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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

FIRST OF AUGUST.

This year, the First of August was celebrated throughout Switzerland with more than the usual solemnity. The theme of all the patriotic demonstrations was one of national unity which bordered on a sacred union of all the political forces of the country. The disappearance off the map of Europe of several states seemed to weigh heavily at the background of these demonstrations. The need of a strong army and of physical and moral preparedness was the predominant note in all the speeches delivered on that day. M. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, declared notably that " To-day, as in 1914, all Swiss are prepared to defend their heritage and the heritage of their fathers."

As usual, bonfires were lit even in the smallest village, and the inhabitants listened standing and bare-headed at the lecture of the federal pact of 1291. For a quarter of an hour all the church-bells pealed in unison. At Zurich thousands of spectators witnessed artillery exercises with live ammunition and saw the latest Swiss arms which included anti-tank guns and the new 105mm. gun. At Zermatt, guides ascended the Matterhorn and soon a bright fire gleamed on the summit of one of the highest Alpine peaks.

At Lausanne the Duke and Duchess of Kent were cheered when seen wearing the white cross.

The day ended with everyone returning home with the same ideal — that of upholding in any circumstances the integrity and the independence of the motherland.

FRONTIER BRIGADES UNDER THE COLOURS.

The Federal Government have decided to recall for a period of fifteen days, all the frontier-brigades with the exception of two brigades who have already served under the colours this year and who will be recalled for another fortnight's service in the near future.

FIFTY SWISS SETTLERS A MONTH FOR AUSTRALIA.

Senator H. S. Foll, Australian Minister of the Interior, stated in Canberra that selected Swiss immigrants may soon be entering Australia at the rate of fifty a month under an agreement between the Swiss Consul General and the Commonwealth Government. The settlers will include highly skilled mechanics and farmers.

GOOD NEWS FOR RECRUITS ABROAD.

Young compatriots who find themselves abroad when they have to undergo military training will be glad to hear of a new privilege which has just been accorded to them. In future, recruits will have their travelling expenses from their domicile abroad to the military headquarters at home refunded. Those who are permanent residents abroad are handed, on the termination of their conscription course, a voucher defraying them of the cost of the return journey if the latter is undertaken within two months.

SWISS TRADE.

Swiss foreign trade returns for the first half year show imports of £41,671,400, a rise of £3,927,500 from the first half of 1938, while exports were £32,400,000, an increase of £2,521,700.

ITALIAN PROPAGANDA IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Federal Attorney-General has decided to make an inquiry into the activities of some unknown persons who have circulated in Switzerland a pamphlet advocating the union with Italy of certain Swiss Italian districts, principally the Canton of Ticino. The Federal Government have instructed the Swiss Minister in Rome to draw the attention of the Italian Government to the fact that the pamphlet concerned was written by an Italian and printed in Italy.

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON IN SWITZERLAND.

Sir F. H. Bowater, Lord Mayor of London, and the deputation from the Corporation of the City of London, arrived last Saturday at Basle, on a state visit to Zurich and Berne.

On his arrival at Zurich, the Lord Mayor was escorted to his hotel by a detachment of 150 Zurich City police. The same afternoon, thousands of school-children gave the distinguished visitor a hearty welcome as he drove in procession to the City Hall for a civic reception. In his speech, the mayor said notably that the links between London and Switzerland are so many and their standard of fair dealings in commerce so high that he felt that they were all in one home.

Earlier in the day twenty-two girls dressed in their native Canton costume had presented a bouquet to Sir F. H. Bowater.

The following day the Lord Mayor of London was received at Unterägeri by Dr. Philipp Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation. At this reception Swiss national songs and folk dances featured on the programme, and Sir Frank Bowater was presented with a large bottle of kirsch. Later the Lord Mayor and Deputation paid an official visit to the Swiss National Exhibition. This was followed by an official banquet given by the City Council of Zurich. At the National Exhibition the Lady Mayoress was presented with an exquisite example of the Swiss watch making craft. Monday was devoted to another visit to the Exhibition, a trip on the Lake and a gala performance of " Carmen " at the Opera House. The weather was glorious and the City bedecked with British and Swiss flags. The next day Sir Frank Bowater left for Berne, where he visited the bear-pit. The same evening he was the chief guest at the banquet offered by the City of Berne. Wednesday, a trip on the Lake of Thun marked the end of this memorable visit. The Mayor left for London the same night.

