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NEW MEMBERS.

It affords us much pleasure to announce the enrolment of further new members recently:

Mr. F.X. Huwyler, Box 4, Kai-iwi, Wanganui.
 Mr. E. Meier, R.D. 2, Manaia, Taranaki.
 Mr. Joe Langenberger, Poro Poro, Whakatane.
 Mr. E. Murer, Owhango, King Country.
 Mrs. Ida Schicker, Mangatoki, Taranaki.

CONGRATULATIONS.

The Central Committee of the S.B.S. wishes to extend hearty Congratulations to the Taranaki Organisers for the splendid success of the great August Celebration held recently at Lowgarth. Mrs. Giacometti and Miss Bernold performed indeed a great job, as we know full well the work entailed in running such a big affair.

We wonder whether it ever occurred to the countless Compatriots participating in these popular festivals in the Taranaki, how many Swiss are non-members of the S.B.S.? - What a wonderful opportunity it would present to one or more of our staunch supporters to canvas for new members at such a gathering!!! ANY VOLUNTEERS FOR NEXT TIME??? It does seem a pity that so many compatriots do not recognise the spiritual and practical support they would give our Benevolent Institution by enrolling; quite apart from the interesting reading in our monthly paper.

It appears to us that some enterprising Taranaki Organisers should arrange a function in the best suited centre, SOLELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY. We feel certain this would find universal appeal and enthusiastic support.

Central Committee.

SUNDAY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Council drew up the agenda of items for the coming fall session of the Parliament, which opens September 18th. On the agenda is the Neuchatel initiative on compulsory social insurance, the Solothurn initiative for a national improvement program, the Federal Council's administration, the activity of the Federal Tribunal and of the Federal Insurance Court, a number of "initiatives" concerning help for the needy aged, the protection of the families, the reprovisioning of the country or the status of agriculture, and the problem of "one-price-stores".

The Federal Council has voted the necessary credits for the continuance of loans to Swiss repatriates. Each of these loans amount to 3000 francs, in exceptional instances 5000 francs. It is understood that such aid is only given in those cases where the recipients have no other means in Switzerland.

The Federal Council decided to recommend the rejection by the Federal Assembly of the petitions for pardon, presented by two condemned to death for espionage and high treason.

Compared with August, 1939, the cost of living index shows an increase of 51.6% in August 1944. It represents only a very slight decrease of 0.4% on the July 1944 index, due to the usual decline of potato prices at this time of the year.

The Swiss Minister to France, Dr. Walter Stucki, arrived at Geneva on September 7th, coming from Vichy by road. The automobile column of the Legation comprised ten passenger cars and one truck. All vehicles had the Swiss flag and were given military honors by the garrison on their departure from Vichy. The journey went without mishap, but was delayed at some points where bridges were destroyed. All the way, the French population gave signs of sympathy to the staff of the Legation. From the Swiss border the cars drove to Geneva's City Hall where Minister Stucki took leave of some of his collaborators.

According to a communication dated August 3rd from the Swiss Legation in Tokio, the Swiss Consul General At Singapore, Mr. Rudolf Arbenz has recently died. Mr. Jean Wild, Chancellor, will be in charge ad interim of the Consulate General.

After a long traffic interruption, the first French train coming from Bellegarde arrived in Cornavin station in Geneva shortly before noon on September 15th.

In view of the military operations in France, now taking place in the proximity of the Swiss frontier, the General of the Swiss Army issued in agreement with the Federal Council the following communiqué: 'On the proposal of the General, the Federal Council has ordered a partial mobilization of Swiss frontier troops. Yellow posters calling up these units have been posted in all communities and railway stations.'

This measure strengthens further our security plan and shows that our country stands ready to cope with all eventualities.

On September 5th, Swiss skies suffered a grave violation. Our air patrols went up and were directing an American bomber toward a landing ground when they were violently attacked by escorting American pursuit planes. One of our fighters was hit several times but succeeded in making a landing at Dubendorf, while another crashed to the ground. The pilot of this second plane was killed. Two American bombers were forced to land in Switzerland. The crews have been interned.

On September 8th, shortly before 9 a.m., four American airplanes flew over the town of Delémont in the Bernese Jura and machinegunned the railway station's installations. They particularly aimed at freight trains on sidetracks. Fortunately, the cars were empty but several were heavily damaged and a locomotive was made serviceless. Five railway men were wounded. At about the same time, foreign planes strafed the station of Moutier in the Birs Valley. Machine gun bullets caused the fall of a high-tension electric line. One railway man hit by the falling cable was killed and another seriously wounded.

