

Sundry news from Switzerland

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program had been evolved and prepared to put into action as soon as need arises. For this purpose a part of the salary and wages equalisation fund for serving soldiers, which at the moment amounts to 260 million francs is to be used. Conditional to every efficient social policy is the preservation of a healthy and vital economy and for that purpose prices and wages must be kept in check in order that the possibility to compete with foreign countries is not totally lost. Unfortunately the enormous weight of the mobilization debt will press heavily on the whole economic system for two or three decades, so that there are less means at the disposal for social schemes. However, the Federal Council proposes the following measures: Creation of a motherhood insurance, extension of the compulsory health insurance with the assistance of the Confederation to economically weak sections of the population, extension of the compulsory accidents insurance to agricultural labour, increased federal subsidies for the insurance against tuberculosis, preservation of a healthy agricultural industry and of a vitally strong trade in the after war period, provision for a bill about labour in the retail trade and small concerns, safeguarding of legal holidays for certain categories of employees. Towards the general old age and survivors insurance and the introduction of a family wage, which is the object of several initiatives, the Federal Council will further consider the various proposals before expressing an opinion. The whole of the federal social program is therefore built up on already existing foundations and will be advanced step by step. It is not a paradise on earth, but an endeavour for an economically bearable and social utility measure.

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RATIONING AND PRICES OF FOODSTUFF IN SWITZERLAND.

The following is a list comparing the pre-war prices of some rationed provisions with prices charged to-day.

<u>Monthly ration</u> <u>March 1943.</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>s. fr. Prices charged</u>	
		<u>September 1939</u>	<u>March 1943</u>
500 Gr.	Sugar	-.27	-.63.
250 gr.	Jam	-.31	-.71
400 gr.	Macaroni, Spaghetti etc.	-.20	-.44
500 gr.	Legumes	-.22	1.05
250 gr.	Oats	-.11	-.31
100 gr.	Millet	-.05	-.38
400 gr.	Flour	-.16	-.24
2 dl.	Oil	-.30	-.58
100 gr.	Butter	-.50	-.82
400 gr.	Cooking fats	-.96	1.32
4	Eggs	-.52	1.38
50 gr.	Egg powder	-.50	-.50
400 gr.	Cheese	1.12	1.68
200 gr.	Coffee	-.44	-.90
200 gr.	Coffee-substitutes	-.25	-.58
50 gr.	Tea	-.40	-.75
1200 gr.	Meat	3.57	6.---
7 kg.	Bread	2.66	3.99
12,5 lt.	Milk	3.87	5.---
140 units	Soap	-.80	-.85
Total s.frs.		17.21	28.21
Increase s.frs. 11.--- or 64%.			

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The capitulation of Italy has made the deepest impression on public opinion in Switzerland. Though it cannot be said yet where the event will lead, the Swiss are aware that it may have important consequences. The Swiss authorities were not taken by surprise, and have taken the necessary measures at once. The

Federal Council will continue to keep a close watch on developments in Italy, and have the country ready for any eventuality. As heretofore, neutrality and vigilance are the watchword.

Soon after the armistice had been announced, a number of Italian soldiers belonging to the Italian army of occupation in Savoy came over the Swiss frontier and were interned. Then, on Thursday, September 9th, the French-Swiss frontier was closed and is now guarded on the French side by Germans.

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Swiss territory has again been violated by air. On Monday, September 6, at about 10 a.m., five American flying fortresses flew over the country and one crossed the frontier again near Rheinfelden after dropping a parachutist who was taken into custody by the authorities. The four other machines landed in Switzerland, three on the airport of Dubendorf, and the other at Magadino in the Canton Tessin. The crews have been interned.

Furthermore, a four-motored American bomber crashed in the lake of Constance, near Romanshorn; out of the crew of ten, nine were saved by Swiss fishermen and brought to safety on Swiss soil, where they were interned.

