

The economic situation of Switzerland

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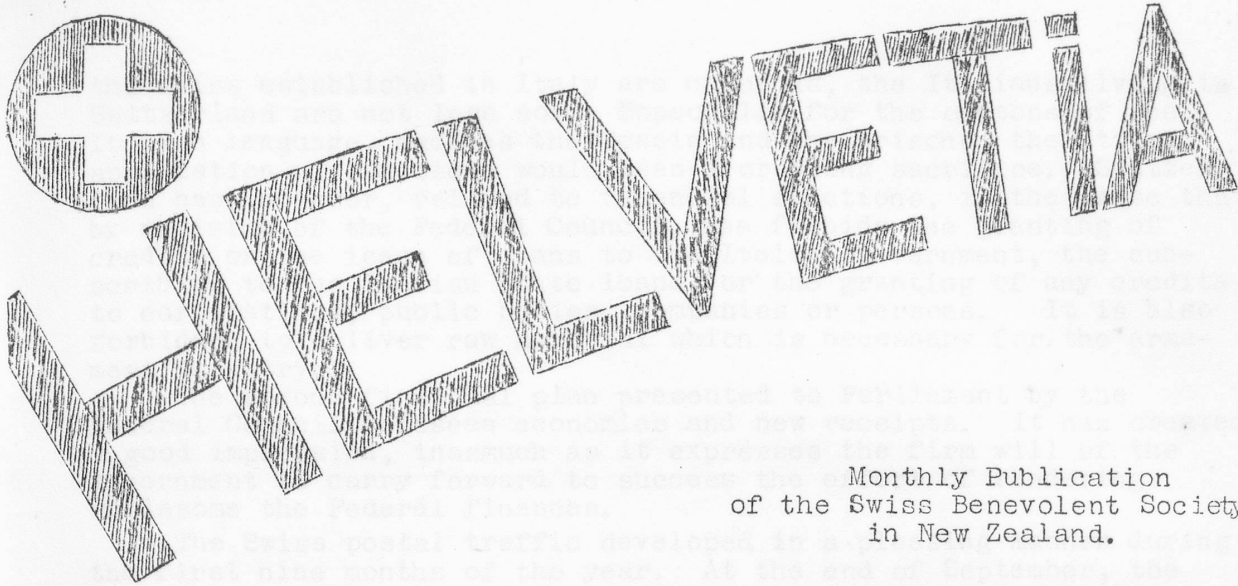
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FAREWELL LUNCHEON TO THE CONSUL.

The Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society wishes to thank all members who helped to make the Luncheon tendered to Mr. Blau a success. The following extract from the N.Z. Herald of April 17th, will best illustrate the function:

Tributes to the work done by Dr. A. C. Blau, retiring Swiss Consul, who will leave by the Mariposa to-night on his return to Switzerland, were paid by speakers at a luncheon tendered to Dr. Blau at the Farmers' Trading Company's tearooms yesterday by Swiss residents of Auckland.

Mr. E. Merz, chairman of the Swiss Benevolent Society, expressed on behalf of the Swiss people throughout the Dominion the regret felt at Dr. Blau's departure. During his term in New Zealand he had rendered excellent service.

A travelling rug and a box made from New Zealand inlaid woods was presented to Dr. Blau by Miss M. Keller on behalf of those present.

Referring to his sorrow at leaving New Zealand, Dr. Blau said he had made many friends in the Dominion, both British and Swiss. He would always retain the happiest memories of his stay here.

We wish to thank the following members for their donations which made the presentation possible:- Messrs. Altherr, Bernhard, Diggelman, Fenk, Guntern, Kaelin, Mathis L. & A., Maurer, Merz, Peyer, Schlaepfer, Schuler A. & H. & F., Steiner John, Jos. A., K. & Ch., Suter, Truetsch, Ungemuth, Walder, Weber, Werder, Zuercher, Steyer, Putman, Mesdames Duss and Gafner. - A total of £10:15:0 was collected and we have credited £2:15:0 towards the fund of the Society, as this sum arrived too late to include with the presentation fund.

