

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

On Sunday, 25th January, the Swiss people rejected the proposal to increase the number of members of the Federal Council and the proposed election of these members by the people. 250,207 voted for this change in our constitution and 519,268 against. Not one canton recorded a majority for.

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The Federal Council recently published the following proclamation to encourage Home Production:

Our country is going through one of the most difficult phases of its long and great history. Peace has been maintained for us. The ever growing limitation of imports, however, makes it increasingly paramount to devote ourselves to the struggle for the daily bread on our own soil. We must, in order to be able to entrust the supply of our daily needs to our native soil and the strength of our hands and hearts, make spiritual and material preparations. To this end the cultivation of cereals and vegetables must be further extended and for this we need more arable land.

The farmers deserve the gratitude and admiration of the whole nation for their efforts. The future task, however, far exceeds the capacity of our farmsteads. The task can only be accomplished successfully with the co-operation of every Swiss citizen and by the use of every inch of Swiss soil. The just distribution and rational use of foodstuffs demand the highest sense of civil responsibility. In laying aside our individual wishes and worries, in constructive co-operation with all fellow citizens we shall reaffirm the true Swiss spirit. Swiss people! During many decades of peaceful prosperity we have become accustomed to a high standard of living, which was the happy result of a healthy social and economic development. The prerequisite of this high standard, however, was undisrupted trade relations with the whole world. As the exchange of goods is rendered more and more difficult as the war progresses, restrictions in our mode of living have become inevitable. We shall have to expect even more severe limitations. These will be easier to bear as a result of official control of consumption helped by the greatest possible home production. But to this end, discipline and the utmost concurrence from

all classes of the nation are imperative. Swiss people! You will be asked to work hard and to make many sacrifices, but the certainty that the great problem can be solved, if we all co-operate loyally, allows us to take a confident view of the future. We expect of every Swiss citizen that he will prove himself fully capable of meeting the tasks of the hour. Wherever citizens are called upon to achieve the seemingly impossible, be it in the Armed Forces, at the plough or at the bench, they will respond with open hearts and willing hands.

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The Swiss penal code, which forms a unification of the 25 different cantonal penal laws, entered into force on January 1st, 1942. Most of the cantons had already accepted the respective tentative legislation submitted to them by the Federal Judicial Department. The new law is like its forerunner, the uniform civil law, a happy amalgamation of old legal principles with modern procedure. A term of twenty years is allowed to the cantons for the adaption of their existing as well as for the erection of new prisons and penitentiaries.

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A commercial agreement with Finland has been concluded which provides for the export of chemicals, machinery, watches and textiles; we are to receive timber and wood products (paper). It is not disclosed how the exchange of these commodities is to be effected.

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A Swiss delegation will shortly arrive at Ankara to negotiate a Turkish-Swiss Trade Pact.

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The Federal Statistical Department has established the fact that never before has the number of 18,500 marriages reached so high a level. The number of births in the same year also increased by 2,680 compared with the previous year and reached the rare

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Samedi, le 7 Février à 12.45 p.m. au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, (near Green Park Tube Station).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.

Démissions.

Admissions.

Divers.

Déjeuner à 1.0 h. précises. Les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Mons. H. Bingueley, 167, Clapham Road, S.W.9. (Téléphone: Reliance 4150).

Le Comité.

height of 36,220. Deaths during the same period by a decrease of 3,650 sank to the extremely low point of 25,350. Therefore the surplus of births over deaths rose by 6,320 to 10,870, thereby showing the same figure as 10 years ago. It is remarkable that this high spot in the "marriage market" coincides with the arrangement of wages indemnity for soldiers, in other words with the improved financial provision for the family of the mobilised man. The reduction in the mortality is partly accounted for that last spring the population was spared an influenza epidemic which generally happens at that period, and further the restriction of traffic caused a reduction in fatal accidents of 120 or 11% to 900.

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The exemption from military service tax has yielded in 1940 in round figures 8.1 million francs.

