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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWITZERLAND IN A DAY.

The daylight services from London to Basle on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 9 a.m., and due in Basle at 10.43 p.m., have been greatly appreciated this summer by visitors desirous of avoiding night travel. The interesting town of Basle has also been a gainer by the services, as passengers by them spend at least one night there before going on to their destination in the Alpine districts. The last departure for this season are September 12th from London and the 13th from Basle.

NEW ELECTRIFICATION.

Plans are reported to be under consideration for the electrification of the mountain railway between Alpnachstadt, near Lucerne, to the summit of Mont Pilatus. The line, which has been operated by steam locomotives since its construction in 1886-88, starts at a level of 1,443 ft. above the sea and rises to a height of 6,789 ft. The steam trains occupy 75 minutes for the journey, including stops for water, and it is estimated that by the adoption of electric traction this could be reduced to 35 minutes. Plans are also under consideration for the electrification of the local railway between Waldenburg and Liestal at an estimated cost of about £45,000.

E.R.

DISASTROUS ALPINE SEASON.

This year's climbing season in the Alps will assuredly rank as one of the most disastrous on record. Already the total number of fatal accidents is close upon 100.

No wonder the Swiss papers are issuing warnings to tourists against attempting mountain ascents under present conditions. Many English climbers who arrived in Switzerland at the beginning of the month and engaged guides for high ascents have had to be content with minor excursions and what is known as training climbs.

The mountain hotels have been rapidly emptying as a result of the inclement weather and also owing to the intense cold and the mists which shroud the peaks. Throughout the month and part of last month hotels, even in the lower Alps, have had to put on their central heating.

THE SWISS MINISTERS AT HOME.

Our diplomatic representatives abroad arrived at Berne for the usual annual conference; the meeting terminates with an excursion to Attisholz.

TOURIST TRAFFIC.

The economic depression and the unfavourable weather conditions are reflected by the reports from the different tourist centres. This also has its effect on the seasonal traffic of the Swiss Federal Railways and the auxiliary services. The gross takings of the railways in July amounted to 36.6 million francs (39.3 in 1930), the travelling public being responsible for a falling-off of 1½ million francs.

On the other hand the "Swiss Hotel Revue" states that a slightly larger contingent of visitors has arrived this summer from England, France, Holland and Scandinavia.

LOAN TO WARSAW.

A note which appeared in our last number to the effect that the Saurer Works at Arbon have made a loan to the town of Warsaw has since been contradicted.

NEW GARRISON TOWN.

The Federal Council is studying the matter, whether to declare Sursée as a garrison town.

SWISS PARLIAMENT.

The autumn Session of the two Chambers will begin on the 14th September.

LOCAL.

ZÜRICH.

According to a return for 1930 by the municipal treasury there resided 413 millionaires in the town (406 in 1929). About 15,000 citizens pay no taxes their income being below the minimum. No less than 13% of the taxpayers are regularly prosecuted for payment of their dues.

Prof. W. Johannes Häne, for thirty years lecturer on history at the Zurich schools, died at the age of 69.

In the by-election for a member of the Stadtrat the liberal candidate, Dr. Hefti, was returned with 11,294 votes, his two opponents Dr. Maag (Democrat) and M. Müller (Communist), obtaining 7,023 and 2,878 votes respectively.

BASLE.

Mixed bathing in the modern Gartenbad, recently opened at Eglisee, has raised a storm in the otherwise tranquil town of Basle.

The Education Authorities, justly proud of the new local institution, have decreed that attendance at certain hours shall be obligatory on all school children. The local priests and a number of parents have, in consequence, strongly protested against this regulation.

The parents in question first petitioned the authorities to make attendance at the Gartenbad optional, since they objected to their swimming and bathing promiscuously, particularly with adults of both sexes. This action failing in effect, the priests ordered the parents to withhold their children from the baths.

This form of passive resistance, however, has proved most unpopular with the children themselves, who threaten to revolt against their parents and their ecclesiastical mentors.

The matter was eventually brought before the City Council, which has just passed a resolution by 65 to 35 votes to the effect that, since attendance at the mixed baths cannot be considered an offence against freedom of belief and conscience, the State Council be advised not to grant exemption except on grounds of health. The City Council adds that it vigorously opposes all interference of ecclesiastical functionaries in educational matters.

The Gartenbad itself is one of the finest and best equipped in Europe. Besides the swimming baths and diving pool there are gymnastic and sports sections, an extensive "strand" of fine clean sand, large grassy plots, and a wooded park, in which one can wander in the shade.

