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An international cheque forger of German origin could be apprehended in Lucerne early this year thanks to the clever conduct of a bank cashier.

In November, an extremely bold robbery was carried out at the **Emmen** post office when the thief got away with Fr.29,000.—. **Gisikon's** Restaurant "Zur Post" was gutted by fire in October, and the inhabitants of **Horw** accepted waste-water and school building projects for 4.2m. francs. At the end of November, the new *Gondelbahn* was opened at **Marbach**, and on private initiative, a small indoor pool has been constructed at **Meggen**, seeing that preparations for a public scheme have been delayed too long.

Richenthal awarded honorary citizenship to Prof. Emil Achermann, Hitzkirch, for his great achievements in the interest of teachers' training. **St. Urban**, like its political sister Commune of Pfaffnau, is to have an expensive school building with gymnasium (nearly 2m. francs). An old traditional custom was again adhered to at **Sursee** when the "Gansabhaut" took place on 11th November. If one of the contestants wearing "sunmasks" succeeds in beheading a hanging goose (blindfold), he may keep it. The farmer's periodical "Landwirt" at Sursee has just celebrated its centenary. The former country house of **Utenberg** today houses a rich collection of costumes and various antique seals and jewellery, as well as the archives of the Swiss Yodelling Association.

(Compiled mainly from news received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

THE "WHITE BOOT"

Switzerland helps Florence

The flood catastrophe in Florence has resulted not only in nation-wide sympathy in Switzerland, but also in substantial material help. Many local and cantonal authorities granted monetary assistance, and the Federal Council, via the Swiss Red Cross, sent a first consignment of blood plasma, vaccines and food to the amount of 100,000.— Swiss francs. In addition, Switzerland sent 500 metric tons (54 railway trucks) of hay. The two parts in Austria affected by bad floods also received a contribution of Fr.50,000.—.

A team of twenty-five men with twelve mud suction trucks left almost immediately and helped considerably in alleviating the chaos due to broken-down sanitary installations. Men and machines came from Berne, Bienne, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Neuchâtel and Zurich.

The Swiss Red Cross received over four million francs by the middle of December, and many other collections were supported simultaneously. Not only money, but clothing, furniture and household goods were sent, and a shoe factory in the Aargau gave 1,000 pairs of rubber boots, flown to Italy by a Balair plane.

The "Schweizerisches Arbeiterhilfswerk" put one million lire at the disposal of the victims and appealed to the Swiss population to support the collection. The Swiss Salvation Army sent money and helpers, and the Protestants of the Ticino sent clothing, blankets and food to the affected Swiss families in Florence. Several theatre performances and concerts were given in aid of the victims, and many artists sold paintings; in the Ticino, sixty-one such works of art were "raffled" for the price of Fr.50.— each. The Cantonal School of Lucerne gave their pupils a free day to do odd jobs, and over Fr.35,000.— resulted.

In Basle, the Christmas sale of candles by the students has become a tradition. This time, not only hand-painted

candles but also plates were sold. 150 prominent men and women, *Regierungsräte*, journalists, actors, even a Federal Councillor, tried their hands, and the plates were auctioned. In former years, the candle sale was for various schemes which needed assistance, and this time, the Florence victims were added. Students volunteered to go to Italy for personal service.

A Committee "Pro Firenze" has been formed to look into the problem of saving some of the valuable art treasures.

A most original campaign in aid of the afflicted population was the "White Boot" organised by Swiss TV. On 1st December, an express train put at the disposal of the organisers free of charge by the Swiss Federal Railways, left Zurich to stop at several places in German-speaking Switzerland on each of the eight days. During this good-will tour, money was collected by prominent personalities travelling on the train, and television recordings were made. Schools, local authorities and clubs went to meet the train, and the resulting TV programme each night was varied and interesting. The train was a special combination which will only come into use in 1968, and thus the success of the short-term programme and timetable is most creditable. As regards the collection, Basle holds the record with Fr. 40,000.—. Carnival *Cliquen*, brass bands, three members of the Government turning up in frock coat and top hat on an old-time waggon, artists performing at the station, groups of people serving refreshments — all helped to achieve this splendid result.

On 8th December, Swiss TV organised a special gala "Doppelt oder Nüt" at the Kursaal in Berne. Many famous artists contributed, and the Berne campaign resulted in nearly a quarter of a million francs. To total amount of 3½ million Swiss francs collected by the "White Boot" was handed over to the Swiss Red Cross for use in Florence.

The President of the "Colonia Libera Italiana" in Solothurn, announced that the Italians in Switzerland had decided to launch a blood donation scheme out of gratitude for the splendid results of the "White Boot".

[A.T.S.]

A SMALL INVENTION OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

Modern man, always busy telephoning, dictating, jotting down a message or an instruction, glancing through a report and checking an account, sometimes has to put and take off his glasses nearly every other minute, all of which only increases his irritability. With this in mind, a Swiss specialist has created a new frame "Permatic", protected by eight patents, whose branches fitted with springs can be opened at a touch and automatically close again when taken off ready for putting back into one's pocket. This is sufficient to ensure the success of this item for everyday use.

[O.S.E.C.]

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