level-crossing in Niederbipp. The driver of the vehicle escaped injuries. The damage caused to the train and the lorry was considerable. [A.T.S.] * * *

The oil tanker "Badella", of the "Schweiz. Reederei A.G." Basle, collided with one of the pillars of the Johanniter Bridge in Basle and sank. The crew were rescued by life-boat. [A.T.S.] * * *

The Chinese Ambassador, Monsieur Li Ching-Chuan, in Berne has paid a courtesy visit to the

Government of the canton Basle-Town. He was received at the town hall by Dr. A. Schaller. The distinguished visitor was entertained to luncheon at the hotel "Drei Könige" and then followed a visit to the Basle Port. [A.T.S.] * * *

The mandate of the five members of the government of the canton Schaffhausen having lapsed, new elections were held. The former government was composed of two Socialists, two members of the Peasant and Bourgeois party (BGB) and one Liberal. As the result of the recent poll the Socialists have lost one seat to the Liberals. The following have been elected: Robert Schärer (Liberal), no change; Franz Fischer (BGB), unchanged; Dr. Hermann Wanner (Liberal), new; Ernst Lieb (BGB), no change; Erwin Hofer (Socialist), new. Georg Leu (Socialist) has not been re-elected. [A.T.S.] * * *

A motorist returning at night to Deitingen was attacked by two men in the Attisholz forest (Solothurn), receiving several knife stabs. When he threatened to call the police the thugs drove away in a car in which a seventeen-year-old girl was waiting. The trio were arrested the day following the attack. The chief perpetrator is a twenty-four-year-old commercial clerk of Oberbuchsitzen. [A.T.S.] * * *

(Continued on page 49354.)



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