On September 11th, Swiss skies were violated numerous times. Shortly after 2.0p.m. three American fighter planes attacked the Zurich-Basel express train between Augst and Pratteln. Many travellers were injured by the attack and by the sudden stopping of the train by the engineer who saw the coming attack. The engine and seven passenger cars were damaged and the electric line was torn.

It is officially reported that the Swiss Legation in Washington has been instructed to call the attention of the American government to the grave violations of Swiss skies in the course of the past days by American aircraft and to the acts of aggression that have accompanied them. The Legation will insist that all useful measures be taken with a view to averting the reoccurrence of these incidents. Switzerland's right to complete reparation of the damage caused will be reserved. Parallel representations have been made by the head of the Political Department to the United States Minister in Bern.

It is to be recalled in this connection that on September 12th, not less than 65 violations of our skies were reported. On September 13th, with covered skies and a decrease of air activity, 9 violations are reported. One American bomber was forced to land in the afternoon at Duebendorf. The crew of nine is safe and has been interned.

In order to avoid the repetition of these incidents and to facilitate the delimitation of our frontiers from the air, Switzerland has lifted the blackout and has hoisted the Swiss flag over buildings in the frontier areas.

But it is not only the violation of our skies by fighters on offensive patrols that reminds us that the war has come very close to our frontiers. An official communiqué says that on September 12th, four shells fired by a German battery fell on Swiss territory near the Damvant frontier in the Bernese Jura. Damage was caused to agriculture and a house was slightly damaged. No one was injured.

The government of the Liechtenstein Principality has decided to lift immediately all blackout measures on Liechtenstein territory.

On September 14th, two Swiss motor-barges, the "Lucerne" and the "Glarus", came up to the pier of the Swiss Rhine port of Petite Huninque near Basel. These vessels have been attacked from the air twice during their trip up the Rhine and were severely damaged. On board the "Glarus" one sailor, Franz Winter, aged 17, of Basel, was killed.

A convoy of severely wounded soldiers crossed the border Friday morning, September 15th, near Neuchatel, i.e., at Les Verrières. The ambulances had arrived from Pontarlier and the wounded men were sent to hospitals in the Val de Travers and in the city of Neuchatel.

Two hundred and twenty-six French children between the ages of six and thirteen years have arrived in Geneva and are on their way to Zurich. They will spend a three-month vacation in our country.

Another convoy of French children from the school sanatorium of Megève in Haute Savoy arrived on the Swiss border near Geneva. These 240 children will be cared for by private families in Geneva, Lucerne and St. Gallen. On the other hand, 75 French children who had found a temporary shelter in Switzerland, recrossed the border en route to Cluse in Savoy.

Important arrangements have been made for the repatriation of thousands of French refugees actually in Switzerland. Nearly 30,000 French who found temporary shelter in our country may from now on be repatriated. It is understood that the repatriation procedure will undergo a strict control.

Following negotiations through the intermediary of Switzerland, an exchange of war prisoners, seriously wounded soldiers and sanitary personnel, as well as 600 civilians has taken place at Göteborg in Sweden. The exchange was made on September 8th under the supervision of the Swedish government. 1553 German soldiers have been able to return home while 2053 British and Americans are getting the same privilege.

Following the destruction of Valleur, a little frontier French town near Geneva during the fighting between FFI-troops and the Germans, a relief committee was set up to start a campaign in behalf of the place. The idea was to raise money and to obtain contributions of clothes, foodstuff, etc. In response, five large trucks loaded with furniture, sewing-machines, clothes, etc., crossed the frontier at Geneva headed for Valleur. At the same time, the committee handed the French Mayor of the town an envelope containing one million French francs to be distributed among the most needy people of the locality.

The collection organized by the Lausanne committee for St. Gingolph, the little French village on the shores of Lake Geneva destroyed by the German occupation troops as reprisal shortly prior to the liberation of all Upper Savoy, brought in 90,000 Swiss francs.

At a meeting of the Zurich Press Association, Mr. Walter Roth, journalist of Zurich, spoke about the press during the past seven years. He showed how our press has fought for its freedom through these years. It has upheld the banner of right and humanity and has succeeded in informing our people about world events. The Swiss press has never faltered in its defense of the Swiss point of view, whenever and wherever it was attacked or contested. If it has accepted a certain discipline during the war, it has never been at the expense of truth.

