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gleaned from the fact that when vacation time came in pre-war summers, he hired nothing less than a Federal Postal Motor Coach to take his attractive wife and ten children all together to their holiday abode near Unterägeri in his native canton of Zug.

As an able citizen Mr. Etter, who incidentally does not consume any alcohol, belongs to the Swiss Army, holding in the same the rank of Major of Infantry.

Since his election into the Federal Council, Mr. Etter has done a great deal for the intellectual and artistic development of Switzerland and the preservation of the nation's political and cultural heritage. As head of the Swiss nation in the fateful year of 1939 he gave eloquent proof of his many fine qualities, his fervent patriotism and his great skill in steering the ship of state. The hard-pressed Swiss people feel therefore confident that Mr. Etter will again be a distinguished President during the year 1942.

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SWISS NEWS SUMMARY.

Federal Councillor Dr. Stampfli spoke on the 23rd November, 1941, on Switzerland's position in the third winter of war. He maintained that while the Swiss citizen was not expected to give up his personal rights and to submit to dictatorship, yet certain restrictions, particularly with regard to freedom of speech and the press, had become necessary in order not to upset relations with the belligerent parties. Today Switzerland's trade position was more difficult than it had been in 1914-1918; the fall of France had exposed all Swiss frontiers to the German counter-blockade. Nevertheless, continued Dr. Stampfli, Switzerland was trying to maintain trade relations with the whole world and to be fair to both sides. Switzerland had made serious efforts to obtain certain relaxations of the counter-blockade in England's favour. If the agreement had caused disappointment in London, that was not Switzerland's fault, she had done everything in her power. The speaker concluded with an appeal to the Swiss to put all their energy into their work, to save and not to lose faith in the future.

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The fourth Federal loan to cover the cost of mobilisation and the future requirements of finance had an unexpected good result, although the interest conditions are extraordinarily low. For the 100 millions 2½% Treasury bonds asked for, 250 millions were offered and instead of the 250 millions 3¼% stock required, 325 millions were subscribed. In view of this readiness to invest, the Federal Council has increased the Treasury bond issue to 270 millions and the stock to 320 millions.

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Almost as a completion of the turnover tax which came into force a few weeks ago, now an increase of the war profits tax has just been announced. The tax free limit has been lowered and the tax increased. The tax which up to now was 30 and 40% on the increased profits has now been put up to 50 and 70%. This increase will come into force already in the present tax period.

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After many years of deliberations which have been retarded by the war, the Federal Assembly has recently completed a law which will liquidate the indebtedness of farms which are vitally sound, but overburdened by debts. This is to be done with the assistance of the Confederation and especially drawn-up legislation. The share of the Confederation to which are to be added contributions by the cantons and certain debt remissions by the creditors, has been fixed at 100 millions Swiss francs. This amount will be paid into a debt remission fund in yearly instalments of 5 millions for 20 years and although the date for the coming into force of the law has not yet been fixed, the first instalment of the share of the Confederation is to be taken into the budget for 1942.

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The inhabitants of the Hinter Rheintal in the Grisons like those in the Urserental in the canton of Uri, are fighting against the project of a power works which would submerge completely the villages of Splügen Medels and Nufenen. At an extra-ordinary "Landsgemeinde" at which 79% of those entitled to vote took part, it was decided to oppose with all means possible the building of this work and they have called for the assistance of the cantonal Government. Even the promises of ample compensation and new settlements under the most advantageous conditions can persuade neither the people of the Grisons, nor of Uri to let their old homes be drowned in the reservoirs of the power works.

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A further decrease in the population of St. Gall is recorded in the statistics just published to the end of 1940. The inhabitants now number 63,321 or more than 12,000 less than thirty years ago but while the percentage of foreigners in 1910 amounted to 33% it is now reduced to 12.1%, i.e. from 24,900 to 7,664. The Roman Church is finding increased favour its adherents numbering 29,432 against 30,810 protestants. Death has scored over the number of births by 21.

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The cultivated land in the canton Vaud has increased by about 15% during the last twelve months and covers now 42,190 hectares; the production of vegetables shows an increase of 40%, potatoes 13.8 and cereals 12.5%.

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The provision coupons for December contain for the first time four coupons which will entitle the holder to four meals in a Restaurant. Although the position of provisioning demands the greatest economy and plainness, many a person will be pleased to be able to have a good feed out during the festive season.

