

The origin of the "1st of August"

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HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporary papers: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève.)

FEDERAL.

THE WAR AND SWISS PRIVATE PROPERTY.

There are over a thousand Swiss whose claims to compensation (in the aggregate about 75 million francs) have been recognised as being in conformity with international agreements and "guarantees." The Federal Council has made all possible representations to the states concerned without the slightest result and has reported to the Federal Chambers that any further remonstrances and protestations will be futile. The National Council, however, has disavowed by an overwhelming majority the intention of our executive and has invited the Federal Council to continue the negotiations and to bring the matter before the council of the League of Nations.

THE GOLD STANDARD AND U. S. A.

It is stated that the Swiss Confederation will continue to pay the interest in gold on the 5½% Loan contracted in America in 1924 although the interest on Swiss investments in America will be remitted in depreciated dollar currency.

A SWISS PUBLISHER'S ACHIEVEMENT.

According to reports, so far not officially confirmed, a publishing firm in Milan whose principal is a well-known Swiss has secured Signor Mussolini's copyright. The firm will have the sole right, for a period of ten years, of printing and publishing any books or speeches by the Italian Prime Minister.

THE S.F.R. AND THEIR COMPETITORS.

The unfair competition of the privately owned motor transport undertakings against the Swiss Federal Railways has after lengthy negotiations been disposed of. An agreement has been concluded which reserves long distance traffic to the railways "short" distance being the domain of road transport.

SWISS FACTORIES AND THE DEPRESSION.

The number of factories operating during the 12 months to end of December last has decreased by 111, and the number of workpeople by 40,580.

OUR "FASCISTS."

The many small political groups, so called "Fronten," which each in their own particular fashion are anxious to emulate, or improve upon, the German pattern do not seem to capture the imagination of the populace. The section commanded by Col. Sonderegger who has been somewhat discredited on account of ascribed dealings with the Russian Soviet convened a mass-demonstration for last Sunday at Sursee (Lucerne). Apart from the valiant colonel, Dr. Ursprung of Zurich was billed to address the meeting which consisted of a few lorryloads of henchmen that had been sent from Berne, Basle and Zurich. Before the orators were able to commence their invocation it was found desirable to clear the hall of a few muscular local farmers; the juvenile stewards, however, were not quite up to their task and an invigorating contest of fist-cuffs was the result. A strong force of police, which the authorities kept in readiness, restored order. Though peace and quietness reigned inside the hall a lusty jodelling competition intermingled with a "Hand and Muhl Harmonica" concert outside muzzled the harangues of the official speakers. In the end the "would be patriots" had to beat an ominous retreat to the accompaniment of the jeers and gibes of the mocking bystanders.

THE FUTURE OF THE "STUMPE."

The additional tobacco duty imposed last month seems to result in a considerable reduction of smoking if the manufacturers concerned are to be believed. It is stated that of the 6,000 hands

employed in about a hundred small factories half will have to be dismissed, and that the thrifty man's Havana will cost 64% more. As is the case with their famous prototypes no machinery is used: it is all hand labour, and some of the coveted brands will become a whiff of the past.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Nearly two million francs have been left to various institutions by Fräulein Susanna Bertha Reiser who died on June 16th at the age of 91. The Zoological Garden (Zurich) will receive Frs. 500,000, the "Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft" Frs. 250,000 and Frs. 100,000 each go to the Municipal Theatre, the "Tonhalle," the central library and the University. The remainder is distributed among a large number of hospitals and general utility institutions amongst which figure the Swiss Benevolent Societies in Paris and Berlin with Frs. 25,000 each.

A recent issue of the "Kämpfer," a leading communist publication in Switzerland, contains a full apology for and an unconditional recantation of slanderous attacks printed in previous issues against the six catholic bishops in our country.

Popular indignation is running strong against one of the German professors at the local university, Dr. W. Freytag. He was appointed district leader of the German Nazis in Zurich, an office which he has now relinquished, but his removal from the teaching staff is being insisted upon in certain quarters.

BERNE.

Damage to the tune of nearly half a million francs has been caused by a fire which destroyed part of the factory and stock of "Progressa," a large wood-working undertaking at Oberburg near Burgdorf.

ST. GALL.

The trustees of the "Eduard Sturzenegger" fund have distributed, as a first of August present, about Frs. 10,000 to 450 aged embroiderers. The trust was created about two years ago when this well-known benefactor bequeathed Frs. 200,000 for the purpose of alleviating the lot of necessitous workers in this particular industry.

SOLOTHURN.

The cantonal accounts for the year 1932 close with a deficit of nearly four million francs; a specially appointed financial expert is preparing a report with a view to economies.

THE ORIGIN OF THE "1st OF AUGUST."

