

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 6 (1940-1941)
Heft: 1

Artikel: Official text of a speech made by the President of the Swiss Confederation, on June 25. 1940
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-943006>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 31.12.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

" foodstuffs and fuel; and exports for a livelihood. She has no sea port and her only link with the outer world leads through France (now for the purposes of trading declared enemy territory by Britain), or through Germany or Italy. Switzerland therefore had to negotiate with these countries, and with Germany a Clearing and Trade Treaty, valid until June 1941, has already been concluded. In this treaty Germany guarantees Switzerland the supply of coal and iron."

With Great Britain the negotiations have not been concluded as yet. It is planned to direct imports and exports to and from Switzerland via Lisbon, and it is expected that negotiations will soon bring about the desired results.

In the face of the economic difficulties, with which Switzerland is confronted, it will be understood that the Swiss Government, as an act of self-preservation for the whole country, cannot tolerate in press, assemblies and meetings, any hostile criticism of foreign countries. Therefore, -

6.) "A censorship of the press has been introduced. Newspaper issues have been prohibited or confiscated. The Government warns newspapers against commenting on and sensationally headlining news, which may create difficulties with foreign countries."

The activities of the Communist Party have been prohibited. On the other side the Government is trying to come to an understanding with the newly appearing national front. Whether the latter will be able to gain importance is entirely up to the Swiss people. So far these parties have proved a failure. The democratic tradition has been rooted deep in the minds of the Swiss people, by a regime 600 years old. We may have confidence!

+++++

OFFICIAL TEXT OF A SPEECH MADE BY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, ON JUNE 25, 1940.

In the name of the Swiss Federal Council President Pilet-Golaz on the 25th June 1940 made the following statement over the three Swiss National Radio Stations in French, which was afterwards repeated in German by Federal Councillor Etter, and in Italian by Federal Councillor Celio. The complete official statement of the Federal Council follows here in English translation:
Compatriots!

Probably you have already been wondering why I have remained silent for fully 7 weeks. Did the Federal Council really have nothing to say in face of the events which reeled off on the world screen like a tragic film? The Federal Council had to think, to make provisions, take decisions and act. It could not make speeches. Speech-making is too popular among us. Talking cannot change the course of events by an inch.

If the Federal Council is addressing the Swiss people again today, it is because a tremendous event has occurred, which will have far-reaching consequences. France has just concluded an armistice with Germany and Italy. Whatever may be the sadness which fills the heart of every Christian confronted with so much desolation and loss of life, it is nevertheless a great relief to us Swiss people to know that our great neighbours have now entered the path of peace: These neighbours with whom we have such close spiritual and economic links, these neighbours who figuratively meet on the peaks of our heaven-scaling mountains and whose culture has been enriching us for centuries, just as the streams descending from the Gotthard Ranges have been fertilising their plains.

This re-assurance -- the word may be the right expression for it -- is natural, human, especially to unobtrusive neutrals who so far have been spared in every respect. We cannot, however, allow ourselves to be deceived by it. To give ourselves up to illusions of a state of carefree happiness would be dangerous. The difficult present will be followed by too difficult a future to allow us to fall back indifferently into the past. An armistice does not yet mean peace, and our part of the world remains in a state of alarm.

Inasmuch as war will no longer be raging around our frontiers we can, it is true, immediately contemplate partial and gradual demobilisation. Demobilisation, however, will confront our fundamentally altered national economy with delicate tasks. International co-operation, which is so necessary for the prosperity of nations, has not yet been restored by a long way. Great Britain is announcing her determination to continue the fight on land, on sea and in the air. Before Europe can begin to rise again, it must find its new equilibrium, which no doubt will be very different from the previous one and will be built up on different foundations from those the League of Nations was unable to build in spite of its vain efforts. Everywhere in all directions, spiritual and material, economical and political, the necessary reconstruction will call for tremendous efforts, which in order to be effective will have to be made independently of antiquated formulae. This cannot be done without painful renunciations and heavy sacrifices. Take for instance in this respect our trade, our industry, our agriculture. How hard the re-adjustment to fit the new conditions will be! In the fulfilment of our first duty, namely to secure for everybody daily bread, that nourishes the body, and to secure work, which strengthens the soul, obstacles will have to be overcome, which less than a year ago were thought to be unsurmountable. To achieve such a result, which is of paramount importance for the salvation of the country, important decisions will be necessary and indeed decisions about which we shall not be in a position previously to confer, to discuss or to weigh at length. There will be decisions to be both considered and adopted immediately on the basis of our own full powers to act. Yes, indeed, I say our own full powers to act. For let us be conscious of the fact that the times in which we live, will deprive us of many former comfortable and easy-going, I might almost say, antiquated habits.

Be that as it may, we must not confuse worn-out ways with tradition, that life-giving sap, that rises from the roots of history. Tradition on the contrary requires regeneration, because its essential characteristic is not to remain on the same spot, but to march forward from the past into the future with understanding and good sense. This is not the moment to look backwards wistfully. With our eyes resolutely forward, we must allow our modest, but useful strength to co-operate in the regeneration of a changing world.

