

Sundry news from Switzerland

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the guild's stock and allow in particular for relief of the poor and to assume the guardianship among the guild-members.

The membership of the Bernese guilds varies between about 160 and some 1400. Where, as a rule, a large rigid municipal administration would exercise its authority and power, the said functions are taken care of within the smaller circle of guild-members. These know one another from childhood when, on occasion of the guild's annual festivity, they meet at the "innere Enge", where Bernese buns are served, joyful games are played and every child may chose a present from a table laden with a wealth of gifts. Boys may receive scholarships. When, on coming of age, the young man attends at the general meeting and has to make his maiden speech - he realises the fact that he is a member of a small democratic community which, though subject to the changes of the time, has, true to tradition, done its duty for centuries and in closer human and personal touch than would be possible to a large administration.

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De Kantonsroht.

Im Schwyzerlændli isch halt schoeh
do haemmer zwoezwaenzg Kantoeh
ond üuseri Vorvaeter, die alte
haend no drüü Kantoenli g'spalte
So isch, wie die Sach bischuet no stoht,
ond jedes haet en grosse Roth
Drom isch es i Üüsere Schwyz so nett
wo jede 5te Maa aes Aemtli haett
Treffst eine aa, ond weisst noed wie ner heisst
tuest am beste, wenn d'ohm Herr
Kantonsroht seist. A. Moosberger

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

In place of the previously elected Prof. Hug of Zurich, who subsequently declined the honour, Nat. Council Kurt R. Dürby has been appointed a Federal Judge by the two Houses in a joint session; he obtained 112 votes against the 83 of his liberal opponent, Dr. W. Geerig, who is an official at the Federal Court. Judge Dürby, a socialist, is a well-known Zurich lawyer noted for his expert treatment of refugee problems. His place in the National Council will be taken by another socialist, Hermann Oldani, a leading figure in the Zurich labour movement who has already been a member of our second chamber from 1928 to 1934.

Prof. Dr. Hunziker died in Zurich at the age of 77. He was the dynamic force in the cultural life of Winterthur. A scientist, an acknowledged authority on literature and a prolific chronicler of Swiss authors and poets he displayed an active and leading interest in musical manifestations of the town.

Standerat Julius Bühler died unexpectedly in Schaffhausen at the age of 56; he belonged to the upper chamber since 1943 and was also a member of the Grosse Rat of Schaffhausen.

The sickness insurance fund in Basle which is on a voluntary basis and open to everybody has now reached a membership of 120,477 out of a total population of 176,636. After many years of adversity the accounts for last year closed with a surplus of about 750,000 francs.

Former Nat. Council Richard Zschokke died at the age of 82 at his home in Gontenschwil (Aargau). Apart from military works in the St. Gotthard region his name remains identified with the construction of the Jungfrau railway.

Maurice Köchlin died near Montreux at the age of 90. An Alsatian by birth, a citizen of Zurich and a graduate of the ETH he is reputed to have contrived and designed the plans of the Eiffel tower which was built for the Paris exhibition in 1889.

Ten workmen were killed when two munition depots near St. Maurice exploded; within a radius of 300 meters, trees were levelled clean to the ground and the neighbouring barracks, empty but capable of holding 600 soldiers, were completely destroyed. Fearing further explosions the inhabitants of the village of Morcle (Vaud) were hastily evacuated in lorries though only for a short time. This underground fort is part of the heavy fortifications in the Rhone valley at Dailly and was under renovation mainly to improve the housing conditions of soldiers. About twenty million francs had been spent on this fortified place; the best part of it will have to be rebuilt.

Without stating any reasons the Federal Council has prohibited the export of all arms, munitions, explosives and components of them for the next six months, i.e., till 11th December, 1946.

Unofficially it is reported that the step has been prompted by malignant and false rumours that a Geneva firm has been supplying arms to the Franco government.

The control and rationing of all kinds of paper which came into force on March 1st, 1943, has been rescinded as from the 1st June, 1946.

The long-awaited bill to introduce into our Constitution the Old-age and Dependents' Insurance is now before our two houses of parliament. In the 200-page message the following are the salient provisions: The insurance is compulsory for all and is based on a 4% contribution on actual earnings (revenue from capital invested is exempted) to be paid in equal parts by the employee and the employer from the age of 20 to 65. Single persons working on their own in a modest way pay 2½% only; exempted are wives (!) and widows unable or unwonted to earn their own living. The annuities after the age of 65 vary according to the amount of annual contributions; on a minimum of Frs. 25 or less a single person becomes entitled to Frs. 450 and a married couple to Frs. 720. The volume of the annuities favours those of the lower earning classes, thus an annual contributor of Frs. 300 (salary Frs. 7,500) can claim a yearly pension of no more than Frs. 1,500 or Frs. 2,400 respectively. There are additional pensions to widows and orphans graded according to circumstances.

SWISS RADIO BROADCASTS.

We wish to advise compatriots that the time of the Swiss broadcasts has been changed to 8 - 9.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays. These programmes can still be heard on the 25 meter band, but our experience is that it is necessary to tune in almost to the 26 meter band.

ASSETS IN GERMANY OR AUSTRIA.

Any Swiss citizens having assets in Germany or Austria should advise the Swiss Consulate in Wellington immediately so that their interests may be safeguarded.

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Please address to the Secretary, Mr. E. Merz, P.O. Box 85, AUCKLAND.