

Collection for Swiss soldiers

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Towards the end of 1940 over 300 children of families immigrated into Switzerland during 1938 had received help from the Swiss Benevolent Fund for refugee children. Furthermore 135 children of political refugees during 1939 were receiving assistance. Some of these were receiving either part or whole upkeep, whilst many were being provided with clothing, additional nourishment and medicines as well as schooling etc. Many of those living in homes were provided for by this institution and about 57 of these refugees are living at the cost of friends or relatives. During the school holidays about 63 children were received by families in various parts of Switzerland and in spite of increasing difficulties, about 46 children, many of them refugees from Germany, were able to leave Switzerland in 1940. They left our Country mentally and physically restored and not without regrets.

It is to be deplored that the receipts of the Benevolent Society show a decrease in funds of Frs. 263.452 in 1939 to Frs. 197.903 in 1940.

The Zürich section for Refugees has also provided about 52 children emigrated from Austria and Germany with money and clothes. The home opened for these refugees has now been closed as its 43 inmates have been able to enter state schools where they fit into the normal routine without difficulty. Children whose parents have been deported or are temporarily in camps are being looked after financially and the expenses of children in the care of foster-parents and at boarding schools are being covered from these funds. (N.Z.Z.)

Armand Dufaux, the well known pioneer in Swiss Aviation, died on July 17th in Geneva. He was born in Paris 13th January 1888, son of the painter Frederic Dufaux, and from 1900 on he devoted himself to the theoretical and practical study of aviation problems. Together with his brother Henri he built the first 100 HP-Flying engine. He also built the first successful Swiss aeroplane, the "Rumpfdoppeldecker" in 1910 and was the first Swiss to fly the lake of Geneva, from Villeneuve to Geneva in 55 minutes, thereby winning the price of Frs. 5000 offered by the firm Perrod-Duval. (N.Z.Z.)

The new sanatorium in Tessin "Sanatorio Popolare Cantonale" is finished. Originally it was the "Sanatorio del Cottardo" started by Dr. Massi in 1900. At the beginning the sanatorium flourished but already in the first decade of its existence the venture began to fail. Then in 1919 the Canton of Tessin bought up the whole concern for half a million Francs and after building a few annexes, which were most urgently required, it was opened in 1921 as the Sanatorio Popolare Cantonale. These alterations cost the Canton Frs. 200,000 and a further Frs. 600,000 have been spent on the building since 1939.

The normal charge for patients is Frs. 5 per person but anyone unable to pay this sum is granted a reduction of up to Frs. 3. The sanatorium contains 130 beds and has a staff of 30 in attendance. Situated about one hour's journey below Airolo at an altitude of 1170 m. its climate is exceedingly mild (N.Z.Z.)

Observations of Glacier movements have shown that during the past year 15 out of the 100 glaciers under observation have grown as against 14 in 1939, 6 have remained stationary as against 5 last year and 79 have decreased as against 81 in 1939.

London, 26th August, 1941.

COLLECTION FOR SWISS SOLDIERS.

Since our last publication in the April 1941 issue the following substantial contributions have been made towards the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund,

Financial contributions: £6.10.0 from three anonymous donors.

From the beginning of 1941, until the 15th of October 1941, the amount of £12.18.0 was received by the Swiss Consulate at Wellington and

on that date the Swiss Foreign Office at Berne was requested to remit the equivalent of this amount to the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund. Remittances from New Zealand fellow-countrymen for this worthy cause until the 15th of October 1941 have reached a total of £ (N.Z.) 277.1.4.

Woollen garments: Miss A. Weber; Mrs. Dalgleish (twice in succession); Mr. and Mrs. E. Merz; Mrs. H. Schmid.

In the April issue, we advised that it was planned to make a second shipment of woollen goods to Switzerland at the end of April. However, we thought it advisable to hold the shipment back until news was received from Switzerland that the first shipment had arrived over there. We now have pleasure to inform the donors and the members of our Society that the goods of the first shipment have arrived in Switzerland and have been distributed. The second shipment was therefore sent on its way to Switzerland via the Swiss Legation at Washington, on the 15th of October 1941. It contained the following woollen garments:

1 balaclava; 1 pair of child's pants; 2 children's singlets; 1 pair of woman's bloomers; 2 pair of children's socks; 1 child's dress; 1 pair of child's stockings; 2 men's pullovers, sleeveless; 3 ladies' pullovers; 1 child's pullover; 2 ladies' cardigans; 1 child's quilt; 1 child's suit; 1 woollen shawl; 1 knitted costume; 1 knitted skirt; 1 lady's night-gown; 6 pairs of socks; 1 child's slip; 1 Baby cap; 1 pair of baby shoes; 1 baby frock; 3 woollen blouses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS RECEIVED FOR GIFTS FOR THE SWISS SOLDIERS' RELIEF FUND.

1. Donations of money: Colonel Feldmann, the Chief of the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund has now confirmed the receipt in toto of the following remittances from New Zealand:

1940	June 18	£220. 9. 3	=	Frs. 2.860. --
	Dec. 26	31.12.11	=	Frs. 430.35
1941	Feb. 20	12. 1. 2	=	Frs. 160.35
Total:		£264. 3. 4	=	Frs. 3.450.70

In previous letters to the Swiss Consulate, when confirming the receipt of each of these remittances, Colonel Feldmann has not failed to express his deep appreciation for these donations from fellow-countrymen in New Zealand. In addition every donor in New Zealand was provided with an individual receipt from the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund.