The first of August celebrations took an official character for the first time in 1891 when on the 600th anniversary a general chiming of bells was heard throughout Switzerland at eight in the evening. Seven years later a petition was presented to the Municipal Council of Berne by the late Mr. Rudolf Mänger, to the effect that the chiming of bells should be repeated every year on the 1st of August. The request was passed on by the council to the cantonal authorities and by the latter to the Federal Council. The cantons were finally consulted and eighteen of them were in favour from the beginning.

On the 22nd July 1899 the Cantons were invited by the Federal Council to bring about a general chiming of bells from 8.30 to 8.45, and five years later this time was fixed half an hour earlier. At the same time it was suggested that flags and pennants should be flown from public buildings. In 1911 the offices of the Federal administration were for the first time closed at 5 p.m.; since then early closing on the first of August has become general.

A petition presented to the Federal Council in 1916, with a view of turning the first of August into a public bank-holiday did not find favour with the two Houses of Parliament. It was held that solemn chimes calling for a few moments of meditation after a day's toilsome work was more dignified than a whole day of festivities and jollifications.

Bonfires never formed part of the official commemoration: they are a remnant of ancient folklore. Since 1910 collections (by the sale of badges, etc.) for the benefit of some Swiss institution of general utility have formed a popular feature of the First of August.

Notes and Gleanings.

By KYBURG.

Bank Holiday:

You will all have plenty of time to read your Swiss Observer and inwardly digest the excellent articles written for your delectation and instruction or amusement. Most of you, I take it, will be at the sea-side, or else roaming among the hills and dales of our beautiful English countryside, that is, if you are not among the very fortunate ones who, like our friend A. ST. have gone to our native land, there to drink in the beauties of our Eternal Alps, our lovely lakes, our forest-clad hills and the countryside which, seen from on high, like the Rigi, for instance, looks ever so much like a mosaic or a cross word puzzle, with the colours of the little acres and fields making a lovely pattern, intersected here and there by silvery rivers. Maybe, of course, that you who are over there and to whom, we less fortunate ones, send the old greeting "Von ferne sei herzlich gegruesst" drink in other good things apart from the beauties of nature and, maybe again, you wonder afresh why it is that in England no Brewery has yet found the real secret to brew real Lager beer, although, to my mind, Wessex Lager comes very near the real thing and is, at any rate, a very good substitute for it in hot weather. Not that I despise Rnstic Ale or kindred beverages. However, this threatens to turn into an advertisement for well-known brands of liquid food of which, as the slogan goes, "a glass a day keeps the doctor at bay" and, as I shan't get any commission, nor even a crate of the stuff for boosting it, I will cease. Besides, there are among our readers some very good people who drink nothing stronger than Barley water and I might make them go off their New-Year's resolutions if I kept on.

However, Bank-Holiday is near. It's the last Bank-Holiday this side of Christmas, so make the most of it and enjoy yourself while you may and while the sun is shining. According to the latest weather reports it will be a very fine and hot Bank-Holiday and there will be little excuse for any fit person to stay indoors. And here comes a WARNING: Like everything else, the SUN can also be abused. I draw your attention to the following article from "Lady" 20th July, and urge you to draw your lesson from it:

This Sunbathing Folly:

Sun bathing is fashionable, and is being written about daily by men of standing and renown. Yet much of what is being written is rubbish.

Sunshine is dangerous. When the ignorant apply it to their bodies it can be as harmful and uncertain a plaything as a still deadly Mills' bomb. During the Whitsuntide heat wave there were many opportunities for observing the foolhardiness of this blind abandoning of the human body to the sun. One saw people lying about in the broiling sunshine for hours on end, their faces and bodies turning a horrid red, their skin burnt off as though boiling water had been poured over it, and one saw, too, ambulance men busily engaged in treating cases of sunstroke, the result of this folly.

Scientific Sun Cures.

Little children, some of them but a few weeks old, were placed unprotected in the open sunshine. Mothers thought it was for the good of their children's health, but many little ones must have spent days and nights of agony following this exposure to heat. Does sunshine have any beneficial effect on the human body? Of course it does. It is like certain medicinal drugs, however. A correct dose is a boon, an overdose is harmful. How, then, is one to know the correct dose?

The only safe way is to make sure that too much sun-bathing is not indulged in, and to err on the right side by not taking enough if any uncertainty exists. Peeling and blistering are signs that injury is being done to the sun-bather. Frequently this peeling and blistering does not commence until some time after a person has removed his, or her, body from under the sun's rays. Thus it will easily be seen that there is real need for under, rather than over, indulgence.

To obtain the maximum of benefit from sunshine, the aim should be a steadily deepening tan acquired during a period of several days. Tan is the skin's defence against the