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DEFENCE

Ethiopia interested in the Swiss Army

The Swiss Ambassador to Ethiopia, Mr. Heinz Langenbacher, has shown a series of military films to Ethiopia's defence chiefs. This mountainous African country would like to transform its professional army into a militia army, and is particularly interested in the Swiss formula. An Ethiopian team is due to visit Switzerland this year. Owing to its geography, Ethiopia's forces are faced with the same tactical problems as the Swiss army and the General Staff is highly interested in Swiss methods.

New combat rations

A new combat ration will be introduced in the forces. It will enable a soldier having lost his unit to survive for a whole day. The modern ration, contained in an aluminium bag wrapped in radiation-proof plastic, has been conceived in co-operation with private industry. It weighs 150 grammes and has an energy value of 780 calories. Its menu is remarkably unsophisticated: Two ham sandwiches, two cheese sandwiches, two bars of chocolate and powdered orange juice. The brains behind this new creation have done away with dehydrated or concentrated foods, such as cubes and tablets. The experience had shown that these were not appreciated by the majority.

(ATS)

SWITZERLAND-UN

New proposals

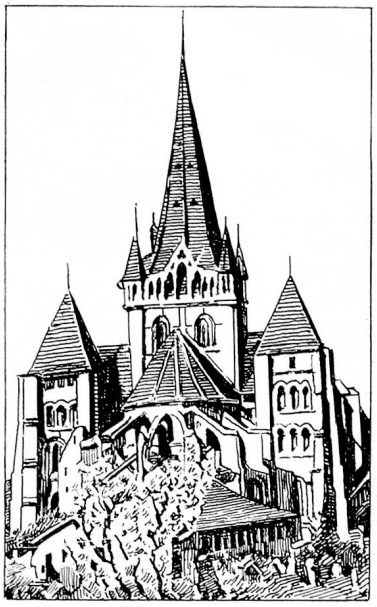
The recent Federal Message on the relations of Switzerland with the United Nations and its Agencies has been approved by a special commission of the Council of States. In the Message, the Federal Council had said that the Swiss people would be called to a referendum on the question of membership in the forseeable future.

According to Mr. Fridolin Stucki, Member of Commission, it had been far from unanimous. The Message considers that the Common Market issue has to be solved before Switzerland seriously considers entering the United Nations. Mr. Pierre Graber, Head of the Political Department and Mr. Rudolf Bindschelder, Legal Councillor for the Department, took part in the Commission's debate.

LAST MINUTE

Before going to press, we learn that two employees of a Swiss financial organisation have been arrested for having disclosed information on the holdings of British nationals in Swiss banks to the British Inland Revenue. At the time of writing, there was little comment available both in Britain and Switzerland.

SWISS CATHEDRALS



LAUSANNE
NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL

At both extremities of the old City, the highest of the five hills towering Lausanne, are the Château, siege of the government, and the Cathedral whose silhouette dominates the town. The cathedral, consecrated to Notre-Dame, is one of the most remarkable Gothic edifices of Switzerland. The foundation traces its origin back to the end of the 16th Century. It was reconstructed several times. As it now exists, in the purest ogival style, it dates from the 13th Century.

On 19th October, 1275, Pope Gregory X made the solemn dedication to the Virgin, in the presence of the emperor Rodolph of Habsbourg, seven cardinals, twenty archbishops, seventeen bishops, princes, a great number of counts and priests, and a multitude of persons having come from all parts of Christendom. It is at Lausanne that ended the conflict that had stood for years between the empire and the papacy, an alliance which was to become one of the foundations of European politics during many centuries.

The Cathedral of Lausanne has more or less suffered from fires, in 1320, 1657, 1674 and 1825. Like most Gothic churches, it is built on the model of the Latin cross set from east to west. Seventy windows give light to the edifice, which has more than 1,300 pillars and columns. The loftiness of the vaults contributes to the beauty of the cathedral structure. Most of the riches which were at Notre-Dame, paintings, statues, sumptuous ornaments, were taken away, in 1536, at the time of the conquest of the Country of Vaud by the Bernese, and which are today in the Historic Museum in Berne.

One of the most interesting parts of the cathedral is the Rose, of 9m. diameter, above the front of the meridional transept. It is adorned with marvellous stained glass windows of the 13th Century. They represent the universe as it was figured in the middle age, the four elements, the seasons, the months, the signs of the zodiac, etc. A window, "Law and Mercy" from Hosch, after Paul Robert, is a real beauty. Other windows recall phases in the history of the Country of Vaud, armorials of the bishoprics of Rome, Geneva, Lausanne and Sion, of the Zähringen, Kybourgs, Châlon, Montfalcon, of the rectors of Burgundy, lords of Faucigny, counts of Geneva, of Pierre de Savoie, and of the six bishops holding the episcopal see from 1375 to 1536.

A superb organ, one of the most remarkable in Switzerland, was installed in 1903, in the place of the instrument of 1738.

The great portal, the principal entrance, is of the 16th Century. The middle of the facade, 15m. high, is decorated with a great number of sculptures, representing religious subjects. A very ancient monument, the Apostles Porch, precedes the second entrance adorned with twelve statues of prophets and saints, is a masterpiece of Gothic art in Switzerland.

The cathedral has seven bells; the largest of the two great bourdons is 2m. 10 in diameter. The twelve bells of Lausanne (seven at Notre-Dame, four at Saint-François, and one at Saint-Laurent) have been repaired and harmnoised in 1898 and 1899. Their ringing is one of the most beautiful in existence.

(Pierre Savoie)

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