

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

In a speech at the annual Congress of the Liberal Democratic Party at Berne, the Swiss Foreign Minister, M. Pilet-Golaz, reviewed Switzerland's policy of neutrality. He declared that the country's traditional attitude continued to prove successful, and that Switzerland's foreign political relations were satisfactory. Today, he said, Switzerland was the Protecting Power of twenty-five States, including almost all the great Powers. The Federal Council would continue to observe a loyal, firm and sincere attitude which would not be swayed either by internal tendencies or by external events. If it was true that this policy was based on reason and wisdom, then it was a reason susceptible to the influence of the heart and a wisdom nourished by hope. Thus politics were raised to the height of neighbourly love. The wish which animated them to tender their assistance to all those who were suffering, made it imperative that their neutrality should continue to instil confidence. This active neutrality might contribute towards saving the cultural values that so far had escaped destruction.

At home, Monsieur Pilet-Golaz continued, the situation demanded the collaboration of all men of good will. The Swiss people could not afford to dissipate their strength and it would be useless to concentrate on the study of problems that were not really urgent. This did not imply however, that Swiss institutions were incapable of improvement, but that the right moment must be awaited as these institutions were still sound on the whole, but according to the man directing them they would prove good or bad. This was the reason why attention ought to be focussed on the substance of matters rather than their form. Switzerland's primary problem to-day was the preservation of her national existence, which presupposed the complete independence of the country. As, however, there could be no life without work, it was up to the authorities to provide work. In order to live, Switzerland must serve in unity the cause of peace, whose advent the Swiss people could promote through honesty, loyalty and firmness.

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The "Initiative Pfaendler" which was voted upon by the people, on May 3rd, was rejected by a

respectable majority 408,646 declining this constitutional change against 219,405 in favour. This initiative was originally launched by the secretariat of the "Landesring" (Duttweiler group) and had as its main object the reduction of the membership of the National Council to 139 Councillors by allowing one representative for every 30,000 voters instead of the existing ratio of 22,000. It also sought to eliminate a peculiarity in our somewhat complicated electoral system by disallowing the accumulation of votes recorded on the many party lists; contrary to the practice in this and most countries votes are not given to individuals but to candidates appearing on a multitude of lists issued by the political parties from which by cumulation the successful candidates emerge. Other reforms covered by this proposal were the restriction to twelve years of the occupancy of a seat in the National Council and the compulsion for its members to disclose their financial and business interests.

* * *

The Federal Council proposed to the Federal Assembly the introduction of a bill to come into force on January 1st, 1943, wherein the canton of Tessin is to receive an annual subsidy of 225,000 frs. in favour of secondary and higher education in order to preserve its cultural and linguistic characteristics. The canton of Grisons is to receive an annual subsidy of 25,000 frs. for the like purpose to apply to the Italian speaking valleys of that canton. The government of the Grisons is, however, empowered to use part of that sum for the furtherance of the raeto-romansch language and culture. The federal subsidies up to now were 45,000 frs. for the Tessin and 4,500 frs. for the Grison valleys.

* * *

A great number of belligerent nations on both sides have entrusted the safeguarding of their interests

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Le Comité.

to Switzerland. To be able to fulfill this honourable as well as difficult task the Federal Council found it necessary to attach special divisions to the most important Legations as well as to the Federal Political Department in Bern, which divisions have the task to look after foreign interests. One of the most important of these special divisions is in Berlin, housed in the building of the American Embassy. A staff of about 100 linguists are occupied to represent the interests of the fifteen different States and their subjects living in Germany. From this centre Switzerland represents to-day to the best of her ability and strictly according to International law the interests of 35,000 Foreign subjects who are living in the German Reich and in countries controlled by it. The majority of these people are able to move about freely and are under the control of the protecting power. The subjects of States at war with Germany who are interned in civil internment camps are visited by and obtain the support of the Swiss representatives. Officials from the Swiss Legation together with Swiss doctors visit regularly the camps of British Prisoners of war in Germany, to observe the state of health of the inmates and to control the sanitary arrangements of these camps. They have an opportunity to converse unhindered with the prisoners and to receive their confidential complaints. To this individual task is added the administration of the properties of the protected States as well as the upkeep of Embassy and Legation buildings and their staffs. All these are duties which require energy, zeal and diplomatic ability.

The Customs Revenue for March 1942 amounted to 13,000,000 frs., a decrease of 2,000,000 frs. on the corresponding month last year. Similarly, the first quarter for 1942 shows a decrease of 6,000,000 frs. on the first quarter of 1941, when the revenue was 41,000,000 frs.

As from the 4th May Switzerland has changed over to Summertime. The morning news bulletin is broadcast at 06.45 Swiss Summer Time and the late evening bulletin at 22.00 S.S.T. (This corresponds to British Summer Time as at present.)

