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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

BROADCAST ADDRESS OF DR. PH. ETTER, PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

On the occasion of the international exhibition which is to open shortly in New York, M. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, has sent the following broadcast message to the American people:

I am very happy to have this opportunity of greeting in this way on behalf of Switzerland H. E. the President and the people of the United States of America, and in particular the People of New York and the authorities of the world's Fair.

The relations between your country and ours have always been characterized by sincere and most cordial friendship. Not even for a moment has there ever been the slightest misunderstanding. Let me therefore thank the people of the U.S. for the faithful friendship they have always shown to my country.

Numerous Swiss have long been living in the U.S. They have kept up at the bottom of their hearts their faith in the old country, love and loyalty.

But equally ardent has been their love of the great land which so generously welcomed them, and to which in return, they are devoted in truly Swiss fidelity and loyalty.

My special greetings, therefore to you, my dear countrymen in the U.S. You are the promoters and guardians of that friendship.

To cultivate it, to make it still closer, and ever more cordial, the Swiss Confederation has gladly accepted America's invitation to participate in the New York World's Fair of 1939. Switzerland is a small country, but within her small territory there lives a nation, filled with an indomitable spirit of independence, a nation with a very active intellectual and economic life, and with a very old culture and civilization. A civilization based on reverence for the dignity and liberty of the individual. They are the same ideals — I know — which animate and inspire also the people of the U.S., to whom therefore, once more, I send most cordial messages and the best of wishes of Switzerland, begging them to preserve us their proved friendship and sympathy.

SWISS CIVIL DEFENCE.

The organization of the civil population for defence is being systematically pursued in Switzerland. An appeal by the Chief Medical Officer of the Army and the President of the Red Cross has been addressed to the women and girls of Switzerland urging as many of them as possible to give their names without delay to the military authorities for duty in the medical services of the Army.

Throughout Switzerland official posters may be seen asking the people to provide themselves immediately with gas masks. Similar appeals have already been made, but the authorities have found it necessary to renew them and to emphasize that the acquisition of gas masks must in no case be postponed until the hour of danger.

SWISS LEGATION IN PRAGUE ABOLISHED.

The Federal Council has decided to abolish the Swiss Legation in Prague, a Consulate will take its place in the near future.

SWISS FRONTIER INCIDENT.

Details became known of an incident which occurred at Basle on Sunday evening in the course of an aviation display near the German frontier.

Three German Customs officials were about to arrest a young Swiss soldier in uniform, who was alleged by them to have crossed the frontier into Germany, when people in the crowd attacked the Customs officials, released the soldier and brought him back into Swiss territory.

During the scuffle one of the German officials fired a revolver, but no one was injured.

The Swiss authorities have opened an inquiry.

STORM DAMAGE ON THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.

A storm in the Alps during the night blew off part of the roof of the famous Hospice on the Great St. Bernard. In the morning parts of the interior of the Hospice were found to be 3ft. deep in snow.

SWISS AND LEAGUE RUMOURS.

Questioned regarding the rumour published abroad that in the event of European war Switzerland might ask the League of Nations to vacate her territory, a leading official of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Swiss Government in Berne, said: "In no case, not even in the event of a European war, would Switzerland ask the League to leave. She has always considered it an honour to shelter great international institutions, and her point of view has undergone no change."

SWISS WINE PRODUCTION.

Though official figures are not yet available regarding last year's production of wine in Switzerland, it is estimated that the total harvest was approximately 339,000 hectolitres.

Of this total, some 227,000 hectolitres were red, and the remainder white wine.

In some parts of the country the harvest was almost wiped out by the spring frosts.

Eastern Switzerland was fortunate in escaping the havoc caused by last year's cold spells in the spring.

In that area the harvest showed a satisfactory yield. This explains the relatively large proportion of red wines to the total harvested in the country.

NEW SHORT-WAVE WIRELESS STATION.

Switzerland has opened a short-wave wireless station which gives her direct communication with the United States. Hitherto the service had been dependent on relaying facilities in England.

JUBILEES IN THE SWISS CIVIL SERVICE.

Dr. Alois Muri, from Sursee (Lucerne) chief of the "Telegraphen und Telephon Abteilung," has celebrated his 40th service Jubilee.

M. Ernst Käser from Windisch, "Kreistelegraphendirektor," has also celebrated his 40th service Jubilee.

Both have rendered great services to our country.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The town of Zurich registers at present 361 millionaires, (Swiss Francs) and 499 "half" millionaires.

