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HELVETIA



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SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY in New Zealand

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AUCKLAND.
MAY, 1941.

6th YEAR : VOL. 8.

NEW YEAR ADDRESS GIVEN BY MONSIEUR E. WETTER
President of the Swiss Confederation.

Members of the Swiss Confederation:

I feel sure I shall be speaking for all of you if I first of all sincerely thank my predecessor President Pilet-Golaz for his devoted, self-sacrificing work for our country and for the Swiss people. The work of the Federal Council (the Bundesrat) and that of the President of the Bund, is difficult today. As time goes on it becomes less and less possible to satisfy the particular expectations, wishes and hopes of every Swiss citizen. Every Swiss can realise that, but that is not the question today. What is essential now is sincere and steadfast purpose, wise judgment and a deeply felt patriotism that is ready for every sacrifice. Only such a patriotic viewpoint can give peace of heart and decision of action both to the Federal Council and to the President of the Confederation.

The future looms dark before us. But one gleam of light is proffered us by the coming year 1941; the memory of the first Swiss Confederation. Six hundred and fifty years have passed by since the year 1291 when in those evil days the men of the vale of Uri, the parishes of the vale of Schwyz and of the forest dwellers in the lower valley joined together to form an eternal union. They swore to assist one another with might and main, with counsel and goodwill, with their lives and their possessions. They swore to preserve order and justice at home and freedom and independence in their foreign relations. They have faithfully kept their oath. Our ancestors have handed down to us, their descendants, a homeland that is free, beloved and beautiful. Through long years of hardship and struggle they have created the unity of our Fatherland. They have succeeded in unifying the different races in our country and in making the nation one and the state strong. They have preserved at the same time the federal basis and the healthy, local life of the cantons.

For all this we have to thank our forefathers now and evermore. Not with empty words; no, with real deeds. It is our duty to see that our country preserves its freedom and independence, that it is for ever our shield and refuge, and that we hand it over to our children sound, free and independent, as we received it. That is our mission. In this sense we are confederates; for this purpose we are bound by our oath.

The coming year will be for all of us a severe and grave one. The war brings difficulties, restrictions, privations and distress not only to the belligerent states. Everybody is involved, for modern war affects the whole economy of the world. We have fortunately so far been spared from grievous hardship. But, instead of the trifling restrictions which now

threaten our comfort rather than our existence, we may suffer in the future from a lack of necessities and from all sorts of privations. Moreover, recent events have shown that, in spite of the most meticulous observation of our duties as a neutral state, we have unfortunately not been spared from actual war damage.

But we must not lose courage and confidence. As confederates we shall face our future lot with stout hearts and do our duty without grumbling. Increased production of everything - that is the solution of the problem for this year. By intensive cultivation of our soil we must make up for deficient imports of foodstuffs; we must adopt a planned war-economy and reserve for cases of necessity the supplies of raw materials imported in insufficient quantities. The whole nation will be obliged to carry out this task, obeying the call of a national duty.

Citizens! it is only in times of stress that the spiritual strength and the greatness of a people is shown. Let us endeavour to be worthy of our forefathers; let us strive to grow greater with the greatness of our appointed task. Let each one do his duty, faithfully, unweariedly, whatever may be his job or his profession.

The Federal Council puts its trust in the Swiss people.

Put your trust, citizens, in the Government. The Government cannot, it is true, relieve you of your heavy burden or spare you these hard trials. But it will take care that the sacrifices to be made are justly divided.

Today, on the threshold of the new year I call upon you all to be united and to work together. If there are things about which we differ in opinion, forget them. They are not essential. But stand firm together in all that unites us: in the love we bear our fatherland in our devotion to our fellow-countrymen.

Let us, therefore, so begin the new year: earnest, resolute, courageous and ready to make all sacrifices as one people. And a great hope shall journey with us - the hope that a kindly fate may soon bring us the fulfilment of the angel's cry: "Peace upon earth and goodwill to all men." -- for the good of all nations, for the blessing of humanity. And may God, who has visibly blessed our fathers, be with us too.

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THE GENERAL'S ADDRESS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Several times during the year just ending, I have taken the opportunity of speaking to you. I then urged you to be steadfast and to hold out. I appealed to your resolution, to your courage and perseverance, and stressed the confidence I had in you. In July, on the Rütli, - that sacred spot - I again expressed my unshaken determination to defend our country and my belief in the Army's power of resistance. Today on New Year's Eve I again speak to you. This is for me not only a duty, but a need and a joy. I feel compelled to address you and, doing so, would like to make this declaration. --

Our task is not yet ended. It still makes demands of every one of us, be he soldier or general. It still calls for hard and tenacious effort, physical as well as spiritual. An unwavering faith must inspire us in our task, that faith which is so needful to us and without which we are powerless. During this year we have seen war rage now near, nor far from our frontiers. In the last few months it has touched our country in a new way: dwellings were destroyed and war claimed innocent victims among our people. We can understand the bitter feeling caused by this. We feel for the stricken families and share their grief. Today, on the 31st December of 1940, as on the 2nd September 1939, and on the 11th May of this year, we must be ready to fight for our Homeland at any moment.

Many of you had leave and were restored to your work and families. Today I speak not only to you soldiers on service, but to all militiamen on leave. In your period of leave make good use of what you have learnt during your military service. Let