On April 1st, 1902, the principal part of the Federal Parliament Building in Bern was solemnly inaugurated. When in 1848 Bern was chosen as the Federal Capital a special Building for the Federal Council and Federal Administration had to be erected. The cost for it amounted to the then considerable amount of 2.5 million Francs. Within the thirty years 1857-1887 the building became so overcrowded that it was found necessary to build a twin wing which was completed in 1892. Already during the construction of the second wing it was obvious that an actual Parliament building would be an absolute necessity. This building should contain the chambers of the National Council and the States Council and at the same time would connect the two wings into a complete whole. Thus the Federal Parliament Building came into being, which stands high above the Aare valley, fronting towards the Bernese alps, crowned with its majestic cupola. Since then another administration building has been added in connection with the National Bank and for some time already plans are completed to erect a fifth wing, but owing to scarcity of building materials there is no likelihood of these

plans being started and the administration has been forced to house some of its sections in private houses.

As a result of the recent census some of our cantons have secured an increased representation in the National Council: Zurich is entitled to three more councillors, Berne to two and Baselstadt, Ticino, Valais and Vaud to one each; on the other hand Neuchâtel will lose one of its representatives. When next the National Council is re-elected it will consist of 195 members instead of 187 as at present.

On the last Sunday in April the cantons of Auser and Innerrhoden, and Ob and Nidwalden held their Landsgemeinden according to old established customs. At these assemblies in the open air the citizens entitled to vote select their authorities, deliberate and enact their laws. The citizens of Auser rhoden assembled this year at Trogen, confirmed the offices of the seven members of the cantonal government for another year, as well as the cantonal supreme court to which were elected two new members. As the Chief Magistrate (Landammann) was elected Justizdirektor Alfred Hofstetter of Gais. Four draft bills were accepted by a large majority. As guests of honour were present Federal Councillors Wetter and Celio.

The Landsgemeinde of Innerrhoden was held at Appenzell. Dr. Carl Rusch from Appenzell was elected the ruling Magistrate and Lieut.-Colonel Armin Locher from Oberegg Vice-Magistrate. After the swearing in of the magistrat and the participating citizens, the remaining cantonal government as well as the cantonal supreme court were confirmed in their offices.

The Obwalden Landsgemeinde took place on the Landenberg near Sarnen where Federal Councillor v. Steiger was present as a guest. Here also the members of the cantonal government were confirmed in their offices, the retiring Maria Odermatt was replaced by municipal president Alois Röthlin from Kerns. The offices of magistrate and county governor were exchanged by the present holders E. Infangen and Dr. W. Amstalden. Of the five bills on which the vote was to be taken on May 10th, four were recommended for acceptance by the government, the fifth was an initiative to limit the duration of office and also the age limit for cantonal justices, was recommended for rejection, although a number of speakers were for acceptance.

At the ring in Wil the Nidwalder Landsgemeinde elected the present county governor Joller as magistrate and the holder of that office to be county governor. Two smaller bills were accepted, a new taxation law, however, was rejected with a substantial majority.

The Landsgemeinde of Glaris which always meets on the first Sunday in May had to be postponed for a week owing to the Federal vote which took place on that day.

The agricultural directorate of the canton of Bern last year started a competition amongst the farmers for the drawing up of a chronicle of their farms, showing the historical and economic cultural development of the respective homesteads. A Committee of experts was able to distribute a number of good prizes amongst the authors who were mostly farmers or schoolmasters intimately connected with the life on

these farmsteads. The success of this competition has encouraged a repetition of it which will be started this spring. The object of drawing up the history of the farms is to foster the love of the soil and to further the preservation of life and customs peculiar to the country.

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Plans have been completed for the construction of a large covered market in Zurich which is an important receiving and distributing centre for fruit and vegetables from and to all parts of eastern and central Switzerland.

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The youth of the canton de Vaud started last year in the neighbourhood of Morges by voluntary labour to dig the first part of a future waterway which is to connect the lake of Geneva with the lake of Neuchâtel. Spurred by this example the youth of Geneva now are intending to contribute also their share towards this trans-helvetie canal. They have set as their goal the building of a road of 1 km. length and 12m. width, which will connect the proposed goods-yard of La Praille with the future river harbour Geneva. Groups of youth throughout the whole of the French-speaking part of Switzerland will prove by this voluntary work that the idea of a waterway from the Rhone to the Rhine, i.e., from the Mediterranean to the North sea is firmly planted in the mind of western Switzerland. Three hundred men will have to work hard for fifty days to complete the work. At the same time these young people will put up frs.40,000 in order to pay for the required stone foundation of 50ctm. thickness.