In the October 1940 issue, we have already published one of these letters of appreciation received from Colonel Feldmann. We would, however, not fail to quote some of his last references regarding the collection for the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund taken up from among our fellow-countrymen in New Zealand. In a letter of the 9th of January 1941, to the Swiss Consulate at Wellington, Colonel Feldmann made the following remarks:

"The Swiss in New Zealand have the satisfaction to know that they have shown our Swiss soldiers on guard at the frontiers of our country their appreciation for their faithful services, in a very noble and substantial way, and we feel very happy to be able to be the intermediary of the donations destined for necessitous Swiss soldiers and their families."

2. Donations of woollen wear: Official confirmation of the receipt of the first shipment to Switzerland of woollies, of October 16, 1940, donated by our "busy knitting bees" is not yet at hand. Private letters received recently at the Swiss Consulate at Wellington, however, are proof that the distribution of these donations in kind has been going on in Switzerland in July and August 1941. We quote in translation the following letters of thanks:

From an Italian speaking Swiss at Zuerich, Silvio Astrelli, Uberland -strasse 11 Zuerich, dated July 12, 1941: "I thank you infinitely for the package we have received"; from Private Armand Gillieron, on Active Service: "I have received

through the Social Work Organisation of the Army a package of underwear of a value of sfrs.28.--. This is a beautiful gift and I am particularly satisfied. I can see from that, that our fellow-countrymen abroad are thinking of their necessitous soldiers. That is very nice. I am married and my military pay goes for the taking care of my wife and 6 minor children. The two elder are apprentices. So you can see that your well-meaning has found a true echo. I have had 278 days of military service since the beginning of this war. Thanking you again from the bottom of my heart for your goodness, I am, with kind regards, yours S.C.Armand Gillieron. (Civilian address: Grande Rue 6, Le Locle, Ct.Neuchatel); from a Mrs. O. Schlaefli, Pflanzschulstr. 79, Zuerich 4 (dated 14th August 1941): "I have received with great thankfulness your kind donation for necessitous families of soldiers. It makes me feel good to know that even abroad people are thinking of us. May God reward you (Vergelts Gott), for I am expecting my 4th child in the near future. Sending you all kind greetings from beautiful Zuerich and from the whole of Switzerland."; from Madame Marie Pugin-Mercier, Vaudereng, Fribourg (dated 19th August 1941): "I wish to express to you with these few lines my most sincere thanks for the package of clothes which I have received from you. Everything fits very well. With kind regards, a thankful mother, Marie Pugin-Mercier."

It is indeed nice to have received these first tokens of appreciation. Members who would like to get in touch with these people in writing, are, of course, welcome to do so.

650TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

Members of our Society will remember from the September issue of "HELVETIA" that on the occasion of the 650th Swiss Anniversary a message of felicitation was despatched to the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Ernest Wetter, in time to reach him at Schwyz on the 1st of August. The Chief of the Swiss Foreign Office, Minister Pierre Bonna, at Berne, in the name of the President, has now sent the following letter of thanks to the Swiss people in New Zealand through the intermediary of the Swiss Consulate at Wellington: "With a cable of the 26th July the members of the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand have been kind enough to express to the President of the Swiss Confederation, through your intermediary, their attachment to the Swiss Fatherland, on the occasion of the Swiss Anniversary, which was of particular significance this year. The President of the Confederation has been deeply moved by this message and he would appreciate if you would be the interpreter of his expression of profound gratitude to the Swiss people in New Zealand, for their patriotic manifestation, and also to convey to them his best wishes in these difficult times."

TRIBUTE TO MERIT.

It would be sheer ingratitude, if we did not extend a warm word of special thanks to the men, who for a good while now, have been in charge of the management of our Swiss Benevolent Society: - Messrs. Merz and Ungemuth. The Chairman, Mr. Merz, has taken a keen interest in the life and progress of the Society and there was no reason for him to retire, had it not been for Mr. Ungemuth's ill-health and the war conditions, necessitating the transfer of the Committee closer to the Consulate. However, every organisation always places its main burden upon the Secretary, and Mr. Ungemuth had a full share of it for the past six years. Thanks to his untiring efforts the Society not only remained alive - compared with earlier starts of a similar nature - but grew and became a strong body. Constantly many difficulties had to be mastered: he did it. Whenever there was work to do for the Society or individual countrymen, or plans to be put into action, there was Mr. Ungemuth in the front line, giving things the necessary "kick". Just imagine the enormous amount of work caused by the monthly compilation of the "HELVETIA", and especially the difficulties in war time, when news from home is coming in so sparingly. Think, too, of the work occasioned by the correspondence, the Committee meetings, arrangement of celebrations and socials etc. In spite of often failing health, weeks in hospital, months of convalescence, there never appeared to be any interruption in the Secretary's activities; letters were answered promptly, the monthly paper came forward regularly. Neither is