

Sundry news

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the missing man.

That was the leading idea in the light of which the Agency organized itself and began to function, the principle which was to cause it to expand enormously and go beyond the sphere allotted to it by the Convention - the care of the prisoners of war alone - and extend its activity to civilians.

The history of the Agency cannot be written here; it would need a whole volume to itself. All we can do is to try to give a general idea of its work. Even this will only be intelligible if the reader makes a twofold effort. First, an effort of memory, to recall the main stages of the conflict; the going to war of nearly all the countries of the world, one after another, lightning invasions, great battles and armistices which "created" prisoners of war in millions; the flight of refugees, deportations, mass transfers of populations, and then the final capitulations which left more millions of combatants in the power of their enemy, and of civilians seeking each other. Secondly, an effort of the imagination, to realise the effect of these events on the Agency's work. Then perhaps he will understand the meaning of these few figures; on September 1st, 1939, the staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross consisted of 50 workers, at the end of April, 1945, of 3,921, of whom 2,585 were at the Agency alone; by the end of October 1946, the Agency had made out and filed 39 million index-cards, forwarded 13 million letters and post-cards for prisoners of war, censored, transmitted - and often transcribed - 24 million civilian messages.

Those are but a few figures.

Straight away, in September 1939, four "national" departments were established, the German, British, French and Polish Departments, each attending to one of the four States and group of States at war. These national departments were the essential element of the Agency. It was they who kept the card-index, where was recorded and whence was subsequently sent out all information relating to individual men. There were also the general departments, technical for the most part, and the special departments set up according to the steps taken by the International Committee. All these together constituted the Central Agency, and at the beginning they occupied - and even then they shared it with other departments of the permanent Secretariat - one small part only of the immense building put at the Committee's disposal.

During the months of the "phoney war," the Agency had leisure to perfect its organization and its method of work, to open up sections, to adapt itself to the volume of questions to be dealt with and to their fairly regular frequency. But in the Spring of 1940, everything changed. From France alone, seven hundred thousand letters arrived in a few weeks, as many as 60,000 in a single day. Fresh national sections had to be established, existing sections enlarged or split, new workers hastily recruited and trained, and the work divided. The "Palais électoral", so recently much too large, was occupied to the last of its 50,592 square feet. Soon, indeed, it became too small for the Agency alone, which overflowed, while the Secretariat and the other sections which had shared the same building, themselves enlarged, split and transformed into departments of no mean size, occupied bank premises, hotels and flats. And so it was until the end of hostilities. The "workshop" of September 1939 had become a huge factory, with its benches, crowd of workers, machines - yes, its business machines - and twenty-seven branches or secondary workshops scattered throughout Switzerland.

SUNDRY NEWS.

TRAVEL.

In 1947 over 1,400,000 tourists visited Switzerland; of these 700,000 were from Great Britain. In the coming Season only some 150,000 to 200,000 British tourists will have the opportunity of visiting Switzerland.

Wenn ii ä Flüüge wär (Fortsetzig)

Wenn ii doch ä Flüüge wär,
 bruucht ii kei Loh ond kei Salär,
 do chönnt mer lostig lebe ohni Geld,
 bruucht kei Huus ond au kei Zelt,
 müesst nöd so schinde för's täglech Brot,
 ond spüehrti nüt vo de Wohnigsnot,
 ond denn so im schlimmste Fall,
 chönnt mer no lebe im ä Stall,
 regnets fest ond goht de Wind,
 ist allewill ä g'schötzt's Plätzli, wo mer findt,
 do chönnt mer all Tag Uus-flög mache,
 ond die domme Lüüt uuslache,
 wo so schaffet ond so schindet,
 bis sie ehres Fuetter findet.
 Das ome Flüüge miech mer Spass,
 me chönnt über Grenze ohni Pass,
 chönnt verchehre i alle Kreise,
 ond chönnt au gratis omereise,
 nöd blos i de Iisebahn,
 no sogar im Aeroplan,
 reise chönnt mer so viel mer wött,
 ond nähm die ganz Familie mett,
 ii ond die ganze Bruet,
 hettet's denn doch sicherguet,
 do chönnt mer denn no viel meh g'sieh,
 ond chönnt i alli Hüüser ie,
 wenn kei Fenster offe stoht,
 wartet mer bis ä Töör uufgoht,
 wenn eim d'Lüüt blos mache lönd,
 ond eim nöd allewill z'tod schloh wönd,
 die chönnd halt viel Ocheil stifte,
 chönnd eim die ganze Bruet vergifte,
 es hät halt allewill no Lüüt,
 si gonnet an ere Flüüge sauber nüt,
 Wenn ii doch ä Flüüge wär,
 müesst ii nöd is Militär,
 müesst nöd dere herte Zwiiback biisse,
 ond dörf de Offiziere of d'Nase sch.....