* * *

The electricity problem was commented upon at a recent meeting of the Administrative Council on Industrial Services by its president, M. Choisy, in the following terms:

Consumption in the year 1940-41 had increased by 15 per cent. because of new industries and the electrification of agriculture. Last year the country's power plants produced 5,500 million kWh., some of which had been exported under international agreements. In future, however, the Government had decided to cancel some of these agreements so as to be able to meet domestic demand. All export could not be stopped, however, for economic reasons. The Government, he explained, had a building and extension programme which would last till 1953. Schaffhausen, Oberland and Verbois plants were on the way to completion.

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Coal prices increased in 1941 by 240 per cent. compared with the 1939 figure. The Federal Railways stated recently that although in 1941 only 15 per cent. of its total traffic was steam-operated, the expenditure on coal was frs.16,000,000, while the cost of electricity for the remaining 85 per cent. of the traffic was only frs.21,000,000. These figures shed an interesting light upon the importance of electrification.

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The present shortage of coal and building materials mainly due to the cessation of imports is responsible for an intensified exploitation of our forest lands which in the present season will be increased by 200% as compared with the amount cut down under normal pre-war conditions.

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The Technical Section of the Federal Military Department which is distributing the contracts for

military supplies is compelled by fixing prices to be paid to act on a decision of the Federal Council of 1924. This provides that all goods supplied to the Confederation shall be based on the wages and cost of materials ruling at the time of issuing the contract, observing of sound working conditions, consideration of the risk incurred and allowing a proper remuneration to the contractor. Excess profits are excluded from the start as the granting of orders is generally based on a limited competition amongst the firms coming into consideration. As the section has its own manufacturing experience of almost all the contracts to be given out, with its own exact calculations of costs, it is therefore in a position to check carefully the prices charged and can justify a reduction in price if necessary. In this way provision is made that supplies for the Swiss Army do not allow excess profits. On the other hand any war profits are cut down by a very severe special tax in favour of the Confederation.

* * *

When the Military command in the autumn of 1940, made a trial with artificial fog in the canton of Uri, a poisonous precipitate was formed which up to the present has not been satisfactorily explained and which caused an illness amongst the cattle fed on the grass or hay on which this fog descended. Horses and goats were not affected. Owing to this illness more than half the herd of cattle in the canton, about 7,000 heads, at a value of 5½ million frs., had to be killed. The Federal Exchequer shouldered the difference between the assessed value and the amount obtained for the meat. Now experience has shown that the poison penetrated into the stigma of the grass so that cases of poisoning are still occurring. The only way of averting further loss of cattle is the breaking up of the soil. A newly founded "Cultivating Association William Tell" is going to turn over 250-300 ha. more of the poisoned soil as was at first decided and is planting it with potatoes, maize and wheat. The association has put up 300,000 frs. and the Federal Exchequer is participating in this big task with an amount of 600,000 frs., besides delivering hay and providing horses and interneers to assist in the carrying out of the work.

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When examining the balance of imports one should bear in mind that these consist mostly of raw materials. It was recently calculated that the value of imports in 1941 was 880 per cent. higher than in 1936. The 1940 imports amounted to two milliards. More than 900,000,000 of this figure must be attributed to price increases since 1936. Regarding exports as a whole, the rise has not been so big. The ratio between prices of products imported and those exported has changed to the disadvantage of Switzerland. The rise in the cost of imported goods is due less to price increases than to transport and insurance, which in many cases amount to several times the price of the goods. For food supplies, Switzerland depends more and more on the Continent, hence the rise of prices in Switzerland. It is evident that the high cost of imported goods has its repercussion on prices of Swiss products. Thus, if the cost of agricultural produce has increased by 51 per cent. since the beginning of the war, this rise is not due entirely to increased cost of production. The actual increase in agricultural costs was 43 per cent.; therefore the agricultural industry has profited to the extent of the difference. Another reason for the increase is that we now have to buy abroad certain goods previously produced here. It is also possible that defence needs have contributed to the general rise.

In order to assist in the important work of salvage and the collection of waste, the Federal Postal Administration has just issued a new 10cts. stamp which has currency at home and abroad until the end of 1942. Instead of a picture the stamp bears the sentence in German, French and Italian respectively "To carry through collect waste." Below is "Helvetia," on the left is a tab with the value in red and on the right the Swiss coat of arms. Printed in three colours this oblong stamp is issued in sheets of 25, of which 12 stamps are printed in German, 8 in French and 5 in Italian.

All kinds of grain have been included in the rationing scheme; thus the last of the imported popular staple foods is rationed. Only bread, potatoes, vegetables and fruit can still be obtained freely. Sea-water fish, whilst not rationed, is imported in such small quantities from Norway and Denmark that for the first time in our history no fish has figured on domestic and restaurant menus during Good Friday week.