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THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF SWITZERLAND.

The position adopted by Switzerland, in the question of sanctions, has been forced upon her, as much on account of the particular geographical and economic situation which she occupies, face to face with Italy, as by virtue of the principles of neutrality which remain at the very base of her political policies. Switzerland entered into the League of Nations in reserving her neutrality, which was formally recognised by the member states of the League, in the Treaty of London of 1920. Switzerland is one of the principal countries for the transit of goods to and from Italy. She has for many years maintained intimate relationships, both economic and cultural, with her southern neighbour, and, if

the Swiss established in Italy are numerous, the Italians living in Switzerland are not less so. Especially for the cantons of the Italian language, such as the Tessin and the Grisons, the strict application of sanctions would mean a crushing sacrifice. Switzerland has, however, rallied to financial sanctions, in the sense that, by decision of the Federal Council, she forbids the granting of credits or the issue of loans to the Italian Government, the subscribing to the Italian State loans, or the granting of any credits to corporations, public bodies, companies or persons. It is also forbidden to deliver raw material which is necessary for the armament industry.

The second financial plan presented to Parliament by the Federal Council foresees economies and new receipts. It has created a good impression, inasmuch as it expresses the firm will of the Government to carry forward to success the effort of rendering wholesome the Federal finances.

The Swiss postal traffic developed in a pleasing manner during the first nine months of the year. At the end of September, the postal auto-cars had transported 4,211,000 passengers, this being 329,000 persons more than during the same period in 1934. If the telegraphic communications show a slight backward trend, the telephonic communications, on the other hand, mark a decided increase. Air transports have also, on their part, shown a great upward movement, both in reference to the number of kilometers flown and to the number of passengers and postal expeditions.

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THE EMENTHAL CHEESE INDUSTRY.

Switzerland, in addition to being an ideal holiday resort, possesses many busy industries, among which - being as she is, a land of milk and honey - the Dairy Industry plays a very important part.

I wonder how many of the thousands of tourists who visit this country yearly and enjoy the excellent Swiss cheese in the hotels, the "wagon-restaurants" and on their manifold excursions, have the vaguest idea as to how the big "cart-wheels" (loaves is the technical name of the enormous Emmental cheeses) or the dainty little wedges, in their attractive cartons, are produced.

As regards the former, these loaves are manufactured in rural cheese factories which exist in nearly every Emmental village and are run by a certified cheese-maker and an assistant, both of whom have usually been trained in the Federal School of Agriculture. These factories are, as a matter of fact, merely small houses, with well-scrubbed tiled floors, spotless deal tables, and enormous polished brass vats. Contrary to what occurs in the Gruyère, the Emmental farmers hardly ever make the cheese themselves, but content themselves by selling all their milk to the factories, where the cheese can be produced under the most approved conditions of modern hygienic requirements. As a general rule, only two cheeses are made each day - one from the morning and the other from the evening milk. The milk is usually carried in flat, wooden receptacles, on the backs of men and youths, or else is transported in large tin cans, to the accompaniment of much barking and tail-wagging, on small wooden carts, drawn by big, shaggy dogs.

It is a wonderful and fascinating sight to see the cheesemaker and his assistant catch and imprison the boiling, floating curds, within the folds of enormous, white cheese-cloths, and then, with a dextrous movement, lift the heavy load of some 100 kilos and place it within a wooden "cart-wheel" frame, under the huge press, in order that all the whey may be squeezed out. This achieved, the "loaf" is placed in a store-room where the temperature can be regulated to any desired degree, and there left to mature for several months, before being placed on the market.

The process employed for the manufacture of carton cheeses, is much more complicated. First of all, the big loaves are taken from the village cheese-making centres to the very modern factory, equipped with all the most perfect hygienic and labour-saving devices, which specializes in the manufacture of carton cheeses. There the loaves are placed in cool cellars and arranged on tiers of shelves. It may easily be imagined what a powerful "cheesy" odour is produced by this accumulated mass of several thousand cheeses, each one weighing approximately 100 kilos! These cheeses are left