

Sundry news from Switzerland

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more devoted himself to his historical studies and was subsequently appointed Professor of Modern History at the Zurich University. Since 1933, he has occupied a chair at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva. In 1933 he was appointed a member of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In 1937, Professor Burckhardt was appointed by the League of Nations to the office of High Commissioner in Danzig. During this particularly difficult period, he devoted all his energies to the maintenance of peace. His role at that time was recognized and appreciated by all the states. Thus, Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, stressed in a letter to the Swiss Federal Council the outstanding part played by Professor Burckhardt.

After Professor Burckhardt had presented to the League of Nations in November, 1939, his report on his mission in Danzig, he devoted himself to the International Committee of the Red Cross, especially to the promotion of relief schemes for prisoners, internees and civilians, and negotiations in progress with the various powers.

Professor Burckhardt furthermore is chairman of the joint relief commission which amongst the International Red Cross organizations was founded to handle relief for civilian population.

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

In the National Council, the retiring President, Dr. Paul Gysler from Zurich informed the chambers of the letter of resignation handed in by Federal Councillor Pilot-Golaz. He said that it will be left to the new President of the National Council to thank the retiring Magistrate for his services. Mr. Gysler also stated that Russia's refusal to maintain relations with our country must not be underestimated, but it has in no way left a shock or even a weakening of our domestic problems. According to the opinion of the Federal Council, our government has given the only right answer to the refusal of Russia, namely, that the Swiss government today, as before, has always fought for the maintenance of liberty and that our country is ready to entertain friendly relations with all nations, including Russia.

On December 7th, the chambers were in joint session, as the Federal Assembly. The meeting was behind closed doors. On the agenda were the three requests for pardon submitted by men sentenced to death by military courts. The reasons for these sentences were particularly conclusive. The defendants were found guilty of treason and espionage in favor of German interests. After hearing a report on each case, and after a thorough discussion which lasted five hours, the requests for pardon were refused by an overwhelming majority.

The Parliament decided that its financial dues to the League of Nations amounting since 1940 to about 1.4 million francs would be met and sent over to the League. The Swiss contribution for the year 1945 has been fixed at 600,000 francs. Since 1941, when the League of Nations closed most of its services, the Swiss government stopped the payment of any financial contribution to the League, but she has continued her practical services, these exceeding the value of her financial quota.

On his return to London from a short visit to Switzerland, Major General Sir Richard Howard Pike head of the section for English prisoners of war camps made the following statement: "I went to Switzerland to thank the Swiss people for all they have done for us. We shall never be able to repay our debt to Switzerland for without her help it would never have been possible for us to secure about what has happened in English prisoner-of-war-camps in Germany. The ability of the Swiss officials is absolutely admirable. The Swiss know how to select authorized delegates who are able to achieve good understanding between the commanders of the camps and the prisoners of war. We are deeply grateful to Switzerland for this achievement.

The bad weather caused great damage in various regions of Switzerland. Floods are reported from the Canton of Vaud, especially in the region of the Broye. In the Canton of Berne, the highways in the region of Gimmenen and from Langenthal to Aarwangen have been cut.

The Swiss farmers of the Italian border Village of Erbone who last Spring had been evacuated to Switzerland due to the establishment of a Nazi zone along the Italian frontier, have now been allowed through the mediation of the Swiss Consul General in Milan, Mr. Brenni, to return to their homes. A total of some 200 persons with all their cattle have gone back to their former domicile.

In Switzerland, December 14th, has been a great day for home politics. The two chambers in joint session, i.e., the Federal Assembly, officially took leave of Mr. Pilet-Golaz who tendered his resignation on November 7th, as head of the Political Department.

Then, Mr. Pilet-Golaz' successor was elected, as well as the President of the Confederation, the Vice President of the Federal Council, and the President and Vice President of the Federal Tribunal.

The President of the National Council who presides over meetings of the Federal Assembly paid homage to Mr. Pilet-Golaz, and called for the election of his successor. Four candidates were in the race, but Mr. Max Petitpierre was elected on the first ballot, a thing which is relatively rare inasmuch as an absolute majority is required for the election.

Mr. Petitpierre's opponents, a Socialist and a Liberal, (Conservative), only received the votes of their parties, while an outsider, Mr. William Rappard, who was nominated against his will by the Independents, only received a few votes as a personal homage.

The new Federal Councillor, Max Eduard Petitpierre, is still a young man and a newcomer in Federal political circles. For the past two years he has been representing Neuchatel in the States Council (Sonnat). His election to the Federal Council testifies to the esteem of his colleagues in the Federal chambers for his sincerity, his uprightness and his incontestable personal authority, which he enjoys in his home canton.