The Federal Council has promised you the truth. It will tell you the truth without palliation and without timidity. The moment of internal re-birth has come. Everyone of us must put off his old self. That does not mean babbling, but thinking, not arguing at great length, but working, not enjoying, but producing, not demanding, but giving.

True, this will not be achieved without moral and material pains and sufferings. Let us not be blind to the fact that we shall have to impose restrictions on ourselves. Before thinking of ourselves, we shall have first to think of others, outside and within our boundaries, of the disinherited, the weak and the unfortunate. It will not be enough to give away part of our super-abundance as alms, we shall certainly also be forced to give away part of what we formerly thought necessary for ourselves. It will not be the gift of the wealthy, but the widow's mite. We certainly will have to renounce many of our comforts, which weigh heavily in our esteem, because they are an unconscious manifestation of our egoism. But instead of impoverishment it will mean for us enrichment; we shall again return to the healthy habit of working much and toiling for modest recompense, whereas until now we often nourished the hope to gain much with as little toil as possible. Does not joy come only from effort? Ask sportsmen, they know this since long ago. More than of ourselves, that is of our own comfort, we shall have to think of others and of their essential requirements. This is true solidarity, of deeds and not of words and parades, that solidarity which is founding national co-existence, through work and order, these two great constructive forces, on confidence and unity. Work: The Federal Council will create work for the Swiss people under all circumstances, cost it

what it may. Order: It is innate in us, and I am convinced that with the help of all good citizens it can be preserved without difficulty. They will also appreciate that the Government must act, fully conscious of its responsibility, and that it will fulfil its duties towards the outside world, and within the country, above all parties, in the service of all Swiss, who are sons of one and the same soil.

Compatriots, it is up to you to follow the Government as a sure and devoted guide, who will not always be in a position to state, to explain and give reasons for its decisions. Events march swiftly, we have to adjust ourselves to their rhythm. Only in this way shall we be able to secure the future. Personal, regional and party differences of opinion will merge together in the melting pot of national interest, which is the supreme law.

Compatriots! Close your ranks behind the Federal Council, remain calm, as it too is calm, remain steadfast, as it too is steadfast, have confidence, as it too has confidence. Heaven will lend us its protection also in the future, if we prove worthy of it. Courage and determination, spirit of self-sacrifice, are the redeeming virtues. Through them our free, humane, understanding and hospitable fatherland will be in a position to continue to fulfil its brotherly mission which is inspired by the great European cultures. Swiss, my brethren, in a manner worthy of the past, let us step out into the future, courageously and whole-heartedly. God may watch over us!

+++++

COLLECTION FOR SWISS SOLDIERS.

Your Committee wishes to acknowledge further substantial donations received during the past few weeks. The names of these friends appear below and we wish to express our sincerest thanks for the generosity displayed:

J. Basler, Auckland ✓ A. Bernhard, Putaruru ✓ Mrs. Dalgleish, Auckland ✓
W. Froelich, Lichfield ✓ M. Fox, Onehunga ✓ G. Giacometti, Okaiwa ✓ Mrs. M. Just, Dunedin ✓
A. Komminoth, Cheviot ✓ J. Kuriger, Oanui ✓ H. Merz, Henderson ✓
M. Roth, Auckland ✓ K. Schmid, Mangatoki ✓ A. Steiner, Lichfield ✓
J. Schumacher, Stratford ✓ C. J. Schumacher, Ngaere ✓ G. Strotz, Otakeho ✓
E. Widmer, Stratford ✓ L. Zimmermann, Otakeho ✓ F. Schuler, Tokoroa ✓
"Anglo-Swiss" ✓

The Consulate in Wellington arranged to remit these collections, approx. £32, to Switzerland at the disposal of the Swiss Soldiers' Relief Fund. No sooner had the letter, addressed to the Swiss Foreign Office regarding this remittance left Wellington, when further donations came to hand. Thus, the bottom of our bag is covered again! Many thanks to the donors and a hearty invitation to others who have not contributed anything, to do their part now. Remember! the bag remains open for further donations.

An official acknowledgment of the first remittance of our collection cabled to Switzerland, has been received by our Consul in Wellington. We have great pleasure in reproducing the text of the letter in its original form and the respective translation:

DON NATIONAL SUISSE POUR NOS SOLDATS ET LEURS FAMILLES.

Berne, le 25 Juin 1940.
Monbijou Str. 6.

Monsieur Le Consul,

Nous avons l'honneur de vous accuser réception de la somme de fr. suisses 2860.-

contre-valeur de : Liv. néo-zélandaises 220.-, 9 sh., 3 pence
que le Département politique Fédéral, Division des Affaires
Etrangères, à Berne, vient de nous remettre de votre part, en faveur de l'oeuvre du "Don national suisse pour nos soldats et leurs familles", à titre de don volontaire de nos compatriotes établis en Nouvelle-Zélande.