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Military Defence

"The Federal Council left no doubt in the formulation of the security concept, that he still considers military defence to be the most important pillar of the overall defence system.

"The main mission of the armed forces is, as already pointed out in the introduction, to dissuade, in concert with other elements of the security policy, a potential opponent or opponents from attacking the country. What are the military means at the disposal of Switzerland? Assuming that most of you have a general idea of the strength and composition of the Swiss Army, I shall limit myself here to giving just a few facts and figures.

"The peace-time Army consists of about 2,000 regulars and 36,000 conscripts, the latter being called up twice yearly and distributed over different basic training camps. The reserve units, too, which are on their three-week refresher courses during the year, must be counted here. These numbers do not, of course, represent battle ready units.

"To bring the Army up to its full strength of about 600,000 men, mobilisation is required, which should take no longer than 48 hours.

"The Army is organised into three Field Army Corps and one Mountain Army Corps for a total of 12 Divisions and 17 Brigades. The three Field Army Corps consist each of: one Mechanised Division; one Frontier Division; one Field Division and Frontier Brigades and territorial units.

"The Air Force has about 290 combat aircraft.

"In case of an attack, the armed forces will defend the country as follows according to the principles laid down in the military defence doctrine valid since 1966: Channelling and wearing down of enemy forces by means of deeply echeloned defence zones; Separation of enemy advance units from their support areas in the rear; Destruction of those enemy ground or airborne units which have penetrated the defence zones by means of counterattack with mechanised forces supported by the air force.

"The minimum goal of this defence strategy is to hold as big a part of the national territory as possible in order to preserve the sovereignty of the country as well as to provide the basis for eventual aid from third parties. Guerilla warfare is considered as a last resort.

(To be Continued)

700th Anniversary of Lausanne Cathedral

In October the city of Lausanne celebrated the 700th anniversary of its Cathedral, which was consecrated in 1275 by Pope Gregory X in the presence of Rudolf von Habsburg. A commemorative exhibition containing items from the former cathedral treasure is on view until the end of the year in the Musee de l'Ancien Eveche. The celebrations includes concerts, oratorios, drama productions and lectures. They were climaxed on October 20th by the official commemorative ceremonies in the Palais de Beaulieu.