It is interesting to compare some of the previous years' figures. At the turn of the century the receipt from this tax was 1.7 million francs. In 1910 it rose to 2.1 millions, in 1920 the amount was just double with 4.3 millions. 1930 showed a further increase to 5.1 millions, to eventually reach in the first year of the war the sky-high figure mentioned at first.

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The dissection of the census material which started about the middle of January will occupy about 250-300 people for quite a considerable time. For this work there were roughly about 3,300 applicants — a sign of the times — from which number were selected mostly commercial and technical employees as well as unemployed teachers. The exact results of the census will be of the utmost importance for the social and economic policy of the future in Switzerland.

Some of the first separate results of the Census which took place on December 1st are now to hand, but no final survey has yet been received, as there are 3,000 boroughs and communal results to be checked and counter-checked. But so far as at present can be estimated the total population amounts to 4.2 million heads. From the figures of the great towns it can be ascertained that these have to record a much greater increase in population since 1930 than have the rural districts.

The greatest community is as before Zurich which has still further increased its lead by the incorporation of several suburbs. On the appointed day, the town counted 333,829 inhabitants or roughly 43,000 more than eleven years ago. The second place is taken by Basle with a population of 161,380 as against 148,063 in 1930. Third rank is given to Berne which increased in eleven years from 111,783 to 129,331 souls.

Many alterations in the order and size of numerous small towns have been discovered by the Census. So for instance Herisau which had a population of 13,500 has now dropped to 12,700, whereas Olten which had the same number of inhabitants as Herisau has advanced to 15,300. Equally Rorschach which in 1930 had an equal number with Köniz of round 11,000 is now reduced to 10,500 whereas Köniz reaches 14,300.

Other interesting results are recorded from the Canton of Geneva whose 174,624 inhabitants show an increase since 1930 of 3,258. This small addition reflects clearly the economic weakening of the frontier cantons. St. Gall, which is in a similar position

records since the last census a retrogression from 286,362 to 285,630. The canton is therefore poorer by nearly 10,000 souls than in December 1920.

Baselland shows an increase in the past 11 years of only 2,012 and has now 94,553 inhabitants. The canton of Thurgau with 137,708 has to-day 1,645 more inhabitants than 11 years ago, but its most populated industrial district of Arbon records a loss of 407 persons.

The resident population in the canton Obwalden has been returned as 20,110 to December 1941, which is an increase of only 709 in eleven years; the largest place is Sarnen with 5,546 inhabitants.

The population of Zurich has increased by 3,021 in twelve months and amounts to 340,195 to end of November last.

In the morning of January 5th the Federal Statistical Department received the last reports from the 3,000 communes which had charge of the census. A provisional computation shows that Switzerland has a population of 4½ million inhabitants; an increase of 200,000 since 1st December, 1930.

The proportional increase, however, has declined. During the years 1910-1920 the addition was 13%, 1920-1930 4.8%, to fall to 4% only in 1930-1941.

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The dissatisfaction with certain political aspects in different parts of the country is shown by the appearance of a new parliamentary party called the "Democratic Faction." No political programme has so far been published but most of the adherents have fallen away from the old radical-democratic group among them being States Councillors Hefti (Glaris), Lardelli (Grisons), and National Councillors Gadiant (Grisons), Lanicca (Grisons), Maag (Zurich), Planta (Grisons), Rusca (Ticino) and Schmid-Ruedin (Zurich).

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Wherever courts or government offices are closed on Saturdays in order to economise fuel the day will become a legal holiday all juridical transactions being held over till the following Monday.

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An increase in some of the rations has been decreed as from the 1st of this month. Farm hands and workers in heavy industries will receive a supplementary cheese ration; for all the fat and butter ration has been increased to 17 ounces per week and the eggs to two per person, young and old.

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The index figure of wholesale prices in Switzerland as calculated by the Federal Office for Statistics is stated to be 184.1 to the end of November last compared with 100 in August 1939. Foodstuffs are chiefly responsible for the abnormal rise.