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It has been possible to organize a second exchange of Americans and Japanese internees. 1500 persons from each side will be exchanged in Murmagao, Portuguese Goa (India) on October 15th. The Portuguese authorities will look after the exchange, while the convoys will be accompanied by Swiss and Spanish delegates.

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The International Red Cross recently sent four Swiss specialists to Germany to fit maimed British and Polish prisoners of war with artificial limbs. Last year an orthopaedic mission examined about 430 maimed prisoners of war and made the necessary casts so that the artificial limbs, with which they will be fitted, could be made in Switzerland.

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Discussing the last session of the two Houses of the Swiss Parliament "Neue Züricher Zeitung" says:

Democracy continues to function in Switzerland, despite the fact that we are approaching the fourth year of war. Nobody can say that the democratic system of government has suffered in any way because of war conditions and a temporary use of full powers. In fact, during the last days of the session an atmosphere of great confidence and a spirit of increased solidarity reigned in Berne.

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Writing of Switzerland's international situation on the eve of the battle for a decision in the present world war, Georges Rigassi, Editor-in-Chief of "Gazette de Lausanne", says:

Just as soon as the invasion of Europe takes place the Swiss factor - terrain, army, transportation lines and economic resources - will be taken into consideration in the strategic planning of both groups of belligerents. One thing must be clear to us - the nearer this great war draws to an end the closer the military danger to our frontiers and, too, the harder it will be for the belligerents to understand and accept the abstention of the neutrals. When the hour for the supreme and decisive struggle strikes, military considerations alone will dictate the decisions of the great powers. We must therefore be ready, both militarily and morally. The recent speeches of our Federal Councillors and the General were a call to attention. God grant that this be understood by every Swiss.

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The Head of the Federal War Food Office, Dr. Veith, and the Head of the Section for Fats and Oils for Human Consumption reported a shortage of fat not only in Switzerland, but in all countries, even in the former export countries. In Switzerland, fat consumption has been restricted to 50-55 per cent of pre-war consumption. Switzerland must still rely on imports of about half this restricted amount. The powers which control the world fat market take good care that Switzerland is provided only with the amount of fats she urgently requires. Butter production is to be considerably increased this summer, to create a reserve for the coming winter. Another 6,000 hectares are to be planted with oil crops. Fats at a value of roughly Fr. 30,000,000 have already been purchased abroad, and only the blockade Powers' permission to import remains to be obtained.

On the 8th July the first transport of 1,200 Swiss children living abroad arrived at the Cornavin Station in Geneva from Paris and Dijon. The Swiss Relief Organisation and the Pro Juventute have found holiday accommodation for them. The children left on the 9th July for the places in all parts of Switzerland where they are to spend their holidays.

The Federal Department of Justice and Police has announced that the proceedings for the denaturalization of several traitors and enemies of the country who have fled abroad are about to be terminated. Named are in particular the one time Major, Ernst Leonard, and the Journalist, Franz Burri, but there are other renegades who also come into consideration, who by their nefarious behaviour have proved themselves unworthy of the citizenship of Switzerland. Those who are threatened with denaturalization have been given an opportunity to be legally heard within a certain time.

Apart from the municipalities and cantons the Confederation is collecting taxes in an ever-increasing measure to cover the colossal expenditure for the defence of the country and the war economy. The list of the federal taxes has become quite an impressive one. It includes the following: - Military tax, stamp duty, federal crisis contribution, equalisation tax, war profits tax, federal defence offering, emigration defence contribution, federal defence tax, goods purchase tax and luxury tax; to these must be added as indirect taxation the customs tariff and the impost on tobacco and alcohol.

The Appeal Court of the canton Zurich has slightly increased the sentences of the lower tribunal before which 67 persons were accused of communist propaganda and activities. 48 (among whom were eight women) were allotted three to 120 days imprisonment or an average of 17 days which is now increased to 24 days.

