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HELVETIA



Monthly Publication of the
SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY in New Zealand

Groupe New Zealand of the N.H.G.

AUCKLAND.
AUGUST 1941.

VOL. 11 - 6th Year.

650th ANNIVERSARY.

MESSAGE BY THE KING.

The following is the text of a telegram from the King to the President and the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation:-

"I desire to convey my warm congratulations on the auspicious occasion of the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation and my best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the Swiss people in the future. The Swiss Confederation was founded by the free choice of its members, whose independence has been so valiantly defended by the Swiss people throughout the centuries and has long been a vital part of European civilisation. The acts of freedom and harmony between the different races so successfully embodied in the Swiss Confederation are fully shared by the peoples of the British Commonwealth, and I am confident that this community of ideals has contributed powerfully to the ties of sympathy which have so long existed between the Swiss peoples."

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APPEAL TO THE SWISS ABROAD.

The defence measures taken to protect the independence of Switzerland and to save the country from the scourge of war have caused considerable expenses. The debts of the Confederation have increased in such a degree that it has become necessary to pay them off without delay. For this purpose the Federal Council has decided to raise a single contribution, a sacrifice for the national defence. Every person domiciled in Switzerland has to make a contribution, amounting for corporate bodies up to 1,5% and for natural persons from 1,5 to 4,5% on the net assets.

The decree regarding the national defence sacrifice provides also for voluntary contributions to be made. The Federal Council wants to afford those who desire to give more than they have to, or those who, though not subject to this sacrifice, nevertheless want to prove their attachment to the homeland, the opportunity to have this wish fulfilled. They were also thinking in this regard of Swiss citizens living abroad.

The Federal Council knows that many of our compatriots abroad have been severely hit by the repercussions of the war and that a sacrifice could not be expected from all of them. But those of

our compatriots who are living abroad in favourable circumstances and who have already so often proved their generosity towards our country, will gladly seize the opportunity offered to them to prove their attachment to their native country through a voluntary gift. This appeal is addressed to them. The Federal Council is thanking them in anticipation.

The Swiss Consulate at Wellington will be glad to give any further information on the subject, as for instance the question of remittance authorities, regarding which, of course, the competent New Zealand authorities would have to be approached officially.

Berne, the 30th January, 1941.

Federal Department of Finance and
Customs. Wetter.

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FEDERAL PRESIDENT WETTER
ON THE ECONOMIC AIMS OF SWITZERLAND.

(Memorable speech delivered by the President of our
Confederation at the opening of the 25th Industries
Fair at Basle.)

When now and again I previously came to Basle, alone and unobserved, I often paid a visit to an old, still and quiet place. This place which is sought after by strangers with Baedeckers in hand is but seldom visited by Swiss generally, because they think that they have no time for such things and therefore it is unknown to them. This place is the spot whereupon the Cathedral stands.

That tall proud Cathedral with its two slender towers, the Basle Minister, built of red sandstone as are some other Cathedrals along the upper Rhine, beautiful already by its colour which lends its warmth and quietude and exalted through its noble architecture. And then the space in front of it. There are in Basle even more elegant spaces, and there are in other towns even more showy groups of buildings; but this modest receding before this proud place of worship, this unassuming, harmonic simplicity, have always made a deep impression upon me and have ennobled this modest place in my eyes.

And that view upon the quiet, powerful river Rhine, which changes now more blueish, now more greenish and then loses itself in the distance as a shining ribbon. And across and above it on the horizon the dark hills. These impressions, together with the old University and the celebrated collection of paintings embodied for me always the old, sedate aristocratic Basle, the Basle of bygone days, the humanistic Basle of the good old times. Since then, Museum and University have been housed in new palaces which are the pride of the present day Basle and which bear witness that even modern times know how to appreciate highly spiritual things. The Cathedral, however, on its lofty eminence above the Rhine has remained, it can be neither replaced nor surpassed by any modern building.

From this high point of observation casting your eye down stream, another picture presents itself, a picture of the modern times: high chimneys, long factory buildings, the home of the chemical Industry, this highly qualified export Industry, which has carried the name of Basle all over the world: the new industrial Basle.

Basle's position as an important European place for Trade and Commerce is due to the natural development of the town. For centuries it was an important junction first of roads, then of railways. When later, with the strong and systematic extension of the European waterways the problem presented itself to Switzerland of joining the great shipping lines and thereby getting into direct communication with the sea, Basle took a