

Sundry news from Switzerland

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It is also with profound regret that we learn of the demise of Mr. M. Mueller, Hunter Road, Eltham, a member of our Society for many years. The late Mr. Mueller was very well known and liked amongst the Swiss Community in the Taranaki District and a large family is mourning his death and we wish to offer them our deepest sympathy in their sad loss.

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COLLECTION FOR A MONUMENT FOR THE LATE FEDERAL COUNCILLOR AND FORMER PRESIDENT
OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION - DR. GIUSEPPE MOTTA.

In the November, 1942, issue of the "Helvetia" we reported on the result of this collection amongst the Swiss people in New Zealand and now quote below a translation of a letter received from the "Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft", Berne, to which the money was handed over:

"In the name of the Committee for the "Swiss Foundation in memory of the late Dr. Giuseppe Motta" we wish to acknowledge the receipt of the amount of NZ\$39.10.6 and to thank all contributors. We have taken note of their names which will be entered on a scroll and encased in the monument.

We are indeed very thankful for this generous contribution coming from a Swiss community so far away from home and it gives us great satisfaction to see, that the Swiss in New Zealand are associating themselves with the movement to pay reverence to the memory of one of our great statesmen and his valuable deeds in the service of our country."

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

An ardent appeal was sent over the Swiss radio on March 22nd calling on our people to approach the future with a spirit of sacrifice and determination as the iron belt round our country would probably be pulled tighter still. The experience of a Swiss doctor was cited who during his mission in a Finnish military camp had to amputate the leg of a young soldier. He was trying to find suitable words to express his sympathy when the Finn interrupted him by saying, "Sir, I know what you would like to say and I thank you, but for My Finland I would gladly sacrifice the other leg." Federal Councillor von Steiger stated in a recent speech at Zurich that the coming six months would be the most critical period which our country had ever faced.

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The recent issue of 150,000,000 frs. of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Federal Loan and 150,000,000 frs. of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Treasury Bonds has been heavily oversubscribed. The Federal Council has decided to accept the full amount of the subscriptions, namely, 232,000,000 frs. of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Loan and 255,000,000 frs. of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Bonds.

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The canton of Uri is contributing about Frs. 160,000 towards the reconstruction scheme of the Lake of Lucerne Navigation company; about Frs. 100,000 are a loan free of interest and the remaining Frs. 60,000 a fonds perdu.

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The management of the Zurich Stadttheater has succeeded in reducing a former annual deficit of over Frs. 637,486 to the negligible sum of 1,700 francs. By catering for the tastes of a larger circle of theatre-goers an average of 73% of the seats available have been occupied (previously 53%); considerable credit is due to the Federal Railways which ran special theatre trains from and to Schaffhausen, Aarau, Zug, Glarus, etc.

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Four Government bills which were submitted to the Basle electors on Sunday, March 21st, were rejected with overwhelming majorities. In the first one the members of the Grosse Rat sought to extend their mandate from three to four years, the second one proposed increases in the income tax rate and the price of gas, the raising of the 10% tax on tickets (Billetsteuer) to 15% was the object of the third bill and lastly the construction of a temporary aviation field in the "Hard" did not find favour. The outcome of the voting is taken to indicate the general disavowal of the financial policy of the cantonal government.

The Swiss fishermen along the Swiss shores of the Bodensee had record catches during the past year. They caught over 300,000 kg. of fish at a value of nearly one million francs. Practically two thirds were Blaufelchen, the remainder were Egli, Gangfisch, pike and trout. The fishing industry today still provides the main earnings of about 130 families on the Swiss side of the lake.

It is officially announced that early on April 15th a British Wellington bomber crashed in flames in the neighbourhood of Birmenstorf, near Brugg, after flying over several places. No damage was done to property by the fall of the aircraft, but the bomber itself was completely burnt out. The crew of five men escaped by parachute, and have been interned by the military authorities.

The food situation has improved since the beginning of this month. Cheese, milk and meat rations have been increased and actually eight eggs have been distributed against four originally fixed for April. A new coupon is being issued entitling the holder to buy either oil, butter or fat.

The introduction of potato bread may come up for consideration in the near future. In order to gain some experience and indications the Federal Food Office has tried out this tentative war product for several weeks on a number of students of the Basle University who have voluntarily subjected themselves to this experiment. They all have survived the ordeal in fact it is stated that the high nutritive and physiological value of potato bread has been unequivocally established.

Chocolate is likely to be rationed in the near future. It is stated that the demand has increased far beyond pre-war figures and that the present distribution is unsatisfactory.

It is reported that another freighter has recently been acquired by Swiss interest; it is the Finnish Ship "Ergo" now lying in Lisbon harbour and which has been renamed "Zurich". It is a 2,800 ton vessel which will increase the total tonnage of our merchant fleet to about 70,000 tons.

Owing to intensification of agriculture and higher prices for agricultural produce, the number of policies of the Swiss Hail Insurance Co. last year rose to 120,000 against 108,000 in 1941, with sums insured frs. 240 millions against frs. 191 millions. The company has had the worst claims experience in its 63 years' existence. The premium income was frs. 6,690,000 (1941, frs. 5,380,000) but claims rose to frs. 10,250,000 (1941 frs. 2,960,000), giving a claims ratio of 153% against 55% in 1941. This has caused a net loss of frs. 1,210,000, whereas there was a profit of frs. 840,000 in 1941; consequently general reserves have fallen to frs. 7,100,000. The directors are considering means of restoring the reserves to be able to meet future catastrophe years.