Around the baths there runs a shallow cemented moat for children too tiny to get into the baths.

The restaurant, buffet, and tea-room are excellent and at prices to suit all purses. The entire institution is kept scrupulously clean and tidy. It has become so popular that as many as 14,000 persons visit it on a single day.

LUCERNE.

It is stated that the City authorities are negotiating to acquire the Wagner-villa at Tribschen where the great composer resided from 1866 to 1872 and created his "Siegfried."

URI.

A fire destroyed the factory of the firm Hunkeler Söhne at the Friedentalstrasse. The damage is estimated to be 30,000 f.

URI.

The cantonal authorities entertained last week the remnants of the old guard who took part in the defence of our frontiers during the Franco-German war in 1870-71. The troupe has shrunk down to 23 veterans; speeches, a banquet and a motor car excursion marked the occasion.

GLARIS.

A serious motor accident happened near Seon when a large car skidded on to the railway track and, in an endeavour to regain the road, overturned. Of the seven occupants the Rev. Jakob Schildknecht, pastor of Glaris, was killed on the spot; his wife, one of the twin boys and the nurse were transported to the cantonal hospital at Aarau where the boy subsequently died. The pastor's mother-in-law and the chauffeur were the only ones who escaped unhurt.

BASEL.

M. Franz Baur, a well-known decorative painter has died in Basle. For over 40 years he

attended to the paintwork of the Town Hall, and many of his works in decorative art have become famous.

BERNE.

The 3,000 Rover Scouts from thirtyeight countries who camped together at Kandersteg from July 29th to August 8th have now all returned or are on their way to their own countries. Reports from Kandersteg say that the ground was left in excellent condition and no litter whatever was left behind. The Chief Scout was once asked what Scouts should leave behind after camping and replied, "Nothing but thanks."

At the entrance to the camping ground at Kandersteg it has been decided to erect a handsome gateway, which will be dedicated to the memory of the late Mr. Mortimer Schiff, president of the Boy Scouts of America, whose generous gift made possible the purchase of the land. Sufficient money for the gateway was spontaneously contributed by the Rover Scouts at the recent moot.

AARGAU.

The recent census shows the following population for the principal districts: Aarau 11,666, Baden 10,143, Wettingen 8,505, Wohlen 5,862 and Zofingen 5,563.

ST. GALL.

A popular figure in local politics disappeared last week through the death of Leonhard Kellenberger, at the age of 70, after several years of failing health. A leading and ardent socialist he has been a member of the Grosse Rat uninterruptedly for forty years.

THURGAU.

The Swiss Railway authorities have under consideration a scheme for the erection of a 12,000 kw. power station at Rapperswil.

The largest "town" in the canton is Frauenfeld with 8,795 inhabitants, then follow Arbon and Kreuzlingen with 8,615 each. Weinfelden with 4,437 is sixth on the list, Sirnach (7,246), Amriswil (6,387) and Romanshorn (6,095) taking precedence. The family of the late M. Gustav Laager-Müller, paper merchant, has bequeathed an amount of 50,000 f. for charitable purposes, in memory of the deceased.

The Novaseta, Limited, in Arbon, is about to reopen its factory, which has been idle for almost a year. This concern produces acetate yarn, whereas all the other rayon factories in Switzerland make viscose. The company was formed in 1928 and has a share capital of 5,000,000 Swiss francs (about £200,000).

It is reported that German rayon producers have invited Belgian makers to come into the recently formed rayon syndicate. The only outside makers so far represented in the cartel are Dutch, Italian, and Swiss producers. It is generally assumed that a meeting between the two parties will soon be held. Opinion in Belgium is much divided about the advantages of joining the cartel. The keenest competition in the Belgian home market comes from the Dutch, who are members of the cartel.

GRISONS.

At Davos a quaint and charming monument to children has just been set up.

Unlike many monuments, it is most admirably fitted to the subject and sentiments which it was designed to express for, besides being attractive to the eye, it is of practical use, since it incorporates a fountain.

The base of the octagonal tank which receives the water is ornamented with bas-reliefs of boys playing at leap-frog and other gymnastic forms of fun, while the central column, from whose base the water flows in four jets, is composed of the figures of four little imps sitting on each other's heads. The fountain stands in a court shaded by trees.

VALAIS.

The local "cause célèbre" has fizzled out through the written admission of states councillor Walpen, the chief of the cantonal military department, that his charges against the late Col. Schmidt were mistaken and based on misleading information. The councillor had stated that in consideration of a personal loan the late Colonel had procured military advancement for Mayor Defayes.