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At the end of last year the Federal Council decided to take over control of the Press and Radio Department, hitherto under army control, thus supervising the necessary measures to ensure the safety of the State in the sphere of news transmission, which so far was one of the duties of the Army Command.

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With the New Year new decrees were enacted regarding the supervision of publications on political, military or economic subjects. They stipulate that

the publication of pamphlets and articles dealing with military, political or economic subjects concerning Switzerland or foreign countries, should be undertaken by the Press and Radio Department. This decree does not affect newspapers or periodicals. A second decree regulates the publication of new periodicals and papers and also any changes in their publication. The prohibition of new publications or changes in papers or periodicals of a political character — issued at the beginning of the war — is maintained, but certain exceptions are provided for. For new publications of a non-political character special permission must be obtained.

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During the second half of December trade talks have been taking place between Slovak and Swiss delegations. It was officially announced, that deliveries of Slovak goods for the first half of the year 1942 are assured to an extent which will allow of the continuation of the existing Swiss export volume.

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By order of the Ministry of War and Supplies, the sale of cement is to be controlled throughout the country as from 8th January, retail sales of less than one ton excepted. Applications for supplies must be made on the special forms supplied for this purpose and when contemplating new works it is recommended to hand in applications for the necessary quantity before starting.

This measure is necessitated by the lack of coal for cement factories, which are thereby forced to restrict their output very considerably. Available cement supplies are not sufficient to meet the total requirements of the country. Military needs have to be met first and foremost and for other purposes supplies will be distributed as fairly as possible. Naturally a reduction of public and private building is unavoidable.

* * *

The extension of the war has given to neutral Switzerland new tasks in the service to other States. Up to a short while ago she represented already diplomatically a number of belligerent countries. Now the representation of the British Empire in Germany and Italy, as well as the interests of the U.S.A. have been entrusted to her care. Further the task of looking after German affairs in U.S.A. and of Japanese in Great Britain as well as in the Philippines has fallen to her lot. There are at present further conversations on foot of charging Switzerland with taking care of still further foreign interests.

Our country takes over the difficult task of a guardian being fully conscious of the great tragedy which weighs to-day so heavily upon humanity, but also with a feeling of deep gratitude that her neutrality is obviously recognised and valued abroad. The world of to-day requires "an honest broker" who is able to save for the future at least a minimum of international relationship and international law. Switzerland will endeavour to justify to the best of her knowledge and ability the trust reposed in her.

Soon after the outbreak of the war the Federal Council decided to enlarge the division founded at the Political Department for the purpose of looking after foreign interests and has detailed to the more important Legations assistants fully conversant with the new requirements. These interests are particularly the legal protection of persons, legal representations in matters of civil, penal or patent laws, private and

States properties and further the very important task of compiling and transmitting lists of internees and prisoners of war as well as to report on these captives to their respective countries.

This very extensive work is undertaken by Switzerland in the spirit that in this way she may at least repay a small fraction of the debt which this little island of peace feels she owes to divine providence.

The Special Division of the Swiss Legation in London has recently increased its staff.

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A recent decision of the Federal Council decrees that a Swiss woman married to a foreigner regains her Swiss nationality if the subsequent civil status of her husband would render her stateless.

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As it is possible that sooner or later the want of raw materials will cause a new wave of unemployment in Switzerland and that on the other hand the supply of provisions and fodder requires that every available space be usefully employed, the Federal Council and the cantonal Governments have drawn up an extensive melioration programme. This will at the same time achieve that in principle there should be some consideration given for the unemployment assistance in the form of some work.

This melioration programme includes 2,364 projects with a total area of 109,300 hectares (1 hectare = 2,471 acres). Roughly 1,700 projects deal with the draining of 41,800 hectares, 200 projects with amalgamation and new partitioning of 62,300 ha, 400 projects are for clearing of forests of an area of 2,400 ha, whilst the rest of 2,800 ha represent improvements of miscellaneous work. For the execution of the total programme 33.6 million working days are required and therefore 10,000 workers will have employment for 13½ years or 20,000 for about 7 years. A part of the first project is ready to be started. On Sunday, December 21st, the people of St. Gall have accepted the melioration of the plain of the Rhine with a majority of 10 to 1 (46,720 yes against 4,672 no). This 25 million francs project will be started at once, as the preparations are well advanced and about 250 of the total of 6,250 ha will be put under the plough. On this first part pota-

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toes for about 15,000 persons, or grain to feed about 2,500 people will be planted in the spring.

