

The great Fire of Glarus

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RANDOM

The Rev. Jörg Rothermundt, of Stuttgart, has succeeded the Rev. Jürgen Roloff as assistant to the director of the Department of Theology of Lutheran World Federation in Geneva.

* * *

National councillor Adolf Doswald died in Baden at the age of 67. Mr. Doswald was a member of the Alliance des Indépendants.

* * *

The go-ahead has been given to build 39 new blocks containing 680 flats in Geneva over the next year. These will be added to a total of 94,443 flats in the whole of the canton — of which 650 were built in the past year.

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Mr. Franz Jost, a teacher at Luzern's cantonal school, has been invited by the University of Colorado to give a course on comparative literature at Boulder (U.S.A.).

* * *

Plans are going ahead in Lausanne to build the "Tour Sarasin", which is to be a 28-storey tower, to house the University of Lausanne. The site which has been chosen is near the Comptoir Suisse at Beaulieu on the west side of town.

* * *

Administrative offices of the commune of La Chaux-de-Fonds have adopted a five-day working week.

* * *

Only 192 firms out of a total of 9,010 are foreign owned, stated Mr. Edouard Chamay, president of the State Council of the Geneva Department of Finance. At least 70 per cent of the staff of these firms are Swiss and it is noticeable that they are turning over more and more to Swiss employees.

* * *

In Zurich, ten dance halls, at present closing at midnight, may be allowed to stay open one hour longer.

* * *

Mr. Hans Fleig, editor on the foreign service of Zurich's daily "Die Tat", has retired. We may remember that Mr. Fleig was the paper's London correspondent from 1948 to 1950.

* * *

The cold-blooded murder in a tobacconist shop of an assistant, Miss Lina Wiget, has shaken Luzern. The police have not yet discovered any apparent motive for the crime.

* * *

The oldest inhabitant of Valais, Mrs. Philomene Martinelli, has died in Sierre at the age of 103.

(Most of the above items were received from the A.T.S. News Service.)

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THE GREAT FIRE OF GLARUS

It was a springtime of really bad weather, when the authorities of the community of Glarus decided to postpone the annual "Landsgemeinde" to May 9th, 1861. But the weather brightened up and the traditional open-air meeting took place with a good attendance, discussing and voting on the problems of the Canton Glarus. As usual, in the communities, there were the regular fire-prevention drills and exercises, except in the cantonal capital of Glarus, where they were postponed for a few days. It was a fateful decision, as during the afternoon the dangerous wind from the south, the gusty "Foehn", was already blowing quite strongly.

The fire-guards were alarmed and made the rounds, when suddenly the fire alarm was given from Councilman Christian Tschudi's house; the church bells were tolling; warning horns were blown and the firemen with the water pump wagons got into action. But the wind was now blowing fiercely and as more of the wooden buildings in the centre of Glarus caught fire, it looked like a real conflagration. Firemen with their equipment came rushing from surrounding villages to help extinguish the big blaze, but within the short time of an hour some 150 houses of Glarus were on fire or had already burned down. The battle to limit the fire lasted all day and the following night; then the "Foehn" wind subsided and so did the fires. Glarus was a town in smouldering ruins and ashes.

This major catastrophe of 10th May 1861 has been commemorated this year, the first centenary of the Great Fire of Glarus. To-day, better safeguards to prevent such windblown fires have been installed in many alpine villages and thus reduced the number of such dangerous fires. With the help of collections in money and goods in all Switzerland, the town of Glarus was rebuilt in Glarner house style, and now has the pleasant appearance of a nice, clean and typical Swiss community.

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