After protracted negotiations the interested States have granted the passage of Swiss import goods by sea from Lisbon to the Spanish port of Bilbao. The requisite vessels have to be chartered by Switzerland. The Spanish Railways have entered into an engagement to put daily ten railway trucks at the disposal of Switzerland in order to clear the goods as far as Canfranc on the Spanish-French frontier, also federal and private lorries for road transport are to be put into use. This new line is principally for imports of Portuguese goods.

A little easement has also taken place for the export of Swiss goods, for a service once a month between Dublin and Lisbon has been opened by which Swiss goods can be sent to Ireland.

Whereas in the first quarter of 1939 roughly 170,000 railway trucks of ten tons of provisions and

raw materials crossed our frontiers, the total import for the first three months 1942 reached barely half of that number namely 83,000 trucks. The value of the import in the first quarter of the last year of peace amounted to 400 million frs. and the amount payable for the goods imported during the first quarter 1942 came to 461 million of which 240 million frs. represents an actual increase in cost. The extra cost therefore represents 110 per cent.

The Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway, the most important and at the same time technically the most grandiose private railway is to be financially reconstructed with the aid of federal finances. Of the 125 million Francs granted three years ago to assist the most important private railways, the Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway received 25 millions à fond perdu and a further sum of 12 millions in the nature of second debentures was placed at its disposal. The canton of Bern is now renouncing the repayment of the debenture interests which this canton paid on behalf of the railway. The definite liabilities of the undertaking will now be reduced by 32 millions and about two-fifths of the remainder will be placed on an interest bearing footing which however is dependent on the working result. The Pension fund of the employees will also receive a subsidy of 2½ millions in order to put it on a proper footing. By this financial operation the B.L.S. Railway should be finally relieved from its calamities which were caused through the first world war and the economic crises following in its wake.

Preparations are being made to celebrate in five years' time the centenary of the introduction of railways into our country, as it is realised that the collection and examination of the necessary information, photographs, documents, and so forth, for which a general appeal has been issued at Zurich by a special committee, under the patronage of the Federal Authorities, will take a considerable time. The issue of a handsomely-illustrated history of the Swiss railways is contemplated. The modest railway museum, housed for some years at the Zurich goods station, is to be enlarged considerably and transferred to a new building better suited to the purpose. In addition to the main museum, it is intended to set up travelling collections of exhibits to extend the celebration to all parts of the Confederation.

Through the rebuilding of the dam between Rapperswil and Hurden on the upper lake of Zurich, the last part of the bridge which once was the longest bridge in Switzerland and in the whole of Europe is now being broken up. First built in 1358 by an Austrian duke, since then several times destroyed and rebuilt the bridge measured 1,400 metres. In 1878 this tremendous construction was practically replaced by a dam to enable the railway to cross the lake. Now this dam also has to make way for a new construction.

The number of motor vehicles in use, which amounted to 124,195 at the end of 1938, has fallen to less than 30,000 as a result of the wartime fuel shortage. There are now about 10,000 passenger vehicles, against 75,000 at the end of 1938, 12,000 lorries compared with 20,000, 5,000 delivery vans and motor cycles, against 26,000, and 3,000 other vehicles in service. The number of vehicles operating on pro-

ducer gas and other substitute fuels has been steadily increasing.

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On the anniversary of the establishment of the Swiss Mercantile Marine, the following statement was issued to the Press. During the year nine ships, with a total carrying capacity of 50,000 tons, have been purchased. These ships now sail under the Swiss flag. They are not of recent types but Switzerland had to be content with such ships as could be purchased. They have rendered great service in collecting goods from Lisbon which had been delivered there from overseas. Some of the steamers have been engaged on direct traffic between American ports and Italy. They are the only ships by which Switzerland can maintain communication between overseas ports and Genoa. The belligerent Powers have been giving them safe conduct. This has been of considerable benefit, and the prompt clearing and re-loading arrangements in Genoa have made this the chief supply port for Switzerland. The possession of her own Merchant Fleet enabled Switzerland to maintain her trade and to exert a small influence on freight rates. The problem of providing crews had been a difficult one. Few Swiss had qualified as captains or officers of merchant ships. Only one of the present ships was commanded by a Swiss captain and many members of the crew were not Swiss.

* * *

Contrary to all pessimistic prophecies the 3rd Industries Fair during the war held in Basle last April was more extensive and varied than all its predecessors. Once more the will to live of the Swiss Industry has overcome all obstacles and has produced the most important economic manifestation which has ever taken place at any Swiss Industries Fair in Basle. From 1,200 exhibitors last year, the participants have increased to 1364, the exhibition area of 19,100 square metres extended to 22,400. Represented were industries and trades from 22 cantons. The large participation required a new permanent building as well as a large tent construction. The new hall is in itself a masterpiece of modern building art. The wooden arch, which had to take the place of an iron and concrete construction has a span of 42 metres. Like all preceding fairs this one bears the seal of quality work. But what is particularly remarkable is the excellent presentation of the production and application of new materials, which are completely replacing a number of raw, and semi-raw materials at present unobtainable. As a whole this year's Industries Fair gave an impressive demonstration that Swiss Industries are determined to hold out and a sign of co-operation of all classes of the population.