It is stated that coal production last year was three times what it was the year before. Swiss industries now find more than half their coal at home. The increased production is attributed, not only to the opening of new mines, but also to better mining methods.

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The "Manchester Guardian", April 6th says: "There is a report that the Swiss are preparing to pull down their older hotels and start building newer and better ones. It seems a long time since anyone in this country ventured to think of a holiday in Switzerland, but the charming and immediate enterprise suggests that the Swiss themselves evidently count on our return. They must also count on our having the money to pay the bills for a sojourn in their improved hotels. So far as one remembers there are no provisions for Swiss holidays in the Beveridge Scheme, but there must be an idea abroad in Europe that we shall presently be able to manage not only social security but a few extra trimmings as well. Naturally, the Swiss must also be counting on tourists from other countries, but it will be a queer hotel that does not include its quota of English visitors."

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To avoid military service for Germany, several hundreds of young Alsations have crossed the Swiss frontiers. The fugitives have been interned in a military guarded reception camp. The frontier guards have been increased.

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Twenty British naval officers who were taken prisoner during the combined operations attack on St. Nazaire a year ago have been supplied with watches by a Swiss firm on a promise to pay for them after the war.

This unusual story of trust in the Royal Navy's word of honour comes from Lieut. S.P. Haighton, R.N., whose father lives at Laneshaw Bridge, Colne.

During the action the officers lost their watches and as a last resort one of the party wrote to a Swiss firm asking for a supply of new ones, but pointing out that the only security they could give was their word of honour to pay at the end of the war.

In due course the watches, valued about £200, arrived at the prisoners' camp. ("News Chronicle", April 3rd.)

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The Federal Council decreed on July 7th the dissolution of two extreme rightist political organisations known as the 'Rassemblement Federale' and the 'Nationale Gemeinschaft' of Schaffhausen. Their newspapers, 'Die Front' and 'Der Grenzbote' were prohibited. In April, 1942, the 'Rassemblement Federale' was given a serious warning that a further publishing of its paper would only be tolerated if a strict Swiss policy were being observed. Meanwhile a relatively large number that came before the military courts for high treason showed that the 'Rassemblement Federale' and the 'Nationale Gemeinschaft' did not want to eliminate from membership the traitors who belonged to this organisation. Considering therefore the bad will or the incapacity of these two groups, the government is of the opinion that they cannot be tolerated any longer, and measures already applied to the Communist party are now taken against these two extreme rightist movements.

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The war economy office has made another innovation in the Swiss food rationing system, which takes into account the varying food habits and the increased cost of living. Beginning with August, the consumer will have the choice between two rationing cards, i.e. cards A and B. Card A will give a larger meat ration, but the amount of milk and cheese will be smaller. Card B gives more milk, cheese and bread and less meat. It will be possible to use both cards in a family. A family of six, for instance, could take three A and three B cards. The consumer who lives alone will be able to choose between one or the other card or half a card of each. The merchandise one can buy on Card A costs 30.85 frs., while the costs of total purchases on card B is 21.60 frs. The nutritive value of the two cards is identical.

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Menues by phone. The Telephone Administration of the town of Zurich has had an excellent idea. In order to help housewives who are finding it more and more difficult to exercise their skill, hampered as they are by rations, the Zurich telephone service has thought of giving a daily menu over the phone. This is the first "menu service" of its kind, not only in Switzerland, but in Europe. The menu is accompanied by a commentary giving useful hints as to quantities, methods of preparation and times of cooking.

More doctors in Switzerland. More than 1,400 medical students sat for their finals in 1942. This is one hundred more than in the previous year.

Development of means of communication in Switzerland. The great programme of work schemes drawn up by the Swiss Government in view of providing occupation for the unemployed includes the following plans for the development of means of transport in the country:

	<u>in millions of francs</u>
Plans for the Swiss Federal Railways	760
" for ordinary roads	540
" for alpine roads	254
" for private railways	250
" for airways	200
" for waterways within the country	190

Swiss solidarity. Solidarity in Switzerland is no empty word. The allocations paid to Swiss soldiers in compensation for loss of salaries and earnings during military service now amounts to 500 million Swiss francs. This shows what social progress has been achieved since the last war, when only 60 million francs in all were paid for the whole of the war period.

NEW MEMBER: We have pleasure in welcoming the following new member:
Mr. A. Lang, 48 Roy Street, Palmerston North.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE.

The Secretary regrets to announce, that in spite of the reminder which appeared in every number of this paper, there are still quite a number of subscriptions for the year 1942/43 outstanding. We would be thankful if such members will realise that the Swiss Benevolent Society and the publication of this paper depend on the payment of this annual subscription of sh.10/- and we sincerely hope, that these long overdue subscriptions will be paid without further delay. Postal notes and money orders should be addressed to the Secretary, and please do not send any banknotes through the mail as this is against postal regulations.

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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. F. GRAEDEL, Orini, R.D., Taupiri:	Manufacturing Mountain Chalet Cream Cheese- 4d per cake -plus postage. Orders promptly dealt with.
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."

CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the Secretary - Mr. Herman Schlatter, 2nd Floor,
T. & G. Building, WELLINGTON. C.I.