

Sundry news

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1. August

Läg dort ich unterm Firneschein
 Auf hoher Alp begraben,
 Ich schliefe mitten im Juchheine
 Der wilden Hirtenknaben.
 Wo sonst ich lag im süssen Tag,
 Läg ich in dunkeln Decken,
 Der laue Krach und dumpfer Schlag,
 Er würde mich nicht wecken.
 Und käme schwarzer Sturm gerauscht
 Und schüttelte die Tannen,
 Er führe, von mir unbelauscht,
 Vorüber und von dannen.
 Doch klänge sanfter Glockenchor,
 Ich liesse wohl mich stören
 Und lauscht' ein Weilchen gern empon,
 Das Herdgeläut zu hören.

Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

1st OF AUGUST CELEBRATION IN MANAIA.

The Swiss in the Taranaki district have decided to commemorate the birthday of the Swiss Confederation on the 30th of July in the Town Hall at Manaiā. The Consul of Switzerland, Mr. Theiler, and Mrs. Theiler, will be the Guests of Honour.

AUCKLAND CELEBRATION.

A gathering of the Swiss community of Auckland and surrounding districts will be held this year at the Comodore Rooms, Customs St., West, (opposite Point Chevalier tram stop) on Saturday, August 7th at 7.30 p.m. Owing to the position of Lighting Restrictions, we ask patrons to roll up early. As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Neuchatel, and also the Constitution, we should like to see our patrons turn up in Good Numbers.

AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAGE 1948.

From the 24th to the 26th of June, 1948, took place the so-called Parliament of the Swiss living abroad. A special meeting had been arranged for the evening of the 24th of June for the Swiss from overseas, in order to discuss various problems. On the agenda figures, the closer relationship between our compatriots living overseas and the Secretariat of the New Helvetic Society for the Swiss living abroad was included. The Swiss Benevolent Society of New Zealand was represented by Mr. & Mrs. Merz as delegates.

SCHILLER FOUNDATION.

The Schiller Foundation has just granted various recognitions to Swiss writers. Among the German speaking Swiss authors, Emil Balmer and Hans Roelli each received a premium of Sfr.1000. Other authors who also received Sfr.1000 are Alfred Fankhuser for "For they shall own the Earth"; Marcel Gero for "Berner Marsch"; Ernst Hirt for "Gallus Peter"; Gustav Keckeis for "Die fremde Zeit"; John F. Vuilleumier for "Die vom Berg" and Albert J. Welti for "Marta und die Niemand'söhne." Among the French Swiss authors Denis de Rougemont was awarded a prize of honour of Sfr.1000 and C.A. Cingria received Sfr.1000 for "La reine Berthe." The Italian Swiss author Vittore Frigerio of Lugano received a prize of honour of Sfr.700 and the two Romanche, Toni Halter and Gian Cadieli each received a prize of Sfr.500.

SWISS FOLKLORE GROUP AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

A folklore group from Switzerland gave a performance at Buckingham Palace in honour of the 81st anniversary of Queen Mary.

INTERNATIONAL FAIR IN TORONTO.

On the occasion of the official opening of the International Fair in Toronto on the 29th of May, the Governor-General of Canada was received in the Swiss Pavilion by the Swiss Minister to Canada, Mr. Victor Nef, also by Mr. E. Primault, President of the Swiss Watch Chamber, and by Mr. Albert Masnata, Director of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade. It seems that the Swiss Watch Pavilion is the main attraction at the Fair.

RED CROSS PRESIDENT IN THE NEAR EAST.

The former Swiss Minister to London, Mr. Paul Ruegger, now President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, went to the Near East in order to verify the alarming news that reached him regarding the position of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Palestine.

SWISS NURSE INJURED IN PALESTINE.

In the exercise of her duties as a nurse of the Red Cross, Miss Florence Cousin-Young from Lausanne was seriously injured under the fire of the Arabs.

PROTECTION FOR THE EAGLES.

Various civic groups in Eastern Switzerland have sent a petition to the Governments of the Cantons of St. Gallen and of both Appenzells, asking for the protection of the so-called stone eagle (Steinadler) by prohibiting its destruction. In that petition it is pointed out that today only eleven (11) eagles are nesting in the high mountains of Eastern Switzerland.

SCHOOLS IN THE CANTON OF ZUG.

With 47 against 8 votes, the Cantonal Council of Zug has voted the extension of compulsory education to eight years duration.

COMPTOIR SUISSE, LAUSANNE.