Wednesday, September 13th, was the official day of the Lausanne Comptoir or Trade Fair. Many Federal officials as well as representatives of the Vaudois authorities attended. Mr. Pilet-Golaz, Vice-President of the Confederation, head of the Political Department, made a speech which supplemented his exposés of the past days before the National Council's Foreign Affairs Committee. After alluding to the proximity of fighting at our frontiers where the belligerents are in deadly combat, Mr. Pilet-Golaz underlined the two tasks of the army. Stand guard at our doors and exercise control over our frontiers. Switzerland wants to show herself merciful but there must be certain limits on the hospitality we extend. The asylum we offer is a right for us alone; for those who ask for it, it is a favor. Exterior security and interior order are the criterions we shall judge by, to which can be added the personal merit of the one who requests asylum and the danger to which he is exposed. After expressing Switzerland's willingness to help in the full measure of her means in the reconstruction of Europe and to collaborate in all humanitarian works and enterprises, and stressing that our neutrality has been fully justified during the present conflict, Mr. Pilet-Golaz ended with an appeal to the Swiss people to continue their efforts on behalf of social progress: 'We have been united in holding out, let us remain united as we march along into the future'.

Statistics published on the Swiss tourist trade, which has been heavily hit by the events, show that not only has the number of foreign tourists decreased, but the recent mobilization of troops have cut down the number of Swiss tourists, too. However, the number of patients in our sanatoriums and health establishments mounted by 25,000. But there is space for more. It is estimated that only 75 out of each 100 beds were occupied during the month of June last. No doubt, the number will increase immediately after the war.

The S/S "El Oriente", flying the Panamanian flag, has been added to the ships in the service of the Red Cross and is to be used to carry relief shipments for prisoners of war. The American Red Cross, which facilitated the purchase of this ship, has expressed the desire that it should be registered under the name of S/S "Henri Dunant", the founder of the Red Cross.

The letters of Pestalozzi, the great Swiss educator of the end of the 18th century, will be published for the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Pestalozzi's birth, on January 12, 1946. This publication will cost approximately 110,000 francs. The Canton of Zurich probably will subsidize this enterprise.

Some 400 British, Australian and New Zealand prisoners of war evadées from camps in Germany and Italy left Switzerland on September 26th, for Annemasse and Grenoble in France. A first convoy passed through Geneva on September 23rd. According to the Hague Conventions, war evadées are to be considered by the neutrals as free men and have the right to transit across neutral countries.

On September 21st, at noon, a German patrol boat landed at Utzwil in the Canton of Thurgau with seven young Frenchmen on board who had escaped from a German prisoner of war camp. They had succeeded in getting hold of the patrol boat at Immonstadt on the German side of the Lake of Constance.

Reports from France give information on the role played by the Swiss Consul Mr. Huber at Lille and by another of our countrymen, the Reverend Pache, at the time of the evacuation of the city by the German troops. Consul Huber with Pastor Pache intervened in order that 700 French prisoners might not be taken to Germany. After long negotiations they obtained permission for 400 of those prisoners to be set free and that the property of the remaining 300 be entrusted to the Swiss Consulate.

In its meeting of September 29th, the Federal Council prohibited the exportation of all war material in a more restricted sense of the word, i.e. arms, ammunition, fuses, parts of aircraft and any other products of this kind. The prohibition will become effective on October 1, 1944, and will apply to all belligerent states according to the Convention of the Hague of October 18, 1917, on the rights and duties of neutral countries in wartime.

The Federal Council has decided to pay again this year special bonuses to the Federal employees and officials in order to enable them to do their winter shopping in time. The total bonuses paid will amount to 18 million francs. Married employees will get 210 francs, unmarried persons with a dependent 175 francs, and all others 140 francs.

In the National Council, the debate was continued on the financial situation of the Confederation. Federal Councillor Nobs drew a general picture of the present situation of the Confederation's finances. The deficit in 1944 budgeted at 125 millions will reach something like 200 millions due to the increase of social and economic expenditures and in particular to the drop in duty revenues. Old age insurance in particular and the consolidation of the financial situation of the Federal Railways will require large amounts. The time has not come to envisage a decrease in taxes. The government must outline the new financial program.

• • • • • OBITUARY:

Held in highest esteem by a wide circle of friends, Mr. J.M. Amrein of Te Kuiti, passed away at his home in Kaitangiweka, on September 8th. He reached the age of 75, and the Te Kuiti district loses one of the best known pioneers.

Mr. Amrein came to New Zealand in 1903 and took up farming in the Taranaki district. After his marriage to Miss Katharina Lutz at Stratford, he purchased property at Kaitangiweka and for the remaining 35 years of his life farmed in that district. He is survived by his wife and 5 children, Messrs. Nicholas Amrein, Joseph Amrein, and Mesdames O'Reilly, Dowman and Remnant; also 16 grandchildren.

Our Society extends to the bereaved family the most sincere sympathies and regrets.

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