

Swiss National Day

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SWISS NATIONAL DAY

1st of AUGUST 1291 - 1949

Six hundred and fifty eight years will pass away on the First of August, 1949, since those sturdy sons of the cantons Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden clasped their hands and vowed to stand steadfast together in distress and danger, in joy and sorrow.

Let us then, dear countrymen, on the birthday of our homeland, wander in thoughts back home to the majestic mountains, to the picturesque lakes, to our native towns, villages and hamlets, where the church bells will be ringing melodiously, spreading the glad tidings of Freedom, Liberty and Independence; and where, at eventide the bonfires on thousands of hills, peaks and mountain tops will send their flares towards heaven, proclaiming that there dwells a free and unfettered country.

Whilst Providence has granted us a long term of peace, other countries have seen their territories destroyed and their destinies determined by trouble and war, but no blood has stained the bonds which have knit together our free and order loving population for many years past. We are a small nation, composed of the most heterogenous elements — Protestants and Catholics, French, German, Italian and Romantsch-speaking Swiss, everyone, let it be remembered, with his traditions, with his prejudices. In each of these conflicting antagonistic elements, however, there is a common bond of patriotism, and the only true policy is that, which reaches that common patriotism and makes it vibrate in all toward common ends and common aspirations.

To this country of ours, which has given us its material, moral and intellectual wealth, to this country which affords to all its children its protection, we owe everything, all that we are, all that we have. And if, this day, we have tried to find out what it means to us, it should be, that we may feel and understand better what we owe it.

What then is our duty to our country?

We shall serve it best by defending it, by accepting willingly all the obligations entailed by that. We must,

with all our might, support the efforts of our Government for peaceful solutions of the world's trouble, so that future generations be spared the horrors of wars. This country of ours, we shall also serve by defending it against interior foes, against those cynics who will tell you that love for one's country is nothing but a myth.

We Swiss abroad are unable to take an active part in shaping the destiny of our homeland, but we can also serve our land by upholding the prestige by individual efficiency and industry, by faithful and honest services, and by respecting the institutions of the country which has given us hospitality.

Patriotism is the vital condition of national permanence, no Government is safe unless it is protected by the good will of the people. Patriotism means: One country, one constitution, one destiny.

More than ever, our national motto: "UN POUR TOUS, TOUS POUR UN" should be our *Leitmotiv*, and this should lead us to happier and more prosperous times. It is not enough, to make on every possible occasion speeches, emphasizing that we are all children of one large family, and therefore should stand together, this is, after all, an obvious conclusion, deeds should now follow words, we should show in a practical way, that we mean what we often so freely proclaim. Let us then, dear compatriots, make this our resolution on the 1st of August, 1949.

Wherever Swiss do dwell their thoughts will on this day go back to their native land, they will go back to their dear ones at home and many a heart will ache and many an eye will be moist; to many of us, that longing, to see again those mountains in all their majesty and glory, to hear once again those bells ringing, will manifest itself, let the clouds which pass above us, be the messenger of our fraternal greetings, let them deliver the message of our unswerving attachment to the land of our birth and tell them of the love which still lives in thousands of hearts away from our native soil.

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