The military department of the canton of Berne together with the Aero Club Berne are intending to train this year 500 Bernese youths as glider pilots.

On the 26th August, 1944, it will be 500 years since the memorable battle of St. Jacob on the Birs, where 1,500 Confederates stood up against more than 30,000 Armagnaken commanded by the Dauphin of France, later Louis XI. They resisted that army to such an extent that he gave up the campaign against the Confederates and concluded an alliance with his former enemies. In memory of the heroic death of the 1,500, a commemorative book will be issued by the Historic Antiquarian Society of Basle and the canton of Basel Stadt.

The Federal solidarity work for compensating soldiers for the loss of wages and salaries has been now in force for three years and it is learned that the fund has paid out five hundred million francs in a round sum. The fund is made up

from a deduction of 2% from wages or salaries from all employed people, from a fixed contribution from trades and agricultural undertakings and from 2% on wages and salaries paid by the employers. In the four years of the last world war the sum paid amounted to about sixty million francs. The present day arrangement, which gives every soldier a legal claim on the fund is cementing army and people firmly together.

In consideration of the greatly increased physical demands which are made on soldiers of today, the conditions at the gymnastic examinations have been made considerably more severe. Young men who have been found medically fit, but cannot fulfill the physical requirements are called to a training camp for six days prior to the entry into the service, where the exercises of the voluntary training are gone through with them. Those who cannot stand up to them will have to pass later on a second preliminary course.

The enormous increase in the cost of transport of grain from overseas has not affected the present-day bread price of 58 cts per kg. The latter is based on a wheat price of frs. 44.- per 100 kg., whereas the replacement cost today amounts to frs. 55-60. The difference born by the Confederation equals a subsidy of from 10-15 cts. per kg. which in spite of the rationing amounts annually to 40 million francs.

As from August 1st a new ration card is introduced giving the holder the choice of the ordinary meat ration or a vegetable one the latter being less expensive but possessing the same nutritive value.

To secure a continued supply of Swiss seamen the "Schweiz. Reederei A.G." in Basle has some time ago put a training ship "the Levantine" into service, in which already 120 sailors and apprentices have been introduced into the secrets of the mariner. They are all now in service with the units of the Swiss Rhine and high sea fleet.

An official inquiry into the position of industry, at the end of the first quarter of 1943, gave the following results. Of 2,850 concerns with roughly 250,000 employees, about a quarter reported full employment, roughly half mentioned satisfactory business and 22.6% stated that the business situation was bad. About one third of the undertakings consider the outlook for the near future as being good, one sixth as bad and about half of them consider it uncertain. Fully employed are the paper and leather industries, the silk and rayon, metal and machine, as well as the watch industry; unsatisfactory are the conditions in the building trade, the cotton, linen and woollen industries.

According to investigations by the Swiss Hotel Proprietors Society the four war years so far have resulted in a loss of revenue of 450 million francs. The hotel industry is one of the heaviest hit in our country.

One of the most important organisations for the purchase of provisions and general necessities is the Association of Swiss Co-operative Societies. Founded in 1890 by a few enterprising idealists who sought to achieve a lowering in the cost of living for the less well-to-do's by buying wholesale and selling at a small profit it counts today about 450,000 members. From a turnover of frs. 45,000 in the first year it controlled a figure of 263 million frs. in 1942.

To prevent the possibility that the share capital of Swiss firms may be bought up unnoticeably by foreigners and thus be gradually denationalised, several large industrial firms have converted their bearer shares into registered shares, the subsequent transfer of which to another owner will have to be officially approved by the administrative council. Such a measure was recently introduced by the well-known engineering firm of Gebrüder Sulzer A.G. in Winterthur. Down to a very small number all the 40,000 bearer shares were reported for registration. The great majority of the capital of 40 million francs is now as before in Swiss hands and at a new issue of shares the administration will adhere to the principle that new shares will only be issued to Swiss. By this a foreign influence will be prevented at the source.

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