Nearly 280,000 tickets were sold. Visitors from abroad were more numerous than was expected and 800 representatives of 16 European and 4 Overseas countries were received.

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The public has only just been given details of the Swiss Aeroplane production. Since 1938 there is in existence an association of the Swiss Aeroplane industry comprising 45 works with about 25,000 employees. These works supply all the various constituent parts of an aircraft, so that the Swiss Air Force of to-day disposes of entirely Swiss aircraft, which in the way of performance, finish and equipment can easily compete with the best foreign aircraft. With such pro-

ducts the aircraft industry will be able after the war to hold its own.

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The watch factory Longines in St. Imier together with its general distributing agents for Switzerland, Wirth & Co., in Geneva, commemorated a double jubilee. Longines looks back on 75 years and Wirth on 50 years of existence. Longines which started with 20 workmen is to-day employing towards one thousand hands, was the first Swiss watch factory which with the aid of the best precision machinery made all the various parts and assembled them to a complete watch under one roof. In those days this was looked upon as a revolution in the watch manufacture, but it was instrumental in furthering the tremendous impetus which took place in that industry. The guiding principle was and still is the attainment of the highest accuracy and in the sphere of precision time measuring the Longines products like their pocket and wristlet watches, chronometers for ships and aircraft, chronographs and sidereal dials, which are to measure a hundredth part of a second, have long ago obtained world-wide reputation.

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Just about forty years ago the Engineering works Oerlikon, near Zurich, built and tried out in a practical way the first single-phase alternating current locomotive in the world which worked with 15,000 volt tension. This current system has since been adopted by the Federal as well as by Private Railways. The locomotive No. 1 is to-day still in use with the Bodensee Toggenburg Railway.

* * *

The engineering works Ruti in the canton of Zurich who's looms and weaving machines of all kinds are world renowned, celebrated a few days ago its centenary. On this occasion the workers and employees received a gratification of double their pay envelope or monthly salary and furthermore the administration made a donation of frs.1,100,000 towards the welfare fund of the firm.

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The conversion of petrol engines to wood-gas seems to have made tremendous strides, all the garages working at full speed. The transformation is stated to be quite simple: Two large containers are built on the rear of the car or lorry; into these the wood is stoked and burnt. A three ton lorry requires one cwt. of wood for every 40 miles. Motor engineers along the Rhine frontier are said to be doing a large business in adapting German army lorries to this "ersatz" driving power. Another interesting item which has received a wide publicity in the English press is to the effect that Germany has demanded 75 steam locomotives, threatening to cut off coal deliveries due to us

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under contract. A "United Press" report even states that Switzerland would have to send her own trucks and miners to secure the coal supplies contracted for.

To promote employment a long-term programme has been drawn up regarding exports and the tourist industry. Measures will be taken to ensure the survival of the export industries after the war. Technical processes will be improved, markets will be surveyed, existing foreign trade connections consolidated, new agencies appointed abroad, exports financed and joint arrangements will be made for the purchase of raw materials. The State will intervene only if private enterprise fails to settle these problems. Commissions have already begun examining the economic situation of the hotel industry. Drastic measures are necessary as many hotels must be modernised. Another plan provides for road construction, railway extension, development of power-sources and building of aerodromes. With regard to roads, the rebuilding of the main Geneva-Lake Constance artery, running north to south, is among the works contemplated. The cost of this part of the programme is estimated at 495,000,000 frs. The programme for the Federal State Railways runs into 760,000,000 frs. The sum total of the programmes, including separate cantonal projects, amounts to 4,680,000,000 frs. It is not intended to expend this sum within a definite time limit. The work will be undertaken according to the degree of unemployment. It is intended to put in hand immediately such work as will provide most employment with the least possible expenditure of material.

The Central Meteorological Institute in Zurich has decided at the request of the Swiss Peasants' Association and with the authority of the Army Command to broadcast a weather forecast for farmers. The Institute will try and advise peasants on likely weather conditions but points out that the sources of information are very scanty and in many cases inadequate.

The Federal Political Department has issued a survey from which is seen that in the past year the Federation and Cantons paid to the Swiss Benevolent Societies abroad a total of frs.76,325 of which the Federation paid frs.45,000. Of the total sum paid about frs.50,700 were paid to Benevolent Societies, frs.18,500 to Swiss Homes and frs.7,000 to Foreign Asylums and Hospitals.

At the moment there are 180 Swiss Benevolent Societies and Homes, 72 of these Societies renounce all claim to a subsidy in favour of the less wealthy associations. All reports so far received appreciate greatly the assistance obtained from the old homeland, but there are about a dozen Societies which were unable to communicate with the home authorities.