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Almost simultaneously with the publication of more restrictions and renunciations, the Federal Council decided on three more far reaching measures to strengthen the social policy already in force. First of all 28 million francs (at present rate of exchange about £1,610,000) are placed for distribution during the years 1942-1945 for the assistance of necessitous old people, widows and orphans. Of these sums 19 millions go to the cantons for the above purpose, 2.5 millions are placed to the fund "for old age" for supplementary assistance of old people and 750,000 are destined for "Pro Juventute" for use in the framework of their present activity, whilst 6 millions are used for the assistance of elderly unemployed. Next an extraordinary donation of Frs.500,000 is placed at the disposal of the "Winter Relief Work" for the strengthening of their own resources. This money is, in the first place, for the population of the mountain districts and parts where there is a necessitous population.

The contributions to the older unemployed are intended for men of 55 to 65 years of age who are only partly able to work and can no more do their full share. Many of them found until now occupation in the work detachments which do work of National importance, but during the winter months these possibilities for work are diminished so that a larger assistance is necessary.

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War and commercial blockade have isolated Switzerland from countries with which she was so very intimately interwoven in a World trade and have forced her to enlarge her own production. But through constant negotiations our country was able to keep the trading figures at a considerable height. To the end of November the Import amounted to Frs. 1,825 millions, a value increase of 7.2% in comparison to the same period of last year and the Export at Frs. 1,310 millions showed a rise of 10.8%. It must, however, be stated that the quantity of import dropped by 23%. The value increase with a considerably lower import quantity shows the enormous increase of prices, which have to be paid for our imported goods, which to a large extent are caused through the tremendous increase in freightage.

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The severe restrictions on motor traffic shows at least one good result. The railways, particularly the Federal Railways, have to deal with a record traffic, which is very profitable for their finances. In the first eleven months of the past year the S.F.R. dealt with 130.6 million travellers, or 17.4 millions more than in the previous year. October with 14 million persons carried stands in first place. Also the goods traffic has reached a record. At the end of November the traffic amounted to 21.2 million metric tons or nearly 2.6 million tons more than in the same space of time in the previous year. The receipts were at the end of November 407.4 million francs i.e., 44.7 millions more than in 1940. The working costs increased by 19.4 millions to 227.7 so that after writing off and placing to reserves, the year will finish with at least 20 millions surplus.

In the years 1925 and 1938 the canton of Tessin has collected a number of cultural and economic proposals and submitted them to the Federal authorities with a view for a closer connection of the Italian-speaking part of the country with the general economic life of the Confederation. During several discussions the majority of the points raised have been elucidated in a friendly brotherly spirit. So for instance the annual federal subsidy of frs.45,000 for the preservation and promotion of the cultural and idiomatic peculiarities of the canton of Tessin will be raised to frs. 225,000; further the Federal Council will consider whether the decision arrived at the finance programme of 1935, to reduce by 25% the subsidy to primary school education, can be waived at least for the canton of Tessin and Grisons.

* * *

The Government and Grand Council of the canton of Tessin expressed to the German and French speaking parts of the country the wish that they should introduce the Italian language as a compulsory subject into all their secondary schools. Until now these schools had next to the mother tongue only one language of the country as a compulsory subject. North of the St. Gotthard this wish has met with due consideration.

* * *

The official unemployment figures of Zurich to end of November last compare favourably with those of the previous periods. 2,683 were registered at the end of that month against 3,643 in 1940 and 4,411 in 1939. The building trade, the clerical profession and the heavy industries are the worst sufferers.