PASS OPENED TO TRAFFIC.

The Gemmi Pass, above Leukerbad (7,640ft.), which has hitherto been blocked by snow, was opened to traffic on Saturday. In normal years the pass is free from snow towards the end of June.

INTERNATIONAL COTTON COMMITTEE TO MEET AT ZURICH.

Fourteen nations will be represented at the International Cotton Committee meeting at Zurich on Saturday, Aug. 5th. The supply of American cotton in relation to the United States Government's export subsidy policy will be considered.

SWISS HORSEMEN FOR DUBLIN.

A Swiss team will take part in the Dublin International Horse Show between the 8th and 12th August. The riders will be: Capitaine Degallier mounted on " Peru " and " Muchos," Lieut. Fehr mounted on " Seigneur " and " Ideale " and Lieut. Mylius with " Rainbow " and " Uzburg."

ESPERANTO CONGRESS.

Several hundred delegates, representing 25 nations, attended the 31st World Esperanto Congress in Berne. An international costume ball and excursions to beauty spots were features on the programme.

SWISS BANK WANTS U.S. VAULTS.

The Société de Banque Suisse is negotiating for the lease of huge underground vaults in New York, capable of holding large amounts of gold and securities.

DUKE AND DUCHESS OF KENT IN SWITZERLAND.

The Duke and Duchess of Kent, who are journeying to Yugoslavia and Greece, arrived on Sunday at Ouchy, Lausanne. The Duke and Duchess then visited the Spanish art treasures in Geneva and were conducted through the League of Nations building by the Under-Secretary, M. Sokoline.

BRITISH SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS.

The Ski Club of Great Britain has decided to hold the next British ski championships at Grindelwald on January 10th and 11th, 1940.

NEW CHESS CHAMPION.

The winner of the Swiss Chess Tournament in Montreux is Mr. H. Grob (Zurich) who beat H. Johner (Zurich), last year's champion, by 10½ points to 8.

HIMALAYAN PEAK CONQUERED.

Further details on the conquest by the Swiss Himalayan Expedition of the hitherto unclimbed peak Dunagari (23,184ft.) have been received in Zurich.

The final assault was made at the beginning of July after the climbers M. Andre Roch and the guides Zogg and Steuri had established a camp at a height of about 20,000ft., and on July 5th the three men reached the top.

WELL-KNOWN GUIDE KILLED.

Hans Schlunegger, chief of the Wengen-Lauterbrunnen mountain guides, was killed after having nearly reached the summit of Mount Lobhorn, 6,500 ft. peak near Wengen (Oberland). He was leading a party of four people none of whom was hurt. A rope which during a descent failed to loosen itself is said to be the cause of the accident; the guide climbed the rock again disentangling the rope when he suddenly disappeared into the abyss.

M. Schlunegger (age 53) was the proprietor of the Hotel Oberland in Wengen.

MORE DEATHS ON THE ALPS.

In four days six deaths were recorded in the Swiss Alps. Two Swiss tourists were killed in the Bernese Oberland after falling down some rocks. One was a young man who fell on the Kaiserstock and the other, a girl, fell on the Mattstock. Two others were killed in Canton Valais — a boy who was gathering edelweiss on the Mittaghorn above Saas Fee, and a girl above St. Niklaus. Near Château d'Oex a young man from Zurich fell fifty feet down a cliff and was killed.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Hans Leeman, professor of Law at the Federal Polytechnic School has died at Zollikon. He was 59.

BERNE.

According to the latest statistics, the Federal capital numbers 121,976 inhabitants. In 1840 the population of Berne numbered about 46,000. During the year ending December 1938, 13.5% of the population were in receipt of public relief. The cantonal accounts showed a deficit of over 4.3 million francs — this was about two million francs better than the last budget. Increased revenue from direct taxation is mainly responsible for the improvement.

GRISONS.

Frescoes dating back to the early period of the Gothic era have been discovered in the old parochial church of Cazis.

LOCARNO.

The death of Father Jean Pedrazzini is reported in Hong Kong. The dead missionary came from a well-known family in the Ticino and had worked for 25 years in China.

Several reports dealing with last Sunday's Swiss Church services, the " Bundesfeier " in Liverpool, etc., are being held over for our next issue.

TO OUR READERS.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer would be greatly obliged if readers would supply him with addresses of likely subscribers, so that specimen copies could be posted to them.

If such addresses supplied should be already included on our mailing list, no extra copies would be sent.