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Our appeal for a couple of Christmas Hampers for two unfortunate compatriots seems to have awakened some criticism amongst our members. The question is raised why the Society could not assist from its own funds.

We wish to point out that the society's funds, still small enough, are not intended for distribution of Christmas presents. More deserving and urgent cases will doubtless crop up one day; in fact a case is just reported of a young Swiss who has been in hospital for over six months, who is probably a cripple for life and is now absolutely penniless. Such unfortunate compatriots should of course be assisted but we repeat this can only be done if all our members do their share and contribute the subscription promptly and regularly. We know of various warm-hearted countrymen who would be disappointed if they could not do their part, and that is why we published our appeal to give everyone the opportunity to help. This appeal was meant for Swiss books more than anything else. One of the two compatriots in question is unable to read or write English and unknown to us he has been an inmate of a mental hospital for many years. It is distressing to think of this poor fellow without friends. He also appears to like flower seeds, as he has a small garden plot allotted for his hobby. The other patient is also a sad case, although he is well versed in the English language. Anyone wishing to contribute something, please communicate with the Secretary.

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SWISS SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES WELL CARED FOR.

Neutral Switzerland with a population of 4,068,000 has an army of 500,000 men guarding our frontiers. For the vital national defence she spends daily five million Swiss Francs, or \$1,230,000, a sum which calls for tremendous sacrifices on the part of her people. However, these huge military expenses are only a part of the burden which Swiss citizens have to bear in these critical days.

With the men keeping watch at the front, girls and women of all ages have assumed duties normally confined to the stronger sex. In factories, workshops and on farms they are proudly substituting or taking over additional work. Delicate or old ladies are busily sewing and knitting for the soldiers, while children, everywhere, particularly in rural districts, are proving surprisingly efficient helpers. If ever there were women of leisure in Switzerland these are no more. Almost overnight they have become Red Cross workers, also seamstresses and laundresses who in specially organised "war laundries" or in their own homes, take care of the laundry of soldiers who are unable to have this work done for themselves.

During the World War of 1914-1918 Switzerland quickly made the discovery that the general well-being of her soldiers, on or off duty, was quite as important as adequate military equipment.

In the present emergency the Central Committee for the Welfare of Swiss Soldiers at Berne inaugurated its activities immediately after Army mobilization, based on the experience made 25 years ago. Here soldiers' wives with children may apply for advice, and villages where soldiers have been stationed may obtain information regarding the establishment of Soldiers' Sitting Rooms. Enquiries pour into this bureau in overwhelming numbers, but equally numerous are the offers of volunteers to help.

Financial support to needy families of Swiss soldiers is given by the Federal and Cantonal governments at the rate of 75% and 25% respectively. This assistance is in no way considered as "relief of the poor". In the larger towns the rate is Frs. 2.90 per adult and Frs. 1-2 per child according to age. In small towns this relief is set at Frs. 2.60 Frs. 0.80 and Frs 1.70, while in rural districts the amounts are Frs. 2.20, Frs. 0.70 and Frs. 1.40.

These relief measures, same as the Federal Military Insurance which protects a soldier against need caused by sickness and accident, were established in the Military Act of 1907. In addition there is the "Swiss National Foundation For Our Soldiers and Their Families", also with headquarters in the premises of the Central Committee for the Welfare of Swiss Soldiers at 3 Effingerstrasse, Berne.

A result of the Swiss watch at the frontier from 1914-1918 is the Association "Public Service and Soldiers Welfare" at Zurich, which looks after the sale, at minimum prices of beverages and food in Soldiers' Homes. This Society also procures work for sick soldiers in hospitals and sanatoria.

Newspapers, magazines and books for these soldiers' retreats are furnished by the foundation "Swiss Public Library" formerly known as "Swiss Soldiers' Library", and the Military Commission of the Young Men's Christian Association, with headquarters at Berne and Morges, furnishes them with free writing material. Army chaplains, village pastors, teachers and Women's Benevolent Societies also co-operate in the establishing and upkeep of Soldiers' Sitting Rooms. Such rooms are maintained along the entire Swiss frontier and up to the loneliest mountain regions where the vigil is particularly strenuous for the men.

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The Swiss Radio Concert will take place on Monday 1st January instead of Sunday 6th January.

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New Members.

We welcome the enrolment of two new members.

Mr. Alois Butler, C/o T. Riedi, Peria Road, Matamata.
Mr. A. Hiestand, Oeo Rd. No. 1. R.D., Manaia.

It is also with great pleasure that we welcome back to New Zealand, Miss M. E. Gafner, 75, Vivian Street, New Plymouth, who relinquished her membership a few years ago on account of a prolonged visit to Switzerland and now enrolled again.

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#### A D V E R T I S E M E N T S.

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