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About 400 hectares of marshland are to be reclaimed on the outskirts of Aarau by partly draining and regulating the beds of the Suhr, Uerke and Köllikerbach. The cost of this correction will be about two million francs.

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A far-reaching revision of the cantonal constitution of Obwalden is the object of an initiative for which the necessary signatures are being solicited by progressive elements of the canton; if a minimum of 500 supporters can be found the proposals will be laid before the Landsgemeinde to be held next May. The chief demand seeks to limit the tenure of any elective office to sixteen years. On reaching the age of 70 no citizen can hold office on any of the councils (incl. communes or parishes). The combining of any two offices will be interdicted, i.e., a cantonal councillor may not hold a similar post in the local administration. Civil servants cannot take an active part in politics by accepting mandates on a council under which they are employed.

* * *

The disagreements and altercations in the battle for a new local council of three members in the small commune of Bözberg near Brugg terminated in a singular and perhaps well-deserved result. Bözberg is practically 100% protestant but after 21 separate ballots one of the few catholics emerged victorious.

* * *

In the elections for members of the Grand Conseil in Neuchâtel the liberals have suffered a bad reverse, their leaders Béguin and Borel being unseated; States Councillor Béguin had been a member of the local

council for twenty-three years. Gains were registered by the socialists and Independents (Duttweiler) and generally speaking the young blood has scored against the more experienced older generation.

* * *

Contrary to the tendency in the adjoining canton Fribourg confirmed all the existing members of the Conseil d'Etat. Most of the 118 members of the Grand Conseil will return to their fauteuils a notable exception being National Councillor Samuel Gutknecht, the syndic of Morat; the two opposing parties, the socialists and the Landesring (Duttweiler), failed to muster sufficient votes.

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In spite of aggressive electioneering methods and a sustained effort to rope in the "Nicolists" and other dissatisfied elements the Landesring (Duttweiler) was unsuccessful in forcing an entry into the Town Council of Lausanne the old traditional parties being returned in about the same strength. The Lausannois were evidently little affected by the violent campaign as only 62% of the voters went to the polls.

* * *

Geneva is suffering from an overflow of Swiss refugees who have arrived in the Calvin City practically destitute from the many countries where they have been robbed of their home and existence. Some of them still hope to return one day to their former place of activities living on their savings while others have not succeeded to obtain suitable employment in Switzerland. There are numerous committees who look after the welfare of our compatriots but the financial strain has forced the Geneva authorities to make representations in Berne and insist on some measures for relieving the situation.

* * *

The absence of private cars caused by the shortage of petrol has prompted the management of the Basle municipal tramways to turn some of their coaches into bridal cars so that the newly-married should not be deprived of the traditional send-off. Attractively decorated for this purpose with richly upholstered seats and a heavily curtained niche for the happy couple the tram is driven to a point nearest to the bride's home. After the pair with their retinue of relations and guests have settled down in the matrimonial conveyance they are triumphantly transported to the particular church, i.e., the point nearest on the line. The nuptial coach will wait until the knot has been securely tied and will ultimately disembark the party at the starting point. — Presumably the tramway service will suffer dislocation during these digressions but the Balois will find some compensation for the loss of the many entertaining processions which they love so much and which the war has washed out.

* * *

A new iron-concrete bridge over the Rhine will be constructed between Schaffhausen and Flurlingen to replace the old narrow wooden bridge erected in 1864. The cost is estimated to be about Frs.340,000 and will be borne by the cantons of Zurich and Schaffhausen. The bridge is expected to be open for traffic in May 1942.

* * *

The annual collection for the Winter Relief work has shown a splendid result, although some of the cantons have not yet been able to announce the final totals. Up to now frs. 2.2 millions have been received

as against frs. frs.956,000 last year. To this must be added a large quantity of clothing, linen, boots, potatoes, fruits and other foodstuffs amounting in value to several thousand francs.

