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SWITZERLAND AFTER FRANCE'S COLLAPSE

An extraordinary situation has been created in Switzerland, through the collapse of France. Not since the time of Napoleon's rise nearly 140 years ago has a condition similar to today's existed. Contrary to that epoch, when the change was spread over a number of years, today's new situation came almost overnight, and naturally it will take time for the people to realise the far-reaching changes taking place.

Although the final decision is yet to be fought out, the continental war is partly concluded, but the urgent question for our people is: how can we adapt ourselves best to the entirely new orientation? A decisive point is the great change in Europe's previous equilibrium, which in the past was maintained by the democracies on the one side and the Axis-powers on the other. Today, the latter not only encircles the borders of our small country completely, but also do they control all our foreign transport avenues. This position is aggravated through a double-blockade: the continental obstruction against England, and England's blockade against Europe.

A dangerous economic position arises for Switzerland. Large oversea markets were suddenly cut off, and many countries now occupied by Germany are unable to trade with us. The metal and watch industries in particular suffer severely, and great numbers of workers had to be dismissed; some factories even close down. Apart from this, the importation of raw material is well-nigh impossible. Through partial demobilisation of our army, additional unemployed men are walking the streets. However, special efforts are made by Federal - as well as Cantonal - and municipal authorities, to create work at all costs and wherever possible. The eminently difficult task of the Federation is the re-establishment of satisfactory Import and Export; the former to ensure sufficient food and raw materials; the latter to keep the industries occupied. Negotiations, with the belligerents in particular, are in constant progress, and let us hope the deliberations will prove successful.

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