The rationing office of the war provisioning department has calculated that the production of the rationing cards for provisions require 11,500 kg. of paper every month, although the cards measure only 8 x 4½ inches. But what undoubtedly is of greater importance is that the goods which are covered by these cards are actually obtainable.

About 1,000 children have arrived from the French Departments du Nord et Pas de Calais. Most of them

have gone to Western Switzerland and the Canton of Appenzell, where they will stay for a month. About 100 children remained in Geneva.

The children's Assistance work undertaken by the Swiss Red Cross, whereby 40,000 foreign children are to be brought to Switzerland for a stay of three months, is making an appeal for money contributions and for coupons for provisions and textile goods. Following the English example it is suggested that as many families as possible contribute 10cts per week to this work. If every fourth Swiss pays his contribution regularly an amount of from four to five million frs. annually should be the result. With the coupons so collected for provisions and textile goods, the families which take in these children will be greatly assisted in the feeding and clothing of their little guests. For children from countries where languages are spoken which are not familiar in Switzerland, or where particular customs prevail, hostels will be opened to admit the children in groups. The Red Cross expects a liberal response to this appeal as a thankoffering for being spared the ravages of war.

The "fourth Switzerland" as the Swiss abroad are sometimes collectively called, has through the new world war suffered great reduction in numbers. According to the latest informations received the number has gone down from 346,000 in 1928 to 266,400 in 1940. This shrinkage refers to Europe and America, whereas an increase has taken place in Asia, Australia and Africa.

In Europe the number of Swiss abroad fell from 251,900 to 181,200; the greatest reduction took place in France where it dropped from 144,000 to 80,000, in Germany inclusive of Austria and Danzig from 55,800 to 52,500. A strong increase took place in England where there are 17,000 Swiss as against 15,000.

In America a reduction has taken place from 83,100 to 71,600, the drop in the U.S.A. alone being from 49,000 to 44,000; Argentine records a reduction from 16,000 to 12,000. Increases are registered in some central and South American States.

In Asia the number of Swiss grew from 2,500 to 3,300, in Australia from 1,500 to 1,900, in Africa from 7,100 to 8,400 most of them in the British Dominions. The reason for the reduction in the number of Swiss in European and American countries is probably the repatriation necessitated by the war, as well as the increased naturalisation in the respective countries.

Events which took place during the last few years in the neighbouring countries forced thousands of people to leave their homeland either through political or racial reasons and to find a sanctuary in Switzerland. Already at the crossing of the frontier they had to be told that Switzerland could only serve them as a transition stage to a new home. An emigration service instituted by the Federal Department for Justice and Police assisted these fugitives in the continuation of their journey to overseas countries. Through the assistance of this department 1,200 emigrants were last year able to pass through France, Spain and Portugal to those sea ports whence they could continue their travels. At this moment there are still 5,800 people waiting for an opportunity to emigrate to a new country.

A few days ago the largest wooden cross in Switzerland was erected between the two Mythen above Schwyz. The cross was the one which towered over the stage on which the 1st of August festival play last year was presented. It is 15 metres high and the cross beam is 6 metres long. It is visible from the valley for many kilometres.

By its geographical position and the enterprise of its pioneers Switzerland has become the centre of high alpine research. In 1907 the Institute for High Mountain Climatic Researches and Tuberculosis was opened in Davos. Of International importance is the Research Institute on the Jungfrau Joch at which nearly 500 investigators have been working since its opening ten years ago.

There is pleasant news for those Bernese living abroad who have still preserved their home dialect. The publishing house of Francke in Berne has just published a book by that past master of Bernese dialect authors, Simon Gfeller, called "Landbärner." This book is sure to provide many happy hours with its stories and "Müschterli," particularly, however, the important narrative "Der Bärner Gring."

Since time immemorial the school and municipal authorities of the town of Zofingen in the canton of Aargau held, together with the teaching staff an annual festival at the end of each scholastic year round about Easter, for which the municipality granted a credit of frs.5,000 in consideration of the voluntary work done during the year by the school authority. This year the people concerned unanimously decided to break with the tradition and to hand over the total amount to the Red Cross for the Children's Fund.

As already mentioned in a previous number of the S.O. several vintners associations in the French speaking part of Switzerland have been ordered to deliver up the grape marc in order to produce oil from the seeds. Specially manufactured machines are sorting out the seed from the dried marc which are then ground and by a chemical process are refined. A factory in Morges on the lake of Geneva has installed such a plant out of which the oil thus gained runs clear and pure.

