

Sundry news

Objekttyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **8 (1942-1943)**

Heft 9

PDF erstellt am: **28.05.2024**

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Any opposition towards this proposal will be based on the fact, that it offends against one of the basic articles of our Constitution and that it might lead to an arbitrary treatment of our constitutional guarantees. The Executive Commission, in open session, discussed the draft law for the deprivation of citizenship, regarding which grave doubts were expressed, it being regarded as undesirable to create stateless persons. On the other hand, it was emphasised that Swiss traitors to their Fatherland, who escaped the country, should at least suffer the penalty of losing their citizenship. The Federal Council will decide the question.

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SUNDRY NEWS.

The Swiss Foreign Minister Dr. Marcel Pilet-Golaz, on the occasion of a political party meeting at Geneva, warned the Swiss people, that this war had reached a crisis in which Switzerland might yet find herself involved, adding however, that our country is still ready and willing to defend its traditional neutrality if it is attacked. He pointed out, that the immediate future looked gloomy and that the test of Swiss endurance was not yet at an end.

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ROLES OF SWISS CIVILIANS DEFINED IN PROGRAM FOR EMERGENCY: Berne.-- Continuing its unbroken series of far-sighted demonstrations of preparedness, the Swiss Federal Council has adopted new measures for dealing with problems of civilian assistance "when and if" the nation is attacked.

Designed primarily to supplement measures adopted immediately after May, 1940, the decree requisitions the services of organizations out of the former plans, but called for "planned and rational self-help".

Details have been worked out for the incorporation of civilian health services, youth organizations and national Red Cross societies in well-defined roles.

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SWISS FIND PHOSPHATES AT AUBERSON: Berne. -- A discovery of capital importance to Swiss agriculture has just been made at Auberson in the Vaudois Jura, where a bed of phosphates covering some two square kilometers has been found. Analysis shows it to be very rich, easily mined and presenting virtually no difficulties for refinement.

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The influence of the cost of transport on the import prices of goods is shown by the following example quoted by the Bank for International Settlements at Basle in their yearly report. In May 1942 the export price for 100 kilos Oats in Argentine was s.frs. 7.85, the cost of transport amounted to s.frs. 50.35 so that the cost of 100 kilos Oats delivered to the Swiss border amounted to s.frs. 58.20.

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In the National Council a short discussion dealing with the introduction of a Federal death duty terminated with a negative resolution. Federal Councillor Wetter though not excluding the possibility of future Federal legislation preferred to leave the matter to the jurisdiction of the cantons as heretofore. The parallel of the English death duties was not applicable, he said, as in the latter country no annual property tax was levied.

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Another socialist motion seeking to limit the payments of dividends to five or six per cent met with a similar fate. Federal Councillor Wetter in his reply stated that during the last twelve months about a third of the capital invested in Swiss undertakings went without dividends and the average dividend on the remainder was at about the rate as was earned by debenture or mortgage holders; it was a fallacy to base the argument on the nominal capital of companies as in a good many instances the present shareholders had acquired their shares at a much higher price.

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A new and far reaching initiative is being launched; it seeks to add to our Constitution a new article which eliminates speculation in land and residential property. Agricultural land can only be acquired by persons who actually cultivate the land for their own existence.

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On account of lack of space to accommodate the steadily increasing number of students the Zurich educational authorities have been forced to refuse admission to the Gymnasium to scholars residing in adjoining cantons; the Gymnasium is a public state school devoted to the classical side of education.

In St.Gall a cost-of-living bonus to civil servants was confirmed by 7,569 ayes against 2,118 noes though all the parties strongly endorsed the proposal. It will involve the municipality in an unforeseen expenditure of about one million francs.

Four months imprisonment and a fine of Frs. 2,000 were inflicted by the St.Gall cantonal tribunal on Ernst Schegg, a dentist at Alstätten, for offences against the security of the State. Three other accused received lighter sentences but the detention was condoned in view of their having been kept under remand for like periods during investigations.

The seasonal Carnival jollifications have been prohibited in all the towns the exception being St. Gall where they are concentrated into one single day till 3 a.m. without the traditional Schnitzelbank.

A batchelors' tax is to be levied in the canton Obwalden: unmarried men between the ages of 32 and 60 will have 20 per cent added to the official demand note.

The Federal Penal Court has given judgment regarding M.Nicolo and his collaborator. They have been declared guilty of communist and anarchist activities. L.Nicolo is condemned to three months imprisonment. Judgment orders the confiscation of a certain amount of printed matter, expenses to be defrayed by the accused.

It is reported that the Franco-Swiss frontier is closed for a certain period in order to allow Italian authorities to verify frontier cards whose number will be notably decreased. Transit facilities will only be granted from now on when the Swiss are able to prove the necessity of their going to France.

The shortage of rubber is extremely acute and cycle tyres and inner tubes are unobtainable. There are over one-and-a-half million cycles circulating in Switzerland.