* * *

A short while ago the Central Station for prisoners of war has registered the ten millionth consignment outward, whereas the incoming reached seven millions. On a single day up to 60,000 letters are coming in and over 100,000 are going out. For the purpose of finding missing civilians as well as military persons 60 stations have been specially erected which contain 10 million cards. Up to the present roughly 40 million kg. of provisions in parcels of comforts for prisoners of war have found their destinations through the Red Cross. This enormous work is dealt with by 26 branch sections with round about 3,500 people, mostly all voluntary workers. Only about 900 receive a very modest remuneration and the cost of the work is defrayed by voluntary contributions.

* * *

The Swiss working community for the benefit of children affected by the War and to which are attached 21 Swiss organisations, has just been amalgamated with the Swiss Red Cross. This charitable work will continue its work under the title "Swiss Red Cross Children's Aid." By its homes, milk-kitchens, Children's clinics in the belligerent countries, by sponsorships and reception of needy children from the various nations, the Children's aid has already been able to mitigate untold misery!

* * *

Seventeen million letters have so far been received and re-posted by the war-prisoners office of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva.

* * *

Geneva is acquiring at the cost of one million francs the Hotel Metropole which, for the duration of the war, will be handed over to the International Red Cross Committee.

* * *

The second Swiss medical mission for the Eastern front is about to leave, announces Radio Beromünster. It will reach its destination via Berlin and is to relieve the first mission which has been active for three months. The second mission consists inter alia of 28 doctors, 26 nurses and four attendants. They too will be active for three months on the Eastern Front. Immediately after having been relieved the first medical mission will leave for Switzerland and according to schedule is due to arrive on 20th January.

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It is stated that the supply of hydro-electric power will not be sufficient to meet the requirements during this winter owing to poor rainfall and increased demands from consumers who have changed over to electric heat because of the shortage of coal. It is hoped that the two new power stations near Geneva and at Innertkirchen will commence operations shortly. Supplies in the reservoirs are rapidly decreasing and there is a danger that they may be exhausted. Restrictions imposed some time ago concerned mainly electric heating which is now prohibited and the warm water supply, which must be reduced to a minimum.

* * *

The hotly disputed project by which it is proposed to build a barrage which would utilise the water power of the Reuss from the Urseren valley to the lake of

Lucerne would be the greatest power work in Europe. The Syndicate which consists of the Federal Railways, the Central Swiss Power Works in Lucerne, Schweizerische Credit Anstalt and the Bank for Electrical Enterprises in Zurich which has studied the matter, has just published details of its findings. The project would be taken in hand in four stages and would cost 600 to 800 million Swiss francs. It foresees a barrage wall of about 200 metres high in the gorge of the Schöllenen up in the St. Gotthard which would dam up the water and form a storage lake of 1,200 million cubic metres water contents, equal in size to the lakes of Hallwil or Sempach. Three centres, Waasen, Amsteg and Seedorf would utilise this water whereby a daily power production of round one million H. P. would be obtained, this at a time when the river works can only supply little current, namely in the winter. During the summer months these three central works would be closed, while water would be diverted into the storage lake from the Vorder Rhine and even be pumped up from the lake of Lucerne. The power of about 3 milliards Kilowatt hours would be produced during the winter months, which is about equal to the present-day total production of all the existing Swiss power works. The Gotthard power would cost about 1.7 to 2 cts. per kw. and at this exceedingly low price would be of the utmost economic importance. Unfortunately this great project has also a great drawback as through this storage lake the villages of Andermatt, Realp and Hospental which together have a population of 1,000 would be totally or at least partly submerged. Plans are already studied to re-settle these people, but in the meantime they are resisting the project by every means in their power.

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The Association of Swiss Electrical Undertakings and the Swiss electro-technical Association have drawn up a building programme for the next ten years. The programme consists of two principal storage works and six river power works. The storage works are built on the Hinterrhein and by the lake of Lucendo on the St. Gotthard, whereas the river works with the exception of the Rapperswil works on the Aare, are all closely connected with the extension of river navigation on the Rhine from Basle to the lake of Konstanz and are to be erected at Birsfelden, Säckingen, Koblenz, Rheinau and Schaffhausen.

