

**Zeitschrift:** Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Herausgeber:** Swiss Society of New Zealand  
**Band:** 9 (1943-1944)  
**Heft:** 3

**Rubrik:** Sundry news from Switzerland

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**Download PDF:** 19.08.2025

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They come from all over Switzerland for an intensive course preparatory to assignments in Greece, in Crete, in Albania - everywhere that the scourge of war has been most hideous.

Each time the headlines report a new move in the war, it means more work for Europe's professional neutral.

The Allied victories in Africa and the rout of Rommel's Africa Corps mean a tide of new index cards, German and Italian, in Geneva; new lists of prisoners, more correspondence flowing through the last link between the two worlds that are at war.

If it keeps up, say the Swiss, all of Switzerland, not just a third or a half, will be doing war work.

Being umpire in a global war is rapidly becoming a full-time job."

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland is busy with preparations for the general parliamentary election which takes place on October 30th and 31st. The electoral campaign is on the whole a very calm one. It is not expected that any fundamental changes will take place. Three states councillors have already been re-elected, as there were no opposing candidates, namely, the two representatives of the Canton of Vaud and Mr. Wenk, representative of the City of Basle. For the 197 seats in the National Council, approximately 1,000 candidates are being listed. 38 national councillors are retiring and are therefore not running for re-election.

The governments of the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud have declared that the list for the parliamentary election presented by the Workers Parties of the two cantons are unacceptable in as far as they include names of candidates who formerly belonged to the forbidden political organization led by Mr. Leon Nicole. Nicole's party was forbidden for its Communistic tendencies and its adherents are therefore ineligible for parliamentary election.

The National Council reaffirmed the prohibition of the Communist Party which was enacted by the government shortly after the outbreak of the war. A petition for the removal of the ban of the Communist Party was turned down by a great majority.

The Italian Legation in Bern stated that it had received from Pope Pius XII through the intermediary of the Papal Nuntius in Bern a large sum of money for the assistance of Italian refugees in Switzerland.

A funeral ceremony was held on October 5th, in the picturesque Ragaz, Graubuenden, for the 14 members of the crews of flying fortresses which crashed on Swiss soil on October 1st. Representatives of the American Legation in Bern attended the ceremonies. The fliers were buried in a common grave. A detachment of the Swiss Army rendered them the last honors, and fired the honor salute.

The electors of the City of Lucerne have adopted by 3151 to 4022 a law according to which a citizen who is over 65 years of age can no longer be a member of the City Council or executive branch of the city's government.

Details of the sinking of the Swiss ship "Maloja" in Corsican waters on September 7th, reveal that of the crew of 25 on board when the ship went down, 3 Portuguese lost their lives and a Dutchman and a Swiss were injured. The injured men are in hospital care in Corsica. The remaining members of the crew are reported to be in Algiers. It is not yet known who torpedoed the "Maloja".

A serious railroad accident has taken place Sunday evening, October 17th. A slow train running from Bern to Lucerne was held up in the Schüpheim Station to let the Lucerne-Bern express through. When the express train was running past the local train, a station employee turned the switch too quickly and the last two cars of the express train jumped the track and crashed into the local train's engine. The accident caused three deaths among the passengers in these two cars, and injured some 40 others.

The General Meeting of the Swiss Winterhelp Funds was held in Zurich. Professor Rohn, President of the Council of the Federal Institute of Technology was confirmed as president. The chief aim of this fund is to help those who suffer most from the increased cost of living. Last winter a collection amounting to over 3 million Swiss Francs made it possible to help more than 22,000 persons.

Swiss observatories registered on October 14th, a new series of earthquakes. Shocks could be felt in the Cantons of Schaffhausen, Thurgau, Zurich, Aargau and St. Gall. No damage is reported.

A Swiss ship building company which has its headquarters near Basel inaugurated last Monday in the presence of General Guisan and several high army officers and representatives of the civil authorities, a home for sailors. This building is to be used by young Swiss sailors and officers who will find there a home for rest and a place to spend their vacation on their return from sailing the high seas with the Swiss Merchant Marine. The establishment can also be used as a center of instruction for future sailors and officers of the Swiss Marine.

Refugees in Switzerland. According to a statement issued by the Federal Justice and Police Department, the refugees to which Switzerland at present is host, numbered on the 6th of October, 1943, over 61,000. The Federal Council has voted a further credit of 3 million Swiss francs for the housing and welfare of these unfortunate people.

