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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

RESULT OF THE FIRST OF AUGUST COLLECTION 1938.

The final accounts of the 1st of August collection 1938, have now been published.

The result is 717,388 frs. or 165,000 frs. more than in 1937. The collection was made for the Swiss abroad.

This is a very gratifying result, and the Swiss abroad are grateful for this *beau geste* of their compatriots at home.

BIRCHER-BENNER †.

By the death of Dr. M. O. Bircher-Benner at his home in Zurich, at the age of 71, medicine loses a great pioneer. As such, he met with the usual meed of incredulity and open hostility, but was fortunate to live long enough to see his methods practised by a number of doctors throughout Europe, and incorporated into the curricula of certain medical schools on the Continent, and to a smaller extent in this country.

Max Bircher took his M.D. at Zurich and went into general practice in the city. Soon afterwards he was immensely impressed by the cure of an apparently hopeless case of disease of the stomach; when, after months of orthodox treatment, a patient gained his unwilling consent to taking a completely raw vegetable diet, suggested by a quack. He then tried the same treatment on himself, and very tentatively on some chosen patients, always with good results. He proved and reproved to his own satisfaction that in practice the eating of uncooked vegetable food strengthens the body and raises and maintains its resistance to disease. He had found in the customary habits of eating a fundamental cause which he had sought without intermission from his student days, and in its reform a power in his hands which in all the late years of his life he learned to use with the utmost dexterity, combined with unfailing gentleness.

He saw that the beginnings of disease, which may later become incurable, often pass unnoticed, so that the strength of the body and the vitality of its organs are diminished; he believed that wrong eating is a causative factor of supreme importance in this tragedy. He began to see how natural immunity could be strengthened and protected so that efforts to establish it by vaccines and other artificial means would become unnecessary — all this before the discovery of vitamins. He taught that the healthy man should have 50 per cent. of his food uncooked, but the invalid should take all of it unfired. He based his treatment on causes, not symptoms.

In 1893 he married Elisabeth Benner, a lady of Alsace, who found that though life with such a prodigious worker was often far from comfortable, this was outbalanced by his deep understanding. They had four sons and three daughters; three sons and also a niece (Dr. Dagmar Brasch) have taken medical degrees. The Bircher-Benners opened in 1902 a private clinic with seven beds. This has grown to a busy sanatorium of 65 beds. To the success of this an important contribution was made by his sister, Bertha Brupbachter-Bircher, who organized the preparation of the food and has written a comprehensive book on the subject. Patients, many of them elsewhere considered incurable, have gone to Zurich from all over Europe, and have learnt how to live so as to regain their health. For years it had been Bircher-Benner's ambition to add to the clinic a section for poorer patients. This has recently become possible by the gift of 1,000,000f. from a cured patient.

Bircher-Benner lectured much on the Continent, and in England in 1933 and 1937. His books have been translated into several languages, the most recent one in English being "The Prevention of Incurable Disease." In this way many doctors have come into touch with this great pioneer and have been able to prove for themselves the practical value of his teachings. His later philosophy may be summed up in his own words: "The soul reveals herself only to those whose blood is pure, and who enter the great silence and dwell therein. The sages of all times lived on the simplest fare."

MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS PLAY TO BE PRESENTED AT EINSIEDELN DURING SUMMER OF 1939.

Calderon's "Great World Theatre," a sacred play by Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, the great Spanish dramatist of the 17th century, will again be presented at Einsiedeln during the summer of 1939. In this instance the performances are to be under the patronage of the Swiss National Exposition at nearby Zurich (May 6th-October 29th), as one of the most important artistic offerings of the Swiss people. Einsiedeln can be reached from Zurich in about 1½ hours by train, or one hour by automobile and is within equally convenient access from Lucerne.

Mystery plays have been given at Einsiedeln from the early Middle Ages up to the French Revolution. On the initiative of Dr. Linus Birchler, Einsiedeln professor of Historical Art, and under the auspices of the present Prince Abbot, Dr. P. Ignatius Staub, the biblical dramas were revived and artistically improved in the summer of 1924. The open-air stage, whose acoustics are perfect, is the monumental Abbey Square and the beautiful façade of the cathedral forms the background. Over 200 natives and a number of trained amateurs from the environs, all in colourful and authentic costumes, have taken part in the occasional "Great World Theatre" play seasons since that time. For better light effects the performances are given in the evening, and in case of inclement weather the presentation is postponed to the next favourable evening.

SWISS DRAMA TO BE REVIVED.

A competition organized in Switzerland by the For the Drama Foundation, under the direction of the town of Berne and the Schiller Foundation, has brought together 89 works by 69 authors: 60 in German, 27 in French, one in Italian, and one in Retho-Romanche, the four national languages.

NEW SWISS GOVERNMENT DECREE.

A Swiss Government decree prohibits propaganda in favour of the boycott of goods from totalitarian States, on the ground that it might endanger the external relations of Switzerland, and cause other countries to take retaliatory measures against Swiss exports.

SWITZERLAND-ITALY ALPINE ROAD TUNNEL.