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Airmail letters from Switzerland to the U.S.A. are sent by rail to Barcelona from there are flown to Lisbon from where they go by Clipper to the other side of the Atlantic.

* * *

The Swiss Federal Railways report that there was a shortage of locomotives and carriages to cope with Christmas traffic, but that the distribution of traffic over the holidays proved satisfactory, in spite of the fact that travelling was considerably heavier than last year or even in 1940. From December 27th, 1941, to January 3rd, 1942, 254 special trains were run as against 341 last year.

* * *

Three weeks earlier than last year the only Swiss Sugar refinery in Aarberg has completed the work on hand by having refined 121,000 tons of sugar beet. The sugar contents was at 17% higher than before so that the smaller harvest this year was more than compensated.

A limited Company has been formed in Zurich for the purpose of building the first synthetic rubber factory in Switzerland. Under the new process the expensive machinery which has hitherto proved an obstacle can be dispensed with.

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Some days ago a film entitled "Oasis in the Storm" dedicated to and describing the activities of the Red Cross, had its first world performance in Berne in the presence of numerous Swiss personages and the diplomatic and consular representatives of foreign countries.

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Recently Zurich saw an exhibition of the works of the Swiss Painter, Johann Heinrich Füssli, known here as John Henry Fusely, who became famous in England in the second half of the 18th century. At the opening of the Exhibition Lord Derwent, Attaché to the British Legation in Berne, spoke of Fusely's first reactions to English Life and Art and of his subsequent development:

Perhaps the turning-point in Fusely's life was his first journey to London in 1763. The recommendations of Sir Andrew Mitchell were his passport to the English world of letters, which quickly realised the originality of Fusely's talent, his intelligence and personality, and welcomed him accordingly. He numbered amongst his friends men like Lord Scarsdale, Coutts, and the publishers Millar and Joseph Johnson, who often consulted him over translations.

Fusely used to speak with admiration of the London theatre world. He would say of it that it alone was worth the journey to London for any man with a soul. Typical utterances of his such as his gripping words: "Ich brauche Raum, Höhe, Tiefe, Länge" were woven in among the general characteristics and mention was made of the influence of his masters, Michelangelo, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton on his compositions. Lavater's stirring words: Fusely does not draw portraits; all his features are simultaneously truth and caricature and Haydon's exquisite description of the self-willed way in which the master worked completed the bright and living picture. Finally Lord Derwent's touching portrayal of the pompous funeral procession to St. Pauls cathedral of the "wild little hectoring Swissman," which united the flower of the nobility and the leaders in the world of art and letters.

Lord Derwent's comments of Fusely's most characteristic pictures were animated by ironical humour and culminated — apart from many lovely coinings of his own — in the very fine description by Edmond Jaloux of the mystery and enchantment of Fusely's colour blendings.

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On December 18th an explosion occurred in the pyrotechnical factory in Oberried on the lake of Brienz, when twelve workpeople lost their lives. Two of the workmen were killed instantly, the other ten died of their burns. The small community of Niederried has lost the seventh part of its voters.

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Great hopes are entertained by an international league styling itself "Lieux de Genève." It has recently been created by Louis Favre of Geneva. Its object is the establishment in every country of certain predestined neutral zones or sanctuaries where the civil populations could take refuge and where objects

of art could be deposited. It is naturally assumed that future belligerents would subscribe to the proposal; it is not stated by what means performance is to be enforced.

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Alois Gabriel of Ennetbürgen Near Stans celebrated his centenary on November 6th last; in former years he carried on a "coach and pair" business from Unterwalden into the Bernese Oberland until the railway over the Brünig deprived him of his livelihood.

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Wherever Swiss Jodels are heard, the name of the Composer Oscar Frederick Schmalz, from Konolfingen in the Emmental should be remembered. Most of his 200 songs and jodels are so widely known that their creator has almost been completely forgotten. On Christmas day he commemorated his 60th birthday.

