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**Autor:** [s.n.]  
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# HELVETIA

Monthly Publication of the



SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY  
in New Zealand

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Group New Zealand of the N.H.G.

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WELLINGTON.

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## SWITZERLAND CONTINUES ITS BATTLE FOR SELF - SUFFICIENCY.

The year 1943 has seen the fulfillment of the fifth stage of Switzerland's intensified cultivation program, known as the Wahlen Plan (Dr. Fritz Wahlen, head of the Swiss Federal Agricultural Experimental Institute being its originator). Work on this part of the program was begun in the autumn of 1942 when 100,000 additional hectares of land were set aside for agricultural purposes. (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). Only half of this area could be used immediately, while another quarter consisted of woodlands to be cleared; 20,000 hectares were pastureland from which rocks had to be removed and 50,000 hectares were wasteland which had to be drained.

The goal set for the first five stages of this plan was to increase the arable land in Switzerland, so that in case of necessity the nation could be entirely self-supporting for its food. Although the increase in the area of land under wheat has not yet reached the required acreage, 1943 harvests of vegetables and potatoes cover the country's needs, calling for no additional planting for the time being.

Since a percentage of wheat still has to be imported bakers in Switzerland have since May 1943 been authorised to mix 15% to 20% of potato flour with regular flour for bread.

In the program established for the sixth stage of the agricultural extension plan during the 1943-44 period, the results obtained so far have been carefully considered. This is particularly the case as far as disafforestation is concerned which, in certain parts of Switzerland, has not yet reached the surface specified in the plan, whereas in other districts it exceeds the same.

In this sixth stage cultivation of the sugar-beet is to be increased and production of rape-seed to be tripled, in order to provide the population with an adequate oil ration.

Besides intensified cultivation the production of feed for cattle has to be increased, so that the Swiss national herd may, as far as possible, be maintained at its present size. This goal is to be achieved by producing more synthetic fodders and by the cultivation of fodder as a main produce.

After experiments with soya-bean planting proved most satisfactory in 1942 at Saas-Fee, in the Valais, 5900 feet a/s, similar tests have been made in 1943 in the Lower Engadine region of the canton of the Grisons, i.e. at Ponte, Zernez and Schuls. Only seed-beans specially treated for high altitude planting were

used. Since soya-bean straw surpasses several times the nutritive value of oats it is possible to use it as feed for horses.

Before the war Switzerland used to import 800,000 tons of feed for cattle per annum. These imports have diminished considerably since the outbreak of hostilities, and during certain periods have been completely interrupted. Thanks to home production and to the measures taken by the government which include the building of silos costing 40 million francs, Switzerland expects to be able to provide sufficient feed for her cattle.

Even in normal times empty lots or unused land were a rare sight in Switzerland. Now, in harmony with the intensified cultivation program, industrial firms and the railways, especially the government-owned lines, have placed any and all of their idle property in the service of the nation. Last year personnel of the Swiss Federal Railroads drained almost 50 acres of wasteland, boosting the total area now cultivated by these employees to an approximate five hundred acres. Principal crops were potatoes, a variety of vegetables, maize and cereals in general. Hazel-bushes were planted on very steep railroad banks.

In view of the increased cultivation program a Federal decree in 1942 ordered farm labor for all young people, students and otherwise, from 16-20 years of age, either in groups or single, at planting and harvest times, and when necessary, between such periods. This measure has worked out well and has eliminated any possible waste. Soldiers, too, are ordered to assist farmers when the necessity arises.

In order to insure a proper distribution of available supplies a strict system of rationing prevails in Switzerland. In addition, a swift and efficient conservation of harvested crops, by means of excellent dehydration equipment, has also been made possible. Everywhere there are modern plants, either subsidized by the Federal government or individual localities and districts, where farmers for a modest fee can have vegetables, grass, sugar-beet tops, cereals, grape seeds, etc., dried electrically.

The need for oil for domestic purposes is particularly acute in Switzerland. Already early in the war it was discovered that tobacco seeds yield 40% of a good quality oil which can without previous refining be used for cooking. As a result Swiss tobacco planters were given instructions by the government to let part of their crops mature into seeds. Other Swiss sources for oil are beech-nuts, also the seeds of poppies, rape plants and grapes. The oil value of grape seeds is a recent discovery which is being systematically exploited in Swiss vineyard regions.

Entirely new and startling are the results of experiments made with coffee grounds. It has been found that they, too, yield valuable oil. All users of coffee in Switzerland, householders, hotels, restaurants and institutions have consequently been ordered to save them and dry them for government use on a warm stove, or in the sunshine. The old adage "necessity is the mother of invention" has thus proved itself again and again in Switzerland.

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SWISS PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The election held for the National Council (Conseil National, Nationalrat), on October 30 and 31, resulted in the following distribution of seats:

Socialists	56	formerly	45
Liberals (largest group in the Old Council)	47	"	50
Catholic Conservatives	43	"	41
Farmers, Tradesmen and Citizen's Party	22	"	22
Independents	6	"	10
Liberal-Conservatives	8	"	8