The particulars for the food rationing for March have just been published and seem to indicate a slight all-round reduction. The rations for Fats, Jam, Honey and Preserved Fruit have been halved. Supplementary rations for soap and similar articles for spring-cleaning are granted. It is also stated that in the near future a new milk product will come on the market, called "Nährcasein", which is equal in nutritive value to "Magerkäse", and will replace the previous cheese ration.

The Geneva Correspondent of "The Times" reports the starting up in January of the Innertkirchen power plant, as a result of which the Federal authorities have announced some relaxation of the restrictions on the use of electricity. The Innertkirchen plant represents the final stage of a large hydro-electric scheme started in 1932 with the formation of an artificial lake containing 300 million cu. ft. of water on the Grimsel Pass at a height of 6,155 ft. Two years later the Handeck power-house was built and in 1937 the Bodan station, the Innertkirchen plant - housed in chambers hewn out of the solid rock - being finished last year. The three power-houses situated at various levels, use water from the same source and together have a plant capacity of 290,000 H.P.

At the end of 1942, about 10 per cent of motor vehicles, numbering over 13,000, had been converted from petrol to alternative fuels, while about 100,000 vehicles have been laid up. Petrol is very strictly controlled and may only be used by Army and Government vehicles. Wood gas is the principal fuel used, about 9,000 vehicles having been adapted for this fuel, as well as a certain amount of acetylene and methane.

The natural impulse of a kind-hearted Swiss locomotive-driver had an unexpected sequel. Driving the Zurich-Schaffhausen train through Singen, which is of course, German territory, he dropped a "Stumpe" to a Russian prisoner who happened to be nearby. The driver was promptly arrested, another one having to complete the journey, and was kept for ten days in the local German prison until diplomatic representations secured his release.

At the annual meeting of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce the difficult economic situation of Switzerland was emphasized, and the Chamber expressed the hope that the population would accept with discipline the inevitable sacrifices and restrictions rendered necessary by the seriousness of the situation. The population have been warned that, because of the almost complete stoppage of coal imports, there will be no hot water for baths from next month onward. The newspapers have pointed out to the people the necessity of saving as much fuel as possible. This can easily be done now on account of the extreme mildness of the winter. Preparation must be made for next winter, when coal for heating may be almost unobtainable and wood drastically rationed.

An additional 150,000 farm workers are likely to become available under a war-time decree which makes it compulsory for all men between the ages of 18 and 30 to work on the land.

Though the influx of refugees has for the time being come to an end the problems of housing, distribution, financial contributions by the cantons, etc., are far from being settled. Since August 1942, some 800 refugees entered our country illegally and their lot and upkeep offers one of the greatest difficulties. Altogether more than 17,000 are at present being cared for. The army has established thirty camps, where 5,000 refugees are now living. They receive the same food rations as Swiss civilians and a special news service keeps them in touch with their own countries.

Refugees between the ages of seventeen and sixty who are fit to work are transferred to labour camps, where they help in land reclamation schemes. The women are occupied with mending the clothes of the refugees. The refugees thus employed receive 1.50 f. to 1.80 f. daily, and are permitted to walk within a certain distance round the camp. All the refugees who can afford it are allowed to live in hotels, but are subject to police control.

A gang of sixty smugglers were surprised by frontier guards near Campo Cologno (Grisons) where an enormous illicit trade in coffee is carried on into Italy; half of them were arrested.

A decree has been issued by the Federal War Office for Industry and Labour, fixing the period of service in agricultural work at three weeks for apprentices between the ages of 16 and 20. The time of service for other young persons will depend on agricultural exigencies, but it will not be less than four weeks.

The Federal Military Department has created a Central Federal Office for the rearing of mules, which are important alike for the Army and for mountain farming. A Committee of experts is to be appointed to this Department.

Recently, the Swiss War Food Office announced that for over a year it had been impossible to import either barley, oats or maize from overseas, and that reserves built up by the Confederation were diminishing. With a view to meeting in part the requirements of the Army and the civil population, the War Office will shortly issue instructions imposing an obligation on farmers to deliver a certain portion of their harvest to the Confederation this autumn; this, after their own requirements have been met.

The Swiss Federal Council also took a decision regarding the Swiss Newsreel, which must be shown in all Swiss cinemas. Already in 1940 all cinemas were obliged to show it, to counter-balance foreign products. Many cinema owners booked the Newsreel and paid for it, but others, while willing to book it, would not pay the fees. It has now been made clear that all cinemas must book the Swiss Newsreel and pay the booking fees, also that the film industry has to give financial support to its production. The cost of this is Frs. 500,000 annually. The Federation pays three-quarters and the cinemas pay one-quarter; the greater part of the production costs is still being borne by the Federal Council.

As the Newsreel is usually an added attraction in the cinema programme and draws larger audiences, payment of booking fees may well be demanded. Since it is not always easy to provide interesting topics week by week in our small, peaceful country, these newsreels will sometimes be replaced by documentary films.

The Federal Council has laid down various regulations concerning refugees in the country. They must refrain from all political activity or any activity detrimental to Swiss neutrality. They may not appear publicly, make speeches, write books or articles.