* * *

National Councillor August Schirmer died in St. Gall at the age of 61; he had been ailing for some considerable time which induced him to resign some of the public offices he has held for years. He took a keen interest in social legislation and initiated or sponsored many welfare movements to improve working conditions in office and factory. He was first elected to the National Council in 1919 and had been a member of the St. Gall Grosse Rat uninterruptedly for nearly twenty years. His chair in the National Council will be taken by Kantonsrat Alfred Baumgartner who is the president of the St. Gall section of the Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein.

* * *

A great philanthropist and benefactor to Switzerland and particularly Zurich is lost by the death of Dr. von Schulthess Rechberg at the age of 86. Among his many public-spirited activities the "Schweiz. Gemeinnützige Gesellschaft" can probably claim the largest share but he was equally unremitting in his research work and practical treatment of epilepsy and tuberculosis. One of his early hobbies was the study of botany and entomology on which latter subject he published no less than 80 volumes and treatises which earned him recognition and distinctions by many foreign scientific bodies.

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Emile Bonjour, a highly esteemed journalist, died in Pully at the age of 79; for nearly 50 years he was editor of the "Revue" and until 1935 keeper of the Arts Museum at Lausanne.

* * *

At the age of 72 years the death is announced in Solothurn of the composer, Casimir Meister, whose name is well known in Switzerland through the "Liedli ab em Land." Although many outstanding compositions will survive, none could have possibly done more to popularise him than the "Liedli" after the words by Josef Reinhart.

When you hear the homely "Zyt isch do" the signal from Bern Radio, which is the beginning of one of his "Liedli" you will remember the dead composer who so fully justified his name Meister.

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The doyen of the medical profession in Aarau, Dr. J. Zellweger, died in that town at the age of 80. Born in the canton Thurgau he spent the early part of his career in Sumatra.

The following commercial data are taken from the November Bulletin of the Swiss Bank Corporation issued in Basle; it contains also a critical retrospect of the Federal accounts for the last fifteen years.

The C. F. Bally (Holding Co.) Lausanne to the end of April 1941, has earned an increased net profit in spite of the difficulties in procuring raw materials but the dividend of 4% is the same as in the previous period.

Nestlé and Anglo-Swiss Holding Co. increased their dividend to 15% for 1940 against 10% in 1939.

A slightly reduced profit enabled the Motor-Columbus in Baden to maintain the dividend at the previous level of 4% for the year ending June 1941.

Though the net profit is increased by over 10% the Lonza works in Basle paid the usual dividend of 5% for the year ending March last; one of the subsidiaries the Meta paid 10%.

A shrinking in the sales and earnings of the Chemische (Ciba) in Basle has reduced the dividend to 17% to the end of December 1940, 20% having been paid for a number of years.

A drop of over 25% in the net profits for 1940 of the Sandoz Co., in Basle, still permits the payment of a dividend of 27% including bonus against 35% in 1939.

Better earnings enable the Brown Boveri Co., to increase their dividend to 6% against 5% in the previous two years.

The Aluminium Industrie A.G. has nearly doubled its profits in the twelve months to December 1940. The dividend of 12½% is the same as before but the share capital has been increased by 25% the new Frs. 1,000 shares being offered to the shareholders as a free bonus in the proportion of one to four.

Gebrüder Sulzer who have now retaken into their fold the separate holding company are stated to have plenty of remunerative orders in hand. 6% was declared for the year to end December 1940 which is the same as in the two previous years.

The Steel works Georg Fischer, in Schaffhausen, have been busy with Swiss armature orders and the dividend is increased from 8% to 10%.

Adolf Saurer, in Arbon, has done well both in the motors and looms department and the dividend is maintained at 6%.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.

and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W. 1.

Capital Paid up s.f. 160,000,000

Reserves - - s.f. 32,000,000

Deposits - - s.f. 1,218,000,000

NEW YORK AGENCY

15 NASSAU STREET.

All Descriptions of Banking and Foreign Exchange Business Transacted