A. Moosberger.

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The activity of the Children's Aid of the Red Cross is continuously assisting to eliminate the effects of war, and at the present time, 35,000 children from various European countries are in Switzerland.

On April 16th, Mr. Burchardt, Swiss Minister to Paris, signed the sixteen (16) Nation Agreement for the Marshall Plan.

In his address to the Congress of the Swiss Socialist Party, the Party President, National Councillor Bringolf, said:-

"There are two enemies to Democracy .. they are Communism and Capitalism."

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, after her stay in England, privately visited Zurich.

32nd SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR IN BASEL.

The Swiss Industries Fair in Basel, which is being held from the 10th to 20th of April, is proving an outstanding success. On Saturday over 100,000 visitors attended, this being a record figure for one day. On the Official Day, Federal Councillor Rubattel, head of the Federal Economic Department, in his address to an audience which included the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Berne, representatives of exhibitors and various economic bodies, also officials of the Fair, said:

"Four Swiss characteristics are manifested in this exhibition, namely:—

Pleasure with which responsibility is accepted;

Courage for initiative;

Renunciation of exclusive profiteering;

A high standard of quality."

A visit to the Fair was paid by Dr. Beel, Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

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In the presence of Federal Councillors Von Steiger and Petitpierre, a commission of the New Helvetic Society was studying questions relating to Swiss abroad. The question of refund for damages caused by warfare to Swiss citizens living in affected countries was the main subject. It was acknowledged that the Confederation can take no responsibility for these losses, neither juridically nor morally; however, the Swiss Government does everything to induce foreign Governments to treat Swiss citizens on the same basis as their own citizens. Satisfactory agreements have been made with Great Britain. A similar agreement was earlier arrived at with Germany. In addition, the Swiss Government and the new Helvetic Society do everything to assist the 100,000 affected people to rehabilitate themselves.

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SWISS-ITALIAN HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME.

The Italian Government has accepted the Swiss proposals regarding the projected hydro-electric station in the valley of Isel-Immerferrara, on the border of Italy and the Swiss Canton of Grisons. A Swiss-Italian commission is already studying the plans for this project.

PESTALOZZI VILLAGE.

Recently sixteen (16) war orphans from Rome and Florence, arrived in the children's Pestalozzi village in Trogen. Polish, French, Austrian, Hungarian and German orphans who have already been living for quite some time in the Pestalozzi village, gave the newcomers a hearty welcome.

GENEVA ELECTIONS.

Recently the elections of the judiciary took place in Geneva, and the candidates of the three parties forming the National Bloc, together with the Socialists, obtained 15,900 votes, whereas the three candidates of the so-called Party of Work, which is just another name for the Communist Party, obtained only 5,970 votes, the absolute majority required being 7,413.

MUSICAL FESTIVAL IN LUCERNE.

During the weeks of the Musical Festival in Lucerne, the American occupation authorities are planning to have a regular train service between their zone and Lucerne, so as to enable the American personnel to participate. For these excursions the luxury train that was formerly used by Herman Goering will be used.

THE BEST WATCHES.

The Grand Council of the Canton of Neuchatel has published the results of a competition held by the astronomical and chronometrical observatory of Neuchatel for Chronometers. Ten collective and 128 individual prizes were awarded. The award winners are firms renowned all over the world, such as Ulysse Nardin S.A., Le Locle, who got the first collective prize for the four best Marine Chronometers and for the six best board and pocket Chronometers, as well as twenty-five individual awards. The Longines factory obtained the first collective prize for the four best bracelet Chronometers, also eight

individual prizes. Among the individual award winners figure the factories of Paul Buhro, Le Locle, Omega Watch, Bienne, Fabrique des montres Zenith, Le Locle, Charles Aerni, Le Locle, etc.

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION.

Under an agreement with the Allied powers, the Greek Government has decided to request Switzerland to represent Greek interests in Bulgaria.

WATERWAY - SWITZERLAND - ADRIATIC.

The Italian Government have decided to grant a credit of 18,000,000,000 Lire for the construction of a canal Milan-Gremona-Po. This canal will connect with the waterways Locarno-Milan and thus be a link in the canal between Switzerland and the Adriatic Sea.

THE 600th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE.

The Swiss universities were invited at the beginning of this year to participate in the 600th Anniversary celebration of the Charles University in Prague, which they have accepted enthusiastically, because that University is Europe's oldest, and played a great part in the spiritual development of Europe. However, due to more recent developments in Czechoslovakia, the Universities of Basel, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchatel and Zurich have unanimously decided not to accept the invitation, because it is with deep regret that they realise that, under the present conditions, the freedom for research, teaching and learning is no longer guaranteed.

