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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS PREPARE DEFENCES.

The finishing touches have now been put on Switzerland's £15,000,000 emergency national defence programme by the Federal Council, or Swiss Cabinet.

About half the £15,000,000 defence fund will be spent on the strengthening of the anti-aircraft defences of the principal cities, all of which are within a few minutes' flying-time of the frontiers.

Work on the construction of permanent anti-aircraft batteries, listening posts and bomb-proof shelters will be begun immediately at Zurich, Basle, Geneva, and Berne.

The remainder of the fund will be used for the construction of fortifications and the purchase of guns and aeroplanes of new types.

The forts are to be built along the northern frontier between Basle and Lake Constance—the only section of the whole Swiss border which is not protected by the Alps or the Juras. These forts will be improved editions of the "pill boxes" of the last war.

The question of mountain defences is particularly important because the Swiss General Staff is understood to be more worried about the possibility of a belligerent taking a short cut through the mountains of eastern Switzerland, in the event of war breaking out over Austria, than about the much-publicised chance of an attack through western Switzerland, between the Alps and the Juras.

It is for this reason that the new defence programme includes a credit of £1,500,000 for the re-arming with modern artillery of the fortifications at the St. Gothard Pass and at St. Moritz, commanding the Simplon Pass.

These two positions command the way from Italy into Switzerland.

FOURTH CENTENARY OF THE REFORMATION AT GENEVA.

On June 12th, 13th and 14th the protestant population of Geneva will observe the 4th Centenary of the Reformation. Numerous delegates from other Swiss cantons and many foreign lands will participate in the celebration. For the first day the program foresees a tea in honor of the delegates at the Palais Eynard, an evening visit to the Calvin Exposition in the Musée Rath, and a solemn opening service with Holy Communion in the Cathedral of St. Pierre.

On the second day at 9 a.m. there will be another solemn gathering in the Cathedral, followed by an official luncheon, and an afternoon session in the Temple de la Madeleine. In the evening the topic of "Our present responsibilities" will be discussed. On Sunday, June 14th, Divine services will be held in all protestant churches at Geneva with a dinner following in the Palais des Expositions. A procession of the Sunday Schools and Young People's Christian Organizations will visit Geneva's historic spots in the afternoon, and an impressive final manifestation will take place before the huge Monument of the Reformation. In the evening at 8.30 the first of a series of three presentations of a religiously inspired Jubilee spectacle "La Source de Vie" will be offered in the Salle de la Réformation. The spectacle, consisting of a series of animated frescoes which depict the outstanding events in our religious life, is to be given with the aid of 300 participants, choirs and orchestras. The second and third performances are scheduled for June 15th and 16th.

During June and July a Calvin Exposition will be available to the public daily.

MEDICAL CONGRESS.

The Swiss Society for Internal Medicine will hold its annual meeting at St. Gallen on May 16th and 17th, when the chief subjects for discussion will be the relations of the gastro-intestinal canal to blood formation and the development of anaemia, introduced by Professor Naegeli of Zurich, and disturbances of absorption in the intestine and their treatment, introduced by Professor Gigon of Basle.

EASTER TRAFFIC IN SWITZERLAND.

Traffic during the Easter holidays was adversely affected by the bad weather which prevailed throughout the greater part of the country, especially on Easter Sunday and Monday. On the basis of the figures supplied by 30 important stations, it is estimated that the total receipts of the Federal Railways amounted to about fr. 3,356,000, or fr. 78,000 less than for Easter, 1935. Nevertheless, 402 special trains were provided, between April 9th and 13th, by Zurich, Basle, Lucerne, Berne, Lausanne, and Geneva stations. Zurich, alone ran 157 special trains and 44 empties. Winter sports traffic was particularly heavy for the Grisons, Central Switzerland, and the Bernese Oberland, and there was an increase in the number of visitors to the Canton Tessin and the Lake of Geneva district. As regards traffic to neighbouring countries, the figures for France and Austria were approximately the same as in 1935, whereas there was a decrease in the cases of Italy and Germany.