A ridiculously lenient sentence was inflicted on a Basle tramway ticket collector who through gross negligence was responsible for injury to 55 passengers 11 of them serious one dying on the spot. He had switched his tram on to a side line where, it being lunch time, it came to a temporary standstill; in his hurry to get home to his meal he forgot to replace the points. Later on two trams approaching from opposite directions collided and were completely smashed. The Court though admitting the exceptional seriousness of the offence sentenced the collector to three months imprisonment.

Sentences in the long drawn out political trial at Zurich have been pronounced at the end of last month and the following is the short report which appeared in the "Times," May 2nd: Two Swiss citizens, the writer, Granz Burri, and Major Ernest Leonhardt, have been sentenced in their absence to five years' penal servitude and 10 years' suspension of civil rights by

the Zurich military court. Of 10 other accused persons, five of whom had fled the country, one was acquitted. The others were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of from one to 12 months for having abused the authorities and Army chiefs and circulated totalitarian pamphlets.

The two principal accused were founders of the Swiss National-Socialist Party. They were said not only to have violently attacked and abused General Guisan, Commander of the Swiss Army, but to have advocated the adhesion of Switzerland to the Reich. They formed a Swiss anti-Bolshevist legion, recruiting for it, but its strength exceeded barely a few hundreds. They were alleged to have endangered Switzerland's independence and to have caused a foreign Power to interfere in Swiss affairs. Leonhardt was also deprived of his commission in the Army.

Last year the number of emigrant Swiss of military age has dropped to an exceptionally low level. Only 1,685 men crossed the frontiers or 743 less than in the previous year. Also the number of returning Swiss amounting to 2,326 was 1,700 less than in 1940. The number of foreign immigrants reached at round 5,200 only half the figure of the previous year.

A memorial to the aviator Walter Mittelholzer, who crashed five years ago over the Austrian Alps, was unveiled at Dübendorf, his place of residence and work. Mittelholzer was a Director of Swissair and was undoubtedly one of the best known Swiss aviators; he was the holder of several international records. He was the only one who flew over the highest mountain in East Africa the 6,000 m. high Kilimanjaro.

At the age of 94, one of the last remaining veterans who assisted in the building of the Gotthard tunnel, Bartholomäus Gamma, died in Goeschenen. He first assisted in the difficult work of surveying and later was working in the tunnel itself.

With the death of National Councillor Dr. Roman Abt, in Zofingen, at the age of 59, the canton of Aargau has lost a leading personality who has been closely associated with the economic life of the "kulturkanton." Lawyer by profession he was keenly interested in furthering agriculture and local industries; he presided the association of hat-plait manufacturers and was on the board of several other undertakings such as the Swiss Bank Corporation.

Dr. Heinrich Dübi died in Berne at the age of 93. A language teacher at the local gymnasium and a lecturer at the university, he remained an ardent and tenacious explorer of our mountains until infirmity damped his enthusiasm; his writings on the Bernese and Valaisan Alps have become classics. For 73 years an active member of the Swiss Alpine Club he was an acknowledged authority amongst the world's mountaineers.

States Councillor Frédéric Martin died in Geneva at the age of 70. He occupied for over thirty years important posts in local councils and was president of the cantonal court of appeal.

Dr. Fritz Brandenburg died in Basle where he lived in retirement, at the age of 77, after a long and severe illness. He specialised in the treatment of juvenile diseases and practised in Basle, Zug (where he was born) and Winterthur; he was for a number of years Master of the Grand Lodge "Alpina."

* * *

Dr. Felix Weingartner, the well-known composer and conductor, died at the hospital at Winterthur, where he had been under treatment. He was 78 and a naturalised citizen.

* * *

To replace the air tubes for bicycles which owing to the decrease of rubber import are almost unobtainable, many people have tried their hand at substitutes, so that already nearly 1,200 inventors have applied for patents. For some time past the Cable and Rubber works in Altdorf have manufactured synthetic rubber, but their production is not sufficient to satisfy home demand.

THE STEADILY INCREASING POPULATION OF OUR TOWNS.

The following table gives the population of towns according to the recent census together with comparative figures for previous periods. Places with less than ten thousand inhabitants at the end of 1941 are omitted; some of our readers will probably miss Montreux and Davos the residents of which have been decreasing since 1930 to below the ten thousand mark. On the other hand Burgdorf is a newcomer.