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The brown seeds of the tobacco plant contain a useful table oil. In order to obtain as much as possible of this oil the Federal Military Provisioning Department has ordered the 4,000 tobacco growers to let the fourth part of their plants grow until the ripening of the seeds, and not to cut off the leaves as is generally the practice. It is calculated that in this way about 100,000 litre of this oil will be produced, the price per kg. of seeds is guaranteed at 1.50 frs. A particularly good result is obtained from a tobacco plantation which was started a few years ago on the right bank of the Rhone near Aigle on a previously sandy and swampy soil. Climatic and ground conditions are such that a specially excellent tobacco plant has been cultivated there which produces stems 3.5 m. high with large, fine leaves. This particular plant produces besides very fine tobacco also a large quantity of seeds. This year the plantation produced 35,000 kg. of tobacco leaves and 20,000 kg. of seeds, from which about 10,000 litre of oil was gained.

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The use of coal which in 1910 amounted to 2.83 millions grew in 1939, including the stocks, to 3.97 million tons. In 1939 the use for house coal amounted to 40.9% of the imported coal, the transport undertakings, railways and shipping 3.6%, the remainder was distributed over industrial and gas works.

Previous to the first World War the Federal Railways required 761,000 tons or 22.7% of the total imports; in 1939, however, thanks to the electrification of the main lines, only 92,000 tons were used or 2.7% of the imports.

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A new process by which copper and aluminium can be reliably soldered together has been discovered by the Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon. This new combination, which up to now was not possible, is of the utmost importance in the construction of electric machines, for which more and more light metal is used in place of the very expensive copper. The patented process consists in a simple spreading of a special alloy over the heated aluminium parts. This alloy immediately forms a union with the aluminium surface and can be soldered in the usual way like copper or brass. Aluminium can be soldered to aluminium or copper without salt or acids as fluxing medium.

This new process will no doubt increase the utility sphere of aluminium.

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In order to preserve the stock of cattle as well as a measure of price regulation the Federal War Provisioning Department ordered a third meatless day since the beginning of December. Accordingly no meat from warm blooded animals is allowed to be sold or consumed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Wednesdays, however, "Blut and Leberwürste" are allowed to be eaten. Since the introduction of two meatless days in May last, the slaughtering in the larger slaughter houses has decreased by 20% compared with last year.

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According to a recent Federal edict wine growers have to collect and surrender the grape-stones from which by a special process the oil will be extracted. These stones are stated to contain about 10% of oil which after treatment can be used for industrial purposes. The machinery for treating the stones is supplied by a Swiss company and production is to be started in the vineyards of the canton Valais.

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An amount of 1.11 million Swiss francs has been paid by the British Government as compensation for the damage done in districts round Geneva and Renens in the night of June 11th/12th, 1940, when the R.A.F. accidentally released some bombs. - In a similar occurrence when the neighbourhood of Zurich was concerned on December 22nd/23rd, 1940, the damage to life and property has been assessed and agreed at Frs. 800,000.

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Early winter has visited Switzerland. On 23rd October a 50 year old shepherd was snow-bound for 30 days in his hut on the alp Bogarten in the canton of Appenzell. He had with him 7 goats, 1 he-goat and 2 pigs. Luckily he had enough fodder for his animals, but he himself had for several days nothing but goats milk.

Somewhat better placed was a Director of one of the Pilatus Hotels, who with his wife and two maid servants was cut off from the outside world for nearly a month. The railway had stopped running and avalanches broke the telephones lines, and with a temperature of 9 to 14 degrees of frost and tremendous blizzards blowing it was impossible to leave the house. After ten days of hard work by fifty men in a breakdown gang it was possible to free the imprisoned party.

October passed out with renewed snow falls, which reached far into the middle land. In many places the potato harvest has not been gathered. So for instance the mountain village of Hemberg in the Toggenburg was totally snowed in and was cut off from the outside by over five feet of snow. Already avalanches are reported from all over the country as the snow is lying only very loosely.

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During the last two years, about 450 villages in the German speaking part of Switzerland have been visited in order to make records of dialect expressions and designations of things, which are to be collected in a language atlas. This scientific and ultimately important work is directed by two Zurich professors, Baumgartner and Hotzenköcherle, and is expected to be completed in about seven years.

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The railway across the Brünig pass from Interlaken via Meiringen to Luzern has been electrified. The work which took about two years is technically a great success, but the budgeted amount of 13 millions is not sufficient owing to the increased costs of the material required. The time of the journey from Meiringen to the pass-height is reduced by half and the 16 electric locomotives will replace 16 valley and 18 mountain engines.

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The first gas-turbine locomotive in the World has just finished its trial runs. It has been invented and built by Brown Boveri, in Baden. The technical-scientific reports now available prove that this is a most valuable invention. The locomotive consumed on the trial runs with an average load of 1,200 - 1,300 H.P., 500 kg. fuel oil. A medium steam locomotive with an equal capacity would use about 1,300 kg. of coal and 9,000 kg. of water.