Unemployment non-existent in Switzerland. The situation on the labour market remained more or less stationary during the month of July. The number of unemployed registered at Labour Exchanges showed a further decline and had fallen to 3004 at the end of the month.

More Factories in Switzerland. During the second quarter of the current year, the number of firms subject to factory law in Switzerland showed a further increase of 89 units recruited for the most part in the machine, clothing, wood-working and metal transforming industries. Within a year, the number of firms subject to factory law has increased by 297. At the end of June, 1943, the total number of factories registered in Switzerland was 9006.

Swiss industrial activity. Industrial activity in Switzerland during the second quarter of the present year can be classified as follows: good for 29% of the firms involved, satisfactory for 52% and bad for the remaining 18%.

Prospects for the third quarter were estimated as good or satisfactory by 38.4% of industrial firms; as bad by 15.8%, and uncertain by 45.8%. The outlook for the wood-working, stone-mason, quarrying and building trades seemed particularly favorable, whereas in the textile industry prospects were generally bad, owing to the raw material shortage.

The wool supply situation. During the first eight months of 1939, Switzerland's wool imports averaged 1,275 tons; in 1941 the volume of imported wool fell to 412 tons and in 1942 to 154 tons. This decline would have had most unfortunate results, had not energetic measures been taken in regard to substitute materials and the salvaging of worn goods, to be used in conjunction with reserve stocks constituted before the war.



Public ownership of Swiss electric power stations. Of the 180 electric power stations in Switzerland, 120 are owned by municipalities, 14 by cantons and 45 by private companies.

Financially, 70% of the capital invested in these plants has been put up by cantonal and municipal authorities.

As regards distribution, 2587 localities, namely, 77% of all Swiss townships and communities, receive their electric power supply from cantonal and municipal-owned plants.

Street-cars are in fashion. Owing to the petrol shortage, public street conveyances are being used more and more in Switzerland.

The statistics shown by the Zurich Tramways - one of the most important municipal transport organisations in the country - are very significant in this respect. In 1942, more than 100 million passengers made use of the trams and buses in this city as compared with 93.4 millions the year before. The 1939 record - the year of the Swiss National Exhibition - has been exceeded by 5 millions.

Post-war commercial aviation in Switzerland. Before the war, Switzerland always endeavoured to develop her international air-lines by keeping the lead in technical progress in Europe, and by ensuring the comfort and security of her passengers. Switzerland was the first to introduce a fast commercial airplane with movable landing under-carriage.

As soon as the war is over, one of the first tasks "Swissair", the Swiss international airline company, will have to meet, will be that of re-establishing connections with the nearest world centres such as Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Budapest, etc., this will be done with its fleet of 14 and 21-seater Douglas planes. Later, "Swissair" will have to secure passenger, postal and parcel transport to airports situated along inter-continental routes, by means of powerful new long-distance planes.

The importance of Switzerland's trade relations with the chief countries of the world and the future great demand for swift means of communication, will certainly justify the linking of Switzerland to the terminal ports of North Atlantic lines in Portugal and Ireland, to South Atlantic air routes starting from Spain or Dakar and to Orient lines leaving Greece or Egypt. "Swissair" also proposes to establish direct air communications with Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

A shooting society celebrates its 500th anniversary. The Shooting Society of Schwyz recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of its foundation. There are documents extant to prove that it dates back to 1443.

A new achievement in Swiss locomotives building. The Berne-Loetschberg - Simplon Railway Company, one of the most progressive companies as regards the building of locomotives and light auto-motor engines, has ordered two new locomotives from Messrs. Brown Boveri in Baden, which revolutionize locomotive engineering. This new type will have only four axles and no supporting wheels. It will weight 80 tons and each axle will therefore have to support a weight of 20 tons. This locomotive will cross the Loetschberg drawing a 420-ton train at an average speed of 75 kms. per hour. It will weigh 60 tons less than the type of locomotive now in use.

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SWISS BROADCASTS: According to information received from compatriots in New Zealand, the twice weekly broadcasts to Australia and New Zealand, transmitted from the Swiss National Broadcasting Station at Schwarzenburg are now received very well again.

Wave length: 25.61 m and from the 21st December also on the  
16 m band

Time: 7.15 to 9.00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

We would be pleased to hear from members what their experiences on the reception of these broadcasts are.