Then, the Federal Assembly swore in the new Federal Councillor, after which it elected Mr. Eduard de Steiger, head of the Department of Justice and Police, to the Presidency of the Confederation and Mr. Karl Kobelt, head of the Military Department, to the Vice Presidency.

As for the Federal Tribunal, its President will be in 1945 Mr. Flinio Bolla, who has been a justice on our Supreme Court since 1925. Mr. Georg Leuch, who has served also since 1925, will be Vice President.

The Federal Council, acting upon the General's advice, decided to release the following officers from their command: Army Corpscommander Colonel Marcuard and the Division Commanders Colonels Fluckiger and Gugger. On the other hand, the following promotions were made: Division Commander Colonel Dollfus, Adjutant General of the Army and Division Commander Colonel Frick to be army Corpscommander. Three Colonels have been promoted to be Division Commanders: Colonel Brigadier Gonard, Colonel Jann and Colonel Richard Frey now on the General Staff.

An agreement has just been reached between the Swiss and the Belgian governments for the shipment of food products to Belgium. Switzerland will furnish Belgium with condensed milk and pharmaceutical products, amounting to 16 million Belgian francs.

On Tuesday, December 12th, a freight train of 35 cars passed the Swiss border carrying condensed milk to the Low Countries. Organized by the "Swiss Gift" for the benefit of the countries at war, delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross at Geneva travelled on the train. Other shipments are on their way also to France.

A new airplane has been put into service by the "Swissair". It is called the "Penny-car" and has been built especially for mountain flying. It can take off and land on a very small stretch. It carries five passengers and mail, and can do 235 kilometers an hour with a minimum speed of approximately 70 kilometers.

The floods continue to cause great damage in Switzerland. The Lake of Murten is overflowing its banks, driving the inhabitants of its shores from their homes. The Lake of Neuchatel has reached its highest level in 50 years, and the wind is blowing at gale force. High waves interrupted all rail traffic along the shores of the lake. The damage caused is already great, and the rain continues to fall.

The level of the Lake of Neuchatel is still rising and the situation of the inhabitants along the Lake's shores is becoming worse from day to day. At Yverdon, many gardens have been flooded under more than a 1-1/2 feet of water. At Murten, on the contrary, the Lake is going down since December 13th.

The Swiss film "Marie-Louise", which tells the story of a little French girl who was given shelter in a Swiss family, has been shown with success not only in Portugal, but also in Sweden.

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AUCKLAND SOCIAL COMMITTEE.

The following is a report of the activities of the Auckland Social Committee for the year 1943-44.

The aim of the Committee was to organize interesting entertainments for the Swiss in this community. Due to the splendid co-operation of all members a very successful social evening was held on the 29th of July 1944, to commemorate Switzerland's Independence Day.

At the November meeting 1943 a motion was passed that £5.0.0 would be kept aside for emergency use only and the surplus could be used for entertainment purposes such as Free Picnics etc. At the January meeting 1944 a suggestion was made that the Social Club have its own bank account. This idea was adopted and in May of this year the account was opened under the heading of "Swiss Social Club Auckland".

Five meetings were held this year and we wish to extend our thanks to the people who supported us in our social activities. At the Annual Meeting held on 11th November 1944 all members of the Committee 1943-44 agreed to hold office for another term.

AUCKLAND SOCIAL COMMITTEE 1943-45.

Mr. B. Buecheler
Mrs. S. Bonny
Mrs. L. Brauchli
Mr. E. Merz
Mrs. F. Moosberger
Mrs. R. Peyer
Mrs. R. Steyer
Mrs. W. Suter

Mr. G. Bonny
Mr. E. Brauchli
Miss B. Haltmeyer
Mr. A. Moosberger
Mr. A. Peyer
Mr. F. Steyer
Mr. W. Suter
Mr. W. Ungemuth (Hon. Member)

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HOSPITAL STEWARDS 1944-5. The following members were elected to act as Hospital Stewards: Mrs. Moosberger, Mrs. Suter, Mr. Moosberger, Mr. Peyer, Mr. Steyer. To facilitate matters relatives or friends of patients may notify Mr. Moosberger, 129 Crummer Road, Auckland, direct.

AUCKLAND SCUTTLE BUTT!!! Once again Auckland announces the date for their Annual Picnic. This yearly event will be held at Pt. Chevalier Reserve on February 4, 1945. A very interesting and entertaining program has been arranged, and we are all looking forward to meeting old friends.. and lots of new ones. Please flatter those who have worked so hard to arrange this picnic and come to make a record attendance. The only charge made will be Good Humour and Carefree Laughter. Milk and hot water will be provided - and may the Auckland Social Committee take this opportunity to wish all members and friends the Compliments of the Season.

B. HALTMEYER, HON. SECRETARY.