

# Sundry news from Switzerland

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **7 (1941-1942)**

Heft 7

PDF erstellt am: **29.05.2024**

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especially aniline dye plants which depend largely on their export trade and require imported raw materials.

On the whole, Switzerland's main preoccupation has been to find the necessary raw materials and means of transport. Moreover, as at present foreign powers only export goods in exchange for products they themselves require, Switzerland is endeavouring to develop her export trade in order to obtain raw materials and foodstuffs. Everything is being done in order to provide necessary means of transport. Switzerland must indeed, at any price, be able to maintain her commercial relations with all countries in Europe and overseas. In the spring of 1941 she founded a mercantile marine flying the Swiss flag. Despite its small tonnage this fleet is nevertheless doing very useful work in keeping Switzerland in touch with distant countries via Lisbon and New York, and it is one of the only fleets which can still connect the Old and the New Worlds. Another innovation of 1941 was the transport of goods through Spanish territory by a Swiss motor truck service which has certainly improved the situation as regard food supplies by counter-acting the shipping and rolling stock shortage.

Thus, thanks to all these efforts, it can be said that for a year of war, 1941 has proved relatively satisfactory. What does the future hold? No one can tell. For Switzerland can continue to live at her present rate only if she can obtain supplies. Every possible effort is being made to buy, to sell and to transport goods. But precautionary measures are also being taken in the event of the situation taking a turn for the worse. Agriculture is being intensified to provide the population with its daily bread. Scrap and waste materials of all kinds are being recuperated and the production of substitute products encouraged so that industries may be kept busy. The nation is accepting restrictions in every domain so that it can keep going. By arming herself with patience and courage, and despite hardships which still may come, Switzerland hopes to weather the storm and to reach the haven of happier days.

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#### SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Intensive agriculture.- (Berne....) In order to ensure national food supplies, Switzerland is making great efforts to extend the surface of land under cultivation. The Government has recently decreed that all firms employing more than 100 workers must provide their employees with allotments so that they can produce their own potato and vegetable supplies as far as possible.

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Swiss forest exploitation. - (Lausanne....) The present shortage of coal and building materials normally imported from abroad has caused Switzerland to exploit her forest lands more fully. During the 1941-1942 season forest exploitation will be increased by 200% as compared with normal pre-war quantities.

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Census of the Swiss population.- (Geneva....) The first results of the census taken at the beginning of December 1941 show that Switzerland has now a population of 4.1/4 million inhabitants. The biggest town is Zurich with approximately 334.000 inhabitants. Berne, the capital, has a population of 130.000.

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The Swiss Industries Fair.- (Basle....) The XXVith Swiss Industries Fair will be held in Basle from April 18th to 28th 1942. The list of exhibitors is already very encouraging and a new exposition hall has had to be built. As usual a great number of foreign visitors are expected.

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The most modern streetcar in the world.- (Zurich....) The authorities of Zurich recently inaugurated a new streetcar which may be considered the most modern in Europe. It is a four-axle car weighing only 12.9 tons with a transport capacity of 100 passengers instead of 60 as has been the case for cars of the same type until now.

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New covered market in Zurich.- (Zurich....) Zurich is an important receiving and distributing center for fruit and vegetables which are sent out from there to all parts of Central and Eastern Switzerland. It is planned to begin work on the building of a large new covered market in 1943. This scheme is of

national importance just now, as by reason of the present intensification of agriculture about 122 kilos (approximately 240 lbs.) of vegetables are produced per capita in Switzerland as compared with 70 kilos (about 137 lbs.) before the war.

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SWISS REJECT SYSTEM CHANGE.

(Berne..) - By 519,000 votes to 250,000 the Swiss people rejected today a Socialist proposal for direct election of the Federal Council, which is the equivalent of a Cabinet in most other countries. The vote also rejected an increase of the Federal Council from seven to nine members.

That the Swiss people, the most democratic in Europe, should reject this proposal is regarded as of more than passing interest. On the face of it, direct election of the government would seem to be the very essence of democracy.

The main argument used against the Socialist proposition was that most European democracies have disappeared in recent years but the Swiss form of government has subsisted chiefly because it was unlike them. Thus the Swiss Government will continue to be elected by the National Council (Parliament).

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SWISS CUT ELECTRICITY.

(Berne, Jan. 25) - Beginning today further restrictions are to be applied in Switzerland on the use of electric power for lighting and heating. The measure is explained by the continued drought, which is reducing the output of hydro-electric plants.

The last restrictions were applied in November, 1941, since when the situation is described as having steadily grown worse.

Public lighting was then reduced 30 per cent; henceforth it will be reduced 50 per cent. The lighting of show windows may not continue after 7 P.M. The use of luminous signs is entirely prohibited.

In homes, schools, offices and cafes the electric light must be reduced by at least one-third compared with the corresponding period last year. No electric power may be used for heating.

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SWISS ACT FOR 20 NATIONS.

Special Division set up to care for Belligerents' Interests.

Berne, Jan. 22. - Since Switzerland has undertaken to represent the interests of some twenty belligerent nations, including the United States, it has been necessary to recruit a special personnel and set up special offices. It was announced recently that this organization was now complete.

The Division of Foreign Interests is divided into five sections, with fifty-five officials holding executive ranks. Its head is M. de Fury, formerly Swiss Minister to the Netherlands. The subordinate personnel is large and is likely to increase. Moreover, additions to permanent staffs have been made at the legations in London, Berlin and Rome.

The Swiss point with pride to the fact that all countries concerned have expressed satisfaction with the work of the division. In addition to its other duties, it negotiates the exchange of wounded prisoners.

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SWISS PATRIOTISM.

Helvetia's reports on the many happy gatherings of our compatriots on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Confederation, I have read with great pleasure. As one who enjoyed the celebration in Auckland, in its humble and sober form, with the opportunity it gave to make new acquaintances among our compatriots, all singing those old patriotic songs, I too want to support the suggestion of some members of the Swiss Benevolent Society for more frequent gatherings in different localities.

To what has already been written, I should like to add this thought: Though we