SWISS PLANE LANDED IN ACCRA.

A plane of the Swissair landed in Accra on the Gold Coast on a return flight from India. There has been some trouble in Accra, and many houses occupied by Europeans were destroyed. Many Europeans had to take refuge in British Military Camps, and on the aerodrome of Accra. Among these fugitives there were sixty (60) Swiss, of whom fourteen (14) returned to their homeland on the plane of the Swissair.

NATIONAL COUNCIL.

At the opening of the National Council, its President, Mr. Picot, delivered the opening address. He referred to the centenary of the Swiss Federal Constitution, and made reference to the recent international events. He said: "We will defend with courage and tenacity the political structure of our country. We do not want a regime that maintains power by insufferable force and that suppresses the elementary democratic liberties. It has been proved that the people can lose all their liberties within a few days if the nation does not possess the necessary means of defence, and if the people are not watchful without relent. We do not want to give all parties that are respecting the rules of the game, every freedom that we wish for ourselves, but we shall not be the dupes of anyone. We shall not even allow the beginning of these criminal machinations that lead a people to their enslavement and into darkness. From 1933 until 1945 we resisted and stood up against the Hitlerian threat, and we shall do so against all machinations no matter from whence they may be directed."

RE-UNION OF BASEL-VILLE AND BASEL-COUNTRY.

The National Council discussed the question of the re-union of the two half Cantons of Basel-Ville and Basel-Country. They had to decide whether the Confederation could permit the two half Cantons to change their constitution with a view to effecting a re-union which would have necessitated a change in the Federal Constitution. Just as the Council of the States had done before, the National Council decided by 88 against 76 votes, negatively. It is felt that this decision was not only the result of the interpretation of the law; the farmers were against it because they saw in their re-union an absorption of a country State by a city State; the Conservatives were against it because they did not want the number of the sovereign Cantons to be reduced, and the Bernese were against it because they did not want to set a precedent for a part of their Canton to be severed and formed into an independent Canton of Jura. Many others, however, were guided by their reverence for the structure of our Confederation, which has stood the test through the ages and that, therefore, should not be altered.

NEW LAKE.

What shall be the name of the new lake in the Canton of Fribourg? Some time ago, the Council of Fribourg decided to give the new lake the name of Bassee Gruyere. This name became the object of wide controversy. The Cantonal Union of the Societies of Development has proposed the names of Lac d'Ogoz, which is the name of the region in which it is situated, or Lac de Thusy, which is the name of an old bridge that will be submerged, and the origin of which can be traced back to the 15th century.

ELECTIONS IN ST. GAILLEN.

Recently the election of the Grand Council of St. Gallen took place. The rightist parties that is, the Catholic People's Party, the Christian Socialists, the Radical Democrats and the Union of the Independents, have all consolidated and improved their position. The Party of the Young Farmers have lost four (4) seats and the Communist Party, called the Party of Work, lost three seats and is represented with only one seat in the Grand Council.

MOTOR ACCIDENT.

In Hergiswil (Unterwald) near the well-known Lopper curve, a motor car from Zurich skidded; the car was turned around with the radiator pointed toward the lake, was thrown against a tree and fell straight into the lake. Of the five occupants only one managed to escape alive.

SUGAR FACTORY.

The people of Switzerland, in a plebiscite, decided with 481,000 against 271,000 ayes, against the construction of a second sugar factory in Switzerland; this was projected in order to bring the home production to 25% of Switzerland's consumption of sugar. However, there would have been a considerable increase in the price, and since all efforts are to be made to reduce the cost of living, the project was doomed to failure from its inception.

DONATIONS.

Our oldest Member, Mr. K. Altherr, Cornwall Hospital, Auckland, surprised us by making a donation to our Fund of Twentyfive Pounds (£25).

On behalf of the Committee, I thank him here again for his generosity - such devotion is worthy of imitation.

A. Moosberger,
Acting Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS.

We have the pleasure to announce the enrolment of 4 new members:-

Miss F. Schmid,
Consulate of Switzerland,
WELLINGTON. C.I.

Mr. E. Bonny,
443 Parnell Road,
AUCKLAND.

Mr. C. A. Schicker,
P.O. Box 258,
HAWERA. TARANAKI.

Mrs. E. Grantham,
15 Hardy Street,
NEW BRIGHTON. CHRISTCHURCH.

REGISTRATION.

New arrivals from Switzerland are requested to communicate with the Consulate of Switzerland, G.P.O. Box 386, Wellington. It is customary for