

Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

LESSONS OF A BLACKOUT.

The results of the observation from the air of the blackout over the whole of Switzerland on the night of September 27-28th are now available. The general conclusion drawn from the test (apart from certain inferences that affect Switzerland alone, because of the natural conformation of the country) is that if the instructions for obscuring all lights are properly followed, precise aim at definite targets from above is virtually impossible.

Observations were taken from military aeroplanes, working, some singly and some in groups, at heights varying from 4,500ft. to 7,000ft. Conditions favoured the test, particularly the imaginary attackers, as the night was clear and there was no moon. In a few districts there was a little fog or cloud. It would appear that the ground surface in general could not be distinguished at these altitudes. Neither rivers nor railway lines could be made out to serve as guiding lines for flight. Lakes were more easily recognized, and had the appearance of flat, milky looking surfaces. Towns in which the instructions to cover all lights had been followed, and where there were no exceptions for special reasons, were almost wholly unrecognizable. In a few cases they were located, but only with difficulty and some uncertainty. Railway sidings at work, and shunting yards where lights were permitted, were easily distinguishable, usually at a considerable distance.

The darkening of trains had been generally observed, and in consequence it was found that ordinary traffic, whether stationary or moving, could not be detected. There are in Switzerland hardly any steam trains, the whole of the State railways having been electrified long ago. The headlights of the locomotives had been reduced in power by various devices which were also being tested out, and they could not be seen from above, but contacts with the overhead wires caused visible flashes. Motor-vehicles on the roads had been given instructions to cover headlights, with blue paper or to substitute blue lamps, and it was found that cars on the road could not be seen.

The flights undertaken by the military airmen were directed by wireless. Otherwise they could not have been undertaken at all, since the absence of the usual landmarks rendered night-flying very hazardous. In some frontier districts the tests were rendered almost valueless by the fact that towns immediately across the border were under no obligation to co-operate with the Swiss authorities. Thus Geneva, surrounded on three sides by French territory, was easily located.

ACCIDENTS IN THE ALPS.

Two Zürcher who were climbing the Gross Mythen (6,258ft.), in Canton Schwyz, on Sunday missed the ordinary route and found themselves in a place from which they could not move either upwards or downwards, as their rope was too short. They remained on a narrow rock ledge and were seen only late in the afternoon, when a search party went to their rescue but failed to reach them. A fresh attempt was made the day after, and the two men were finally brought down in an exhausted condition after having been clinging to the rocks for 24 hours.

A Swiss, Herr H. Werder, fell and fractured his skull while descending the Aermighorn in Canton Glarus, and died soon afterwards.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS BUDGET 1939.

The Budget of the Swiss Federal Railways for 1939 anticipates a deficit of 37.7 million francs.

DR. h.c. FRITZ FUNK †.

Dr. Fritz Funk, one of the Founders of the Engineering Works Brown Boveri in Baden, has died in Baden at the age of 80.

In 1891, when the firm was founded, he entered as a partner and soon became one of the Managers. In 1906 he joined the Board of the Establishment of which he was Vice-President from 1912-1924 and President from 1924-1934.

Dr. Funk, who was a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Basle since 1926, was a Director of a large number of industrial concerns in Switzerland, he rendered eminent services to the Brown Boveri concerns for 47 years.

MARIA WASER.

Maria Waser, the well-known Swiss authoress, has celebrated her 60th birthday; amongst her best known books are "Das Leben der Anna Waser" which was her first work, and "Begegnung am Abend."

CARDINAL PACELLI IN SWITZERLAND.

Cardinal Pacelli, Papal Secretary of State, is on holiday in Switzerland. Since the time when he was Nuncio in Munich, Cardinal Pacelli has nearly always spent a few weeks in the autumn on the shores of Lake Constance.

SWISS CLIMBERS IN GREENLAND.

The Swiss expedition, to Greenland, which started in July, is now on its way back and is expected in Geneva within a few days. It was organized by M. Michel Perez, of Geneva, who visited Greenland with the late Dr. Charcot in 1934 and 1936. The object of the expedition was to make scientific observations and to climb the highest mountains of the region named "Schweizerland."