The latest steam locomotives have an efficiency of 9-10%, whereas the gas turbine locomotive has 17%. The new locomotive which requires only cheap oil, but no coal or water, is particularly suitable for countries poor of water.

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In the night of 5th October Switzerland reverted to normal time, i.e., has put back the clock one hour. The regulation issued by the Military authorities states that the black-out has to start at 10 p.m. instead of 11 p.m. and the Broadcasting stations are also closing down at 10 p.m.

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At the beginning of October the last contingent of the small holiday guests who spent a few weeks in Switzerland have now returned to their homes. 200 Swiss children whose parents live in Belgium were the last ones to leave. The Swiss children living in Germany, about 400 returned at the end of September, as have also those living in France, followed by 34 from Holland and 9 from Czecho Slovakia. From Italy 120 small children were able to spend their holidays in Switzerland, but all these could not fill the vacant places put at the disposal of these little guests, so that a number of convalescent children from the French speaking part of Switzerland made use of the so kindly offered homes.

In the interests of equal provisioning the Federal War Provisioning Department has just completed a stocktaking and rationing of eggs. The monthly ration for adults and children is three eggs. Owners of chickens are allowed to use for own consumption the annual produce of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  chicken per person permanently boarded with the family, the remaining eggs have to be handed over to the collecting stations.

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#### AUCKLAND DISTRICT'S FIRST PICNIC.

Do you know what happened in Auckland on the 8th February? The Auckland District of the Swiss Benevolent Society had a picnic at Point Chevalier, this lovely beach with playing grounds easily accessible by tram from all parts of the city. From early in the morning, our compatriots arrived with their families from all parts of the Auckland District, happy to meet other fellow countrymen and spend a day with them, chatting with one and another. Unfortunately the weather was not too good and it was rather cold, but in spite of this, old and young met together at this nice spot. A sheltered place was found where we sat together in small groups, enjoying the good company which many of us had missed for years. All the morning some of our members sat on a bench near the tram terminus, receiving all the Swiss who were anxious to meet compatriots and guiding them to the chosen place for our picnic. To call attention to themselves as the "Reception Committee", they wore a little flag with the white cross on the red field, which brings to some of us happy remembrances of past times. It was great to see how everyone was happy to meet old friends and make new acquaintances. We were also very pleased that Mr. L. Zuercher from Hastings found the way to our picnic and hope that on future occasions we may be able to welcome more visitors from other Districts.

Just before lunch a movement started in our groups - what was it? All the water lovers started to get ready for a nice swim in the sea, for the tide was just full in. One after the other went in and swam through the water though it was a little bit cold and choppy due to a fresh breeze, but it was very much appreciated. When the swimmers came back, most of them found lunch ready for them, and how inviting did it look all over our camping place! All cooking art was here presented and our compatriots from the country showed proudly the products of their gardens. "A guete" sounded from everywhere but this was hardly necessary as everything was so well prepared beforehand by all the ladies. After we had been fortified by a good meal, Messrs. E. Brauchli and C. Ding got ready to start the Sports, competitions for married and unmarried ladies, men of all ages, and children. There were enough competitions to keep us busy for a great part of the afternoon. Nice prizes were handed over to the winners of the various sports competitions. Some of these prizes had been chosen and bought by Mrs. Brauchli and Mrs. Moosberger, members of our social committee, while others had been kindly donated by the members of our society, Messrs. G. Kerler and A. Peyer. All the prizes were very welcome and you could see the winners walking around showing with a happy smile of contentment, their well-earned prizes. Big Charley had a small but significant one, specially chosen for him (as a joke) by one of the ladies.

After the sports we all got together for a nice sing song and everyone who possibly could joined in, singing some of our well-known songs from home. I am sure that it was a great pleasure for us all to sing and listen to our familiar songs. Little by little our friends had to leave regretting that this successful meeting had come to an end.

M. ROTH.

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#### NOTES OF THE AUCKLAND COMBINED DISTRICT AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE.

The combined District and Social Committee wishes to express their heartiest thanks to all, members and non-members of our Swiss Benevolent Society, who have contributed to the great success of our first picnic by attending it and helping to cover our expenses for the prizes by their generous gifts we have collected. Further we are very thankful to Mr. G. Kerler for the nice prizes he generously donated to us.

Photographs of the picnic can be obtained through the Auckland District and Social Committee at the following prices:  $1/4$  Plate ( $4\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ") 1s.0d; Enlargement ( $8$ " x  $6$ ") 3s.6d.

Proofs of these photographs will be shown by the following members: -

Mr. W. Ungenuth, Ferry Building, Auckland, C.I.

Mr. J. Schlaepfer, Ostrich Farm, Pukekohe.