| | 1850 | 1900 | 1930 | 1941 | * |
|-------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Zürich | 41,585 | 168,021 | 249,820 | 333,829 | + 39.2 |
| Basel | 27,844 | 109,161 | 148,063 | 161,380 | + 9.0 |
| Bern | 29,670 | 67,550 | 111,783 | 129,331 | + 15.7 |
| Geneva | 37,724 | 97,359 | 124,121 | 124,442 | + 0.26 |
| Lausanne | 17,108 | 46,732 | 75,915 | 91,738 | + 20.8 |
| St. Gallen | 17,858 | 53,796 | 63,947 | 62,360 | — 2.5 |
| Winterthur | 13,651 | 40,961 | 53,925 | 59,192 | + 9.8 |
| Luzern | 10,068 | 29,255 | 47,066 | 54,841 | + 16.5 |
| Biel | 5,609 | 29,557 | 37,726 | 40,850 | + 8.3 |
| La Chaux-de-Fonds | 13,659 | 35,968 | 35,252 | 30,939 | — 12.2 |
| Fribourg | 9,065 | 15,794 | 21,557 | 25,975 | + 20.5 |
| Neuchâtel | 7,901 | 21,195 | 22,668 | 23,925 | + 5.5 |
| Schaffhausen | 7,700 | 15,275 | 21,118 | 22,400 | + 6.1 |
| Thun | 6,019 | 10,213 | 16,524 | 20,193 | + 22.2 |
| Chur | 6,183 | 11,532 | 15,574 | 17,074 | + 9.6 |
| Lugano | 5,142 | 9,394 | 15,184 | 17,025 | + 12.1 |
| Solothurn | 5,370 | 10,025 | 13,734 | 15,432 | + 12.4 |
| Olten | 6,969 | 1,634 | 13,484 | 15,282 | + 13.3 |
| Köniz | 5,984 | 6,886 | 10,987 | 14,358 | + 30.7 |
| Aarau | 4,657 | 7,831 | 11,666 | 12,851 | + 10.2 |
| Herisau | 8,387 | 13,497 | 13,599 | 12,737 | — 6.3 |
| Vevey | 5,602 | 11,781 | 13,036 | 12,613 | — 3.2 |
| Zug | 3,302 | 6,508 | 11,113 | 12,316 | + 10.8 |
| Le Locle | 7,493 | 12,559 | 12,001 | 11,363 | — 5.3 |
| Bellinzona | 3,209 | 8,255 | 10,706 | 10,952 | + 2.3 |
| Grenchen | 1,581 | 5,202 | 10,397 | 10,900 | + 4.8 |
| Yverdon | | | | 10,856 | |
| Uster | | | | 10,588 | |
| Rorschach | 1,751 | 9,140 | 11,005 | 10,536 | — 4.3 |
| Baden | 2,745 | 6,050 | 10,143 | 10,313 | + 2.7 |
| Burgdorf | | | | 10,156 | |

* Indicates percentage of increase or decrease since 1930.

GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE ON WATCH FOR SECURITY AT HOME.

(An address by Federal Councillor Von Steiger delivered at Berne on April 16th 1942.)

Translated by C. J. Bernheim, Esq.

To the Swiss People, candour is the element of political life, suspicion its most dangerous poison. Conscious of its duty, the Government will take care to give reasonably wide scope to candour and to avoid all secretiveness. There is nothing to hide, neither in home nor in foreign politics. The federal chambers, the cantonal governments and the press are kept continually informed.

The Swiss Foreign Policy is like an open book. How could it be otherwise in view of the strict neutrality of the Federal Government? There are no secrets and no hide and seek business. Here also complete openness is the only correct state policy. That with it certain forms of courtesy have to be kept, is a matter of course and an old established custom. Probably nowhere is candour more necessary and secretiveness more dangerous than in the field of secret intrigues against the security of the state. Swiss citizens can rely on it that also in matters concerning the political police they will continually receive all the information which it is at all practicable to give. It must not be overlooked, however, that, in spite of the great ability and zeal of the staff, it is still an extraordinary difficult and delicate problem. Moreover, it is only since a comparatively short time that Switzerland possesses a political police and its necessity is really after all repugnant to us. In all the defence measures against disturbances of our public order, no matter where they come from, we continually find ourselves confronted with the fundamental problem of the safeguard of the freedom of public opinion. Where propaganda no longer means a mere personal, more or less theoretical, expression of views, without offensive aim, but is directed against internal security and against the state itself, it can no longer be tolerated. The security within must be put on a par with that from without. There is no sense in keeping the country safe from without with arms while security at home collapses. The state, no matter how small, loses its right of existence if it does not take care of its internal security.

We do not prosecute anyone who aims at bringing about changes in some of our state institutions in a constitutional way. No obstacle was put in the way of the so-called "Stalder-Initiative" which wanted to replace our present parliamentary order by some sort of "Tagsatzung." Mere "grumbling" is not liable to prosecution either.

What we cannot tolerate, however, and never will tolerate, is the advocacy of aims which are in opposition to the constitution, the forcing on of a constitutional change without or against the will of the people. We cannot allow the illegal brushing aside or endangering of the constitutional order by a so-called "emancipation of the free people," not by means of reform but by revolution. There can be no feeble giving-in, nor can we make any concession here. Any such attempt must be nipped in the bud. More than one group or movement which originally pretended to propagate new ideas for the benefit of the people led in the end to treason and attacks against the state. Such movements endanger the security of the state