THE USE OF ELECTRICITY IN SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland does not possess any coal beds, but its water streams are a permanent source of supply for electricity which has, in comparison to coal, the inappreciable advantage of being inexhaustible. Hydro-electric introduction and its use in Switzerland is very advanced. It is estimated that the works already in service and those in the course of construction will be adequate for consumption requirements for several years to come, even admitting that the consumption of electrical energy continues to progress in the same ratio as at present. These works are intercommunicating by a very perfect system. In general they are owned, not by private companies, but by public societies. It is estimated that a capital of 2 milliard francs is invested in the production and distribution of electricity in Switzerland; without taking into account the stations which are employed exclusively for the railways. In 1935, the production of electrical energy amounted to 5.7 milliards of kiloWatt hours and the consumption was estimated at 1050 kiloWatt hours per inhabitant. 99% of the housing accommodation is connected with the net-work of electrical distribution. Switzerland thus holds the first place; followed by France with 93.6%, Sweden, 84.5%, Germany, 75.3%, Holland, 74.7%, Italy, 56% and Great Britain, 43.7%.

SWISS EMIGRATION.

During the month of March, 150 Swiss have emigrated (1935: 97), the figures for the first three months, are given as 363 (1935: 234).

GENERAL-CONSUL L. SCHÖLLER +.

M. Leo Schölller, since 1926 Swiss General Consul in Cologne, has died at the age of 58. M. Schölller, who was a partner in an important textile firm in Düren, has rendered great services to the Swiss Confederation.

FOREIGN UNIVERSITY HONOURS.

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the University of Utrecht the following Swiss scholars have received the degree of *doctor honoris causa*: Professor Kelsen (University of Geneva); Professor Karl Barth (University of Basle) and Professor Emil Brunner (University of Zurich).

LANDSGEMEINDEN.

The "Landsgemeinde" of Appenzel J.-Rh. has re-elected the members of the cantonal government and tribunal. — At Trogen 9,000 voters have participated at the "Landsgemeinde" of Appenzel A.-Rh.; M. G. Altherr was elected "Landammann." The "Landsgemeinde" of Nidwald, which was held at Stans, has elected M. Yoller as "Landammann" and M. Christen as "Statthalter." At Sarnen, the "Landsgemeinde" of Obwalden has elected M. Roethlin as "Landammann" and M. Abacherli as "Statthalter."

SWISS CRIME MUSEUM.

A crime museum — the first of its kind in Switzerland — has been opened in Geneva by the Geneva Institute of Medical Jurisprudence. The exhibits include ancient instruments of torture, the guillotine used in Geneva during the

French Revolution, and the weapons with which notorious crimes were committed.

Pride of place in the display is given to the preserved head of Lucceni, the assassin of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, who hanged himself in his cell at Geneva after serving 20 years of a life sentence.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The well-known stores, Jelmoli in Zurich, have celebrated the 100th anniversary of their existence; on this occasion the firm has made a donation to the Pension Fund of the Staff amounting to 50,000 frs.

BERNE.

The death is reported of Dr. Ernst Kissling at the age of 72. Dr. Kissling was for many years a teacher at the "Knabensekular Schule" in Berne and later on Professor at the University in Berne.

* * *
The 24 years-old son of M. Denmler, Restaurant Proprietor in Thun, manipulated with his army rifle, when suddenly a shot rang out killing him instantaneously.

SCHWYZ.

The results of the Grand Council elections of the canton of Schwyz, are as follows: conservatives 56 seats; radicals 34 seats and socialists 13 seats. The following members have been elected for the cantonal government: Messrs. von Weber, Boesch, Bettschart, Dr. Schwander, Knusel, Ruoss and Bürgi-Poels. (The latter two are new members).

AARGAU.

From Baden comes the news of the death of Dr. F. J. Stocker. The deceased was from 1900-1916, Manager of the Bank of Baden, and from 1916-1929, Manager of the "Schweizerischen Bankgesellschaft" in Baden.

* * *
The well-known "Conservenfabrik-Lenzburg" has celebrated its 50th anniversary of existence.

VAUD.

Mlle. Louise Dentan in Pully, citizen of Lutry, has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary.

The cantonal government has presented Mlle. Dentan on this occasion with an easy chair.

THURGAU.

The community of Steckborn has decided not to accept any foreigners for naturalisation for the next 5 years.

BASLE-COUNTY.

M. Fritz Lüdin-Gysin, senior partner of the Printing firm Lüdin and Cie., A.G., in Leistal, has died at the age of 81.

* * *
The death has occurred in Eptingen of Dr. Karl Schaub, a well-known specialist for rheumatic diseases, at the age of 63.

VALAIS.

Alfred Chuard, from Montet, who some time ago, poisoned his father, was condemned to 15 years imprisonment.



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