

After the Lake Geneva disaster

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The change is the result of numerous complaints from the public, that their morning sleep was being disturbed by bells being rung at six o'clock.

The police department consulted the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Old Catholic authorities about the problem, and all agreed that the morning ringing of the church bells should be postponed for an hour.

The regulation comes into effect on September 1.

AFTER THE LAKE GENEVA DISASTER

A spokesman of the "Compagnie de Navigation sur le Lac Léman", the company which operates the paddle-steamers of Lake Geneva, made a statement explaining why the "General Guisan" passed near the site of the shipwreck off Thonon, which had cost the lives of 19 French children, without changing course.

He said that the captain, the pilot and a mechanic were in the wheel cabin as the ship was nearing the site of the disaster keeping at a distance of 300 m. from the shore because of the *bise*. The three men noticed a half-submerged boat surrounded by a fleet of small pleasure craft. The pilot took a look through his binoculars but could see nobody in the water and no beckoning signs towards his ship. Not being aware of the importance of the disaster that had just occurred, the three men continued their course, believing that there was a sufficient number of rescuers surrounding the wreck.

The spokesman added that the ships of the "Compagnie" went out of their way many times a year to rescue people shipwrecked on the lake. In the circumstances, he doubted whether the presence of a big ship, rolling in the waves lifted by the *bise*, would not have rendered the rescue operations any easier.

WHERE LIFE-SAVING PAYS-OFF

Early last month an eleven-year-old boy drowned in the swimming pool of Allenmoos, in Zurich. A few minutes after his disappearance, the supervisor in attendance lifted him up from a depth of 3 m. 20 and immediately gave him the kiss of life. As soon as the ambulance was on the spot, the child was connected to an artificial breathing apparatus. Within twenty minutes of the first alarm calls to the Cantonal Hospital, he was in its new ultra-modern emergency ward. His clinically dead heart was electrically excited and injected with high-powered medicine. Within fifteen minutes it slowly responded to the treatment. It was only the next morning that the child regained consciousness, after having been helped to stay alive by oxygen and drugs in great doses.

The health inspector of Zurich,

Mr. Walter Hess, drew the lesson from the chain of events that had saved the life of the child. He said they proved once again the necessity of having well-trained supervisors present in every swimming-pool. They should be dressed in a distinctive manner, so that they could be found immediately should an emergency arise.

Professor Georg Hössli, who treated the drowned child in hospital, appealed to schools on the radio the next day. He said that what the life-saver had done, every schoolboy ought to be able to do and expressed the belief that the time had now come where the knowledge of life-saving techniques and first-aid measures should compulsorily be taught in the higher forms of every school.

SWISS POPULATION AT THE BEGINNING OF 1969

The latest estimates of the Federal Statistical Office indicate that the total population of Switzerland (foreigners included) was 6.115 million at the beginning of the year. This means an increase of 79,000 inhabitants between the beginning of 1968 and the beginning of 1969, a smaller figure than that for the corresponding period a year before, which was 83,000. There is a distinct slowdown in the rate of population growth. Had it followed the rate found in 1963 and 1964, then today's population would have been 6.85 million.

Since 1964, Zurich has lost 7,600 inhabitants, Geneva 5,200 and Bern 600. Basle has gained 1,700 inhabitants and Lausanne 2,500. The present populations of these cities are respectively 432.2, 169.5, 166.8, 213.2, and 138.3 thousand inhabitants.

Compared with the 1964 situation, the population of every canton except Appenzell has increased. The smallest increases (considerably below 5%) are found in Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Basel-Town, Schaffhausen, the two Appenzells, the Grisons and Valais. In absolute figures, the population of the Canton of Bern has seen the greatest growth, with a 71,000 population increase, then comes Zurich with 63,900, Ticino with 37,000, Aargau with 33,000 and Geneva with 32,900 new inhabitants.

A SCARE IN OBERHASLI

The management of the power-station "Oberhasli AG" received a letter from Namur, in Belgium, signed by a member of the so-called "Jura Liberation Movement Abroad", warning that the power-station would be blown up some time after the 13th of September. Taking no chances, the management reported the inauspicious message to the local police, who increased their supervision of the premises. The staff was asked to apply rigorously security measures concerning the maintenance of the dam and

the water conduits. The management said there was nothing else that could be done. There was fortunately no reason to be seriously apprehensive of any real sabotage. The Bernese daily "Der Bund" reported that the handwriting of the letter received by "Oberhasli AG" was the same as that received earlier by other villages. It can only be the work of an eccentric, living abroad and acting alone, who apparently derives great enjoyment from trying to scare entire villages.

PLASTICS AND ART

A Bernese sculptor has just completed a gigantic plastic fresco, the largest in Switzerland. It is 8 m. long and 3.2 m. wide and decorates the school of Buempliz (Be). There had been a competition opened ten years ago for such a fresco but it had yielded no results. The sculptor, Walter Voegeli, had undertaken his work after having made a detailed model of the fresco and submitted it to the "Arts Council" of the Canton of Bern. It had taken him two years to achieve and, in his own words, the "Arts Council" had shown a distinct "greatness" in accepting a work of such magnitude.

Another plastic fresco, entitled "Janus" (the legendary king who, being of such wisdom, was always depicted with one face looking backward towards the past, and another looking forward towards the future—both of which he knew) has been causing some upheaval in Basle. It is a gift by the firm Sandoz to the city in celebration of its 50th anniversary. Sandoz had opened a competition for such a work. It happened that the six-men jury, (three from the town and three from the firm) chose this particular fresco, which had not been entered in the competition. It portrayed an old man on one side and a youth on the other. The jury thought that this symbolised appropriately the past and future of Basle, its history and its modern industrial surge. No site had been foreseen for the fresco, so the jury decided it could be conveniently placed in Totenplatz. As it happened, the plastic work of art produced vehement complaints from local residents and the numerous visitors to the hospital near-by, whose feelings were hurt by the cantankerous look of the past face of Janus. The City Council has decided to fix the fresco in a wooden frame and see whether local residents and other Basle citizens still find that it spoils the harmony of Totenplatz. Sandoz is anxious to avoid any strife in the town over its controversial gift and has made known to the City Council that it was not intent on keeping it in Totenplatz. One outraged member of the Great Council, Dr. Marie-Agnes Massini, has promised to raise the matter in the next session of the Cantonal Parliament.