BERNE.

The newly erected barracks in Thun, were inaugurated last Saturday, in the presence of M. Minger, head of the Federal Military Dept., and representatives of the cantonal government.

In a speech, Federal Councillor Minger said that the country can have full confidence in the army.

LUCERNE.

The population of the town of Lucerne at the end of March numbered 54,306 inhabitants.

ZUG.

Dr. Alois Meier, a veterinary surgeon, was killed in Baar, when a motor-cyclist ran into a group of pedestrians, his daughter and another pedestrian were seriously injured. The motor-cyclist himself was badly hurt, and is at present in hospital.

BASEL.

Dr. Paul Wernle, from 1897-1930 Professor of church history at the University of Basle, has died at the age of 67.

GRISONS.

The death is reported from Malans of M. Joss Andrea, from 1920-1936 Director of the "Landwirtschaftlichen Schule Plantahof" in Landquart, at the age of 59. The deceased enjoyed a great reputation as an expert on cattle breeding.

AARGAU.

Mrs. Elisabeth Siegrist-Müller, in Aarau, has celebrated her 104th birthday; in her honour the bells on the cathedral were rung.

VAUD.

Colonel Paul Pfund, for forty years a member of the Federal Instruction Corps, has died in Lausanne at the age of 89. He retired from the army in 1910.

* * *

The Grand Council of the canton of Vaud celebrated the 136th anniversary of its existence. Amongst the many guests who assembled at the large Hall of the Comptoir Suisse, were M. Etter, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Army-Corps commander Guisan. M. Vallotton, President of the National Council presided.

GENEVA.

The town of Geneva numbered 124,934 inhabitants at the end of March, 1939.

LA POLITIQUE.

Les nouveaux crédits militaires.

Au mois de décembre, le Conseil fédéral a adressé aux Chambres un rapport sur l'état et le renforcement de la défense nationale. Il y résumait ce qui a été fait au cours des dernières années et exposait ce qui reste à faire. Pour la réalisation de ce programme, trois cent cinquante millions sont, disait-il, nécessaires; il se proposait de demander, le moment venu, les crédits correspondants.

Un court message, récemment paru, accompagne la première de ces demandes de crédits, pour un montant de cent quatre-vingt-dix millions. Les sommes en question seront réparties sous sept rubriques. Il s'agit d'abord d'augmenter le nombre des mitrailleuses pour l'infanterie territoriale, d'armer de fusils-mitrailleurs les compagnies de subsistances, en vue de la défense contre avions, d'accroître la portée des obusiers de 12 cm., de remplacer une partie des anciens obusiers et des canons, de faire des essais avec un nouveau lance-mines lourd. Il y en aura là pour dix-sept millions environ.

A ce renforcement de l'armement s'ajoute le développement de l'aviation et de la défense contre avions. L'achat d'appareils de guerre et d'avions d'école et de transition s'impose; on voudrait se procurer au moins la moitié du parc prévu. Il va de soi que ce développement entraîne l'obligation de procéder à des constructions et à des aménagements. Un service de surveillance aérienne plus perfectionné, par le moyen d'une escadrille spéciale, paraît indispensable. Les essais d'appareils radiotélégraphiques pour avions étant terminés, il faut maintenant passer les commandes. La Confédération doit en outre soutenir les efforts des villes et des industries pour la défense "antiaérienne." Le tout représentera soixante-quinze millions.

Par ailleurs, les crédits prévus pour les fortifications vont être épuisés; cinquante-trois millions seront affectés à combler certaines lacunes qui subsistent encore et à établir, derrière la ceinture des fortifications, une seconde ligne.

Le message expose aussi qu'il importe d'accroître les réserves de munitions, car il faut du temps pour passer de la fabrication en temps de paix à celle du temps de guerre. Ce complément représenterait dix millions. Celui du matériel de corps et la constitution de réserves suffisantes exigeraient un peu plus de dix-sept millions. Les mesures de protection et d'adaptation pour les chemins de fer et les lignes téléphoniques figurent pour 1 million 600,000 francs. Enfin la construction de bâtiments et installations nécessaires à l'armée émargera pour quinze millions et demi. Il s'agit de cavernes pour la protection des troupes en haute montagne, de la réfection de plusieurs tronçons de routes, de