The Annual Comptoir Suisse, which is a national exhibition mainly concerned with rural displays, is being held this year from the 11th to 26th of September, in Lausanne.

GERMAN DEPOSITS IN SWITZERLAND.

The Reuter Agency issued the following communiqué from Brussels, Belgium:-

"The Inter-Allied Office for Reparations, in Brussels, has requested Switzerland to proceed with the liquidation of all the German property that is located in Switzerland. Furthermore, it has requested the Swiss Government to put at the disposal of the member Governments of the Office for Reparations, the sum of Sfr.1,000,000 as a first instalment of the sum fixed in the Washington Agreement of May, 1946."

The Federal Political Department comments as follows on this communiqué:

"The resolution made by the allied agency for reparations has been brought to the knowledge of the Federal Council as an appendix to the notes of the French Embassy and of the Ministers of Britain and of the U.S.A. dated 11/13 May, 1948. Through the Washington Agreement, Switzerland is under contractual obligations with France, England and the United States of America, but not with the Inter-Allied Agency for Reparations in Brussels."

It has been made known officially, and on several occasions, that the Federal Council will not be able to take up its position in regard to the notes of the three allied great powers until such time as it has received a reply to an important enquiry that it made in the meantime. The agency in Brussels is labouring under amisapprehension inasmuch as it assumes that German

property in Switzerland could, and should, be liquidated before the question of an adequate compensation has been settled. Since it does not seem possible that an agreement will be reached on this very important question, the case will probably have to be submitted to an international Court of Arbitration, which possibility is provided for in the Washington Agreement.

The liquidation of the German holdings in Switzerland has been the object of a complaint in the British Parliament by a speaker of the Foreign Office; also the middle and lower press and some radio commentators of a similar category in the United States, accused Switzerland of not carrying out her obligations under the Agreement of Washington. Experts in Bern pointed out that all these accusations are unjustified.

On the occasion of the ratification of the Washington Agreement, voices were raised in the Swiss Federal Parliament against said Agreement, because it was in contradiction to the Swiss Federal Constitution and to Swiss law, inasmuch as force was applied against the property of third parties. On the 8th of October, 1947, the Federal Council, in a note to the Allied Governments, explained its legal point of view; in Switzerland people can only be expropriated of their property if a complete compensation is made thereof. In order to be able to assess such compensation a certain relation must be established between the Swiss and the German currencies; Switzerland has requested the Allies to fix such a rate of exchange corresponding exactly to the parity between the dollar and the reichsmark in Germany. The Allies made a proposition according to which a German from whom 100 frs. would be taken away would receive in compensation only 56 reichsmarks. It is to be noted that, without a doubt, the value of the Swiss franc exceeds by far that of the reichsmark. Switzerland could not therefore, accept the proposition because it is in contradiction to the principle to give to expropriated owners a compensation representing the true counter-value of the goods or holdings involved. The acceptance of said proposal would constitute too heavy a burden for our country. To its note of the 8th of October, 1947, the Federal Council received the answer of the Allies only on the 8th of May, 1948. The Political Department saw itself compelled to request further explanations in connection with an important point in that note. An answer by the Allies to this request is still outstanding. The Federal Council regrets that a delay has occurred in the execution of the Washington Agreement - it points out however, that it cannot be made responsible for this delay.

The Swiss refuse to believe in the principle that "might makes right." They have resisted the Nazis whenever they tried to impose conditions in utter disregard of the law and the Swiss are determined to resist such impositions, no matter from what quarter they might come. Switzerland is, and will always remain, a State built strictly upon law and justice and under no circumstances will she deviate from her line of conduct.

SWITZERLAND'S ROLE IN EUROPE.
(continued)

But obviously, Switzerland's success story is due to more than tourists and electric power. Even her agriculture, the well-known cows and yodelling alpherds - are far less important than her highly developed industries and the products of skilled labour. Today, industry absorbs 45% of the nation's workers, agriculture only 22%. Best known of Switzerland's many exports are, of course, her watches. Twenty million are exported annually, mostly to the United States, Great Britain and South American nations. Swiss textiles find ready markets, and so do the delicate embroideries and lace-work of the so-called "home-industries." The Swiss chemical and pharmaceutical concerns boast a long record of achievement, including the famous DDT formula. Swiss marine turbines, heavy machinery and precision instruments are in enormous demand. Her graphic arts are superlative. Atomic research is in full swing. And, although landlocked, Switzerland has built up an amazing mechanism of banking and international trade which functions as precisely as a chronometer. The Swiss franc is the only currency comparable to the dollar in stability.