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of Col. Henri, and has thanked him for his services as Commissioner for Internment. His duties have included dealing with the internment of Polish soldiers in the French Army who entered Switzerland in June 1940. These men form the largest contingent of interned soldiers in Switzerland.

The Grand Council of Lucerne has also invited deputies to put forward a plan for the building of a central aerodrome in the interests of tourism in central Switzerland.

In its turn, the Grand Council of Zoug has examined various proposals concerning the construction of an aerodrome between Cham and Zoug.

A Swiss Institute for the study of foreign countries has been founded. The Rector of the Federal Polytechnic and Professor Brunner, the Rector of Zurich University will be its Heads. The Institute will concern itself with scientific and objective studies of foreign countries, particularly of those countries which are of special interest to Switzerland.

SWISS BROADCAST: We herewith wish to inform members, that the Swiss National Broadcasting Station at Schwarzenburg is still transmitting a broadcast to Australia and New Zealand twice weekly, on Tuesday and Saturday on wave length 19.60 m which is received in New Zealand between 8.45 and 10.15 p.m.

As many listeners will have found out by themselves, the reception of this broadcast was lately very bad and sometimes could not be heard at all. The Swiss National Broadcasting Service has been informed of this and consequently trial-broadcasts were also made on 31.43 m, but unfortunately with no better results.

The only Swiss broadcasts well received at the present time in New Zealand seems to be the Swiss-North American broadcast on the 31 m band, which is received daily, except Sunday, from 1.45 to 3 p.m. and the daily transmission on 48.66 m from 6 a.m. to 9.30 a.m.

We would be pleased to hear from members what their experiences on the reception of these broadcasts are.

1st AUGUST CELEBRATIONS - AUCKLAND: The 1st of August is coming around again and the Auckland Branch are preparing a bonzer programme for the evening - one that you will be sorry to miss.

The chief attraction for the evening will be the picture gallery of - "Just the little streets where old friends used to meet." - photos of your old home town, the little church you and Hubby were married in, the shops where you used to spend your pennies on lollipops and so on. They are worth seeing. Items will be rendered by the more talented members among us and a well known personage will be straining their vocal chords in an effort to entertain you.

Supper will be provided and the small charge of 2/6 for admission will be made, to cover expenses.

It is to be held in the Overseas League Rooms on the 3rd Floor of the Queen's Arcade, Queen St.

If any of those intending country visitors have a "Handoergeli" it would be appreciated if they would bring it along.

B.R. HALTMEYER, SECRETARY.

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS & MARRIAGES. Some members have complained, with good reason, that "Helvetia" fails to report equitably on the deaths and weddings which occur from time to time in the Swiss community in New Zealand. We wish to point out that such information will, at all times, receive our immediate and careful attention, but we are entirely dependent on our members for sending immediate notification to the Secretary.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T:

Sharemilker wanted (preferable two single men, Swiss) for good herd of 65 - 70 cows - 1/3 share and 1/2 calves and pigs - good conditions, cream supply. Start June or July.

Please apply:

F. Graedel, Orini, R. D. Taupiri.

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SUBSCRIPTION 1942 - 1943:

Your annual subscription fee of sh.10/- for the year 1942 - 43 was due on October 1st, and you are asked to forward payment to the Secretary - Mr. Herman Schlatter, 2nd Floor, T. & G. Building, Wellington.

Auckland members we wish to remind of the arrangement made with Mr. A. Peyer, 48 Moa Road, Auckland, or Mr. W. Ungemuth, Clarence Road, Northcote, Auckland.

Bay of Plenty members may pay to Mr. C. Gebert, C/- Post Office, Opotiki.

Waikato members may pay to Mr. John Steiner, Eastport Road, Waihou.

Kindly help to make the Committee's task easier by remitting early and your prompt attention in this respect will be greatly appreciated.

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NEW MEMBERS:

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new members:

Mr. John Steiner Sen., Hastings Road, Mangatoki, Taranaki.
Mr. Jos. Arnet, Springdale, Waitoa, Waikato.
Mr. Charlie Camenzind, 218 Ellis Street, Hamilton.
Mrs. Hausler, C/- St. Joseph's Home, Herne Bay, Auckland.
Mr. A. Biland, Te Rapa, Waikato.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T S.

MR. P. CATTIN, Te Kauwhata:	"Scintilla" Wine and Fruit.
MR. JOHN BUTLER, Butcher, Tariki:	Varieties of Swiss Sausages.
MR. TONY KOMMINOTH, Wellington:	Visit his new "Lido Tea Rooms", 118 Courtenay Place, Wellington.
MR. L. LEUTHARD, New Plymouth:	Visit his "Hygienic Dining Rooms".
MR. AL. ZUERCHER, 303 Market St., S., Hastings:	Apple Cider, 5 sh. per gallon in two gallon lots - samples free of charge. Send your empty jars or barrels. "Moscht müends, aim ghä!"

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E,

Please address to the Secretary -

Mr. Herman Schlatter,
2nd Floor,
T. & G. Building,
WELLINGTON, C.I.

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