In Italy, work is being continued on the plan for building a motor-road tunnel through the Col Ferrex, between Italy and Switzerland. There are no serious obstacles in the way of the construction of the tunnel, which would be about four miles in length. The Italian road leading to the tunnel is, however, subject to danger of avalanches and snowdrifts, but this could be eliminated by building small tunnels and protective walls. The road would lead from Courmayeur through the Ferrex Valley to Gruetta, from where a straight tunnel with a slight slope beneath the Alpine frontier would lead to Chalets de Ferrex, on the Swiss side, and thence to Martigny via Praz-le-Fort. The distance between Torino and Basle would be 300 instead of 370 miles, via the Simplon and between Genoa and Basle 240 instead of 324 miles. It is understood that work will be commenced as soon as agreement is reached with Switzerland.

UNIONE TICINESE

Please reserve

Wednesday February 22nd

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET & BALL

at

PAGANI'S RESTAURANT, W.1.

TICKETS at 16/6 from Committee Members

CREDITS FOR AERODROMES.

The Federal Council has granted an amount of 1,885,000 frs. for two Hangars at Emmen and Buochs.

HELP FOR SPANISH CHILDREN.

The Federal Council has put at the disposal of the committee, dealing with the evacuation of Spanish children, an amount of 20,000 frs., a further amount will be made available shortly.

DUTCH ROYAL FAMILY'S SWISS HOLIDAY.

Princess Juliana and her husband, Prince Bernhard, will shortly spend a holiday at Grindelwald, they will be joined later on by the Queen.

GOOD SKIING WEATHER IN SWITZERLAND.

The weather, after an unsettled period, is fine again and cold. The skating rinks, which had been spoiled by rain and snow, are in excellent condition, and it is announced that the Lake of Joux, in the Jura, is completely frozen again and open to skaters. Conditions for skiing are excellent in the Swiss Alps, and the Jura mountains.

In some of the winter resorts there were as many as 24deg. of frost. The depth of snow is 1ft. at Adelboden; 15in. at Kandersteg and Wengen; 2ft. at Grindelwald, Gstaad, Davos, Pontresina, St. Moritz, Morgins, Villars, Zermatt, and Andermatt; and 27in. at Arosa and Montana.

SWITZERLAND WINS BOBSLEIGH TITLE.

Great Britain, holders for the last two years, lost the world Bobsleigh Championship to Switzerland at Cortina D'Ampezzo (Italy), though the British team twice broke the course record. The Swiss lead on the first two runs enabled them to win by 1.24 sec.

DIVIDENDS OF SWISS BANKS.

The following dividends of Swiss Banks, for the year 1938, have been declared:

Schweizerischer Bankverein, 5 per cent. (1937: 5%); Eidgenössische Bank A.G., 5 per cent., (1937: 5%); A. G. Leu & Co., 6 per cent., (1937: 6%); Schweizerische Kredit Anstalt, 5 per cent., (1937: 5%); Schweiz. Volks Bank, 4 per cent., (1937: 4%); Genossenschaftliche Zentralbank Basel, 4 per cent. (1937: 5%); Schweiz. Bodenkredit-Anstalt, Zurich, 5 per cent. (1937: 5%); Aargauische Hypothekenbank in Brugg 4½ per cent. (1937: 5%); Volksbank in Hochdorf 4 per cent. (netto (1937: 4½% brutto); Société Bancaire de Genève 6 per cent. (1937: 5%); Spar & Leihkasse Frutigen, 6 per cent. (1937: 6%); Bank in Langnau, 6 per cent. (1937: 6%); Volksbank in Reinach, 5½ per cent. (1937: 5½%); Hypothekarkasse des Kantons Freiburg, 5 per cent. 1937: 5%); Gewerbe Kasse in Bern 6½ per cent. (1937: 6½%); Gewerbebank Zurich, 5 per cent. (1937: 5%); Allg. Aarg. Ersparniskasse, 4½ per cent. (1937: 5%); Hypothekar-Bank Lenzburg, 5 per cent. (1937: 5½%); Société Financière Franco-Suisse Genève, 4 per cent.; Solothurner Handelsbank, 5 per cent. (1937: 5%); Spar & Leihkasse Sempach, 4½ per cent. (1937: 4⅔%); Spar Kasse der Amtei, Kriegstetten, 5½% per cent. (1937: 5½%); Gewerbekasse Baden, 5 per cent. (1937: 5½%); Bank in Burgdorf, 4 per cent.; Bank in Gossau, 6 per cent. (1937: 6%); Bank in Langanu, 6 per cent, (1937: 6%); Darlehenskasse Waldkirch, 5 per cent.; St. Gallische Credit-Anstalt, 7 per cent. (1937: 7%); Schweiz. Hypotheken Bank, Solothurn 5½ per cent.

LOCAL.

SCHWYZ.

The late M. Franz Blaser, in Schwyz, has left an amount of 190,000 frs., to be distributed amongst a number of charitable institutions.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Dr. H. Bütler, has been elected rector of the "Kantonsschule Schaffhausen," in succession to Professor Kugler, who is resigning his post for reasons of health.

THURGAU.

Mme. Saurer-Hegner has left the castle of Eugensberg, which contains a valuable collection of art treasures to the canton of Thurgau, in remembrance of her late husband, M. Hippolyte