M. Perez and Dr. Wyss-Dunant, of Geneva, occupied themselves with geological, glaciological, and Meteorological studies, and M. Perez found the culminating point of the ice layer which covers that mountain district. It lies at about 40 miles north of Mount Forel, 67.30 North and 36.35 West., and M. Perez named it "Pourquoi Pas? Plateau," after Dr. Charcot's ship. He also discovered two peaks over 7,800ft. high, and says that these mountains are as beautiful as the Swiss Alps and as interesting to climb.

The party of climbers made the first ascent of Mount Forel (10,080ft.) and of 16 other peaks. They were led by M. André Roch, of Geneva, who was a member of the Dyrenfurth expedition to the Himalayas.

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL.

Many difficulties have beset the selectors entrusted with the task of selecting the Continental football team to meet England in London on October 26th, and at present, a fortnight before the match, the composition of the team is uncertain. The selectors announced the names of 15 possible players, but at their meeting here yesterday they stated that four had withdrawn, and five more possibles were selected. Two others, one from Holland and the other from Switzerland, will be added if they can be released.

The new list shows that the three Czechoslovak players, Kopecky, Daucik, and Nozier, and the Swiss back, Minelli, have dropped out. The Czechs have been obliged to withdraw be-

cause they are still mobilized as a result of recent international events. Minelli has had to cry off owing to injury. The Hungarian authorities have agreed to release their players who were called up for Government service.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

At the end of the current year various changes in the administration of the Swiss Federal Railways will take place.

Dr. H. Eggenberger, chief engineer and hitherto chief of the Dept. for electrification, will be in future in charge of the newly created Dept. for power stations.

M. C. Lucchini, formerly engineer-in-chief will take over the management of the 2nd railway district (Kreisdirektor) in succession to M. Labhardt who has recently resigned.

M. Ernst Bärtschi has been appointed "Vorstand der Hauptkasse" in Berne.

The death has occurred in Berne of Colonel Theodor Herrenschild, a former member of the Federal Instruction Corps, at the age of 80.

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of Colonel Friedrich Mezener, chief of the Federal "Kriegsmaterialverwaltung" since 1915.

Colonel Mezener, who was born in 1868 in Berne, held various commands in the army, such as commander of the battalion 38 and commander of the regiments 15 and 19; he has rendered invaluable services to the Swiss Army.

M. Hermann Schuppach, for sixteen years Manager of the Hotel "Schweizerhof" in Berne, has died at the age of 60.

BASLE.

M. Adolphe Hamm, for nearly thirty years organist at the Cathedral in Basle, and Professor at the "Conservatoire," has died in Basle at the age of 55. The deceased was one of the Founders of the Bach choir in Basle.

SCHAFFHAUSEN.

M. Urs Haengggi, from 1893-1935, Manager of the well-known watch manufacturing firm Rauschenbach in Schaffhausen, has celebrated his 80th birthday.

M. Haengggi was one of the pioneer's of the watch-making industry to which he has rendered great services. On more than one occasion the Swiss government delegated him on commercial missions abroad.

ST. GALL.

M. Oscar Zollikofer, Merchant in St. Gall, and for many years Spanish Consul in that town has died at the age of 82.

Dr. J. Meile, the new bishop of St. Gall was consecrated at the Cathedral, in the presence of Cardinal Pacelli, Secretary of State and M. Etter, Federal Councillor, and representatives of the governments of the cantons St. Gall and Appenzell, J.-Rh.

The Municipal council of St. Gall has expressed its disapproval with regard to the visit to Nürnberg of the chief of Police during the National-Socialist Congress.

TICINO.

The recently deceased Federal Judge, Dr. Agostino Soldati, has left an amount of altogether 300,000frs. for various charitable and religious purposes.

AARGAU.

The Government of the Canton of Aargau has decided to exploit the deposits of low-content iron ore found in the Frick Valley. This plan has long been discussed but never carried out owing, firstly, to difficulties attaching to the supply of coke to the ironworks, and secondly to the still greater difficulty of profitably extracting iron from ore with a low iron content. Lately progress has been made in both these directions. It is now possible to obtain metallurgical coal from cheap lignite and iron from low-content ore. The Aargau Government has shown great interest in a German process that recently underwent a long series of laboratory tests, and discussions are being held on the economic aspect of the plan, the basis of which is being submitted by German representatives.

CITY SWISS CLUB

Please Reserve

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25th

for the

Annual Banquet and Ball

at the

GROSVENOR HOUSE, PARK LANE, W.1.

Admission by ticket only, obtainable from Members of the Committee.