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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The President of the French Republic has caused to be presented to the City of Basle the "Médaille vermeille de la reconnaissance française," together with a diploma in recognition of the charitable services rendered to French refugees and wounded soldiers during the late war.

\* \* \*

The British Chamber of Commerce for Switzerland has held in Berne its General Meeting under the presidency of the British Ambassador, the Hon. Theo. Russell.

Leading representatives of Swiss commerce and industry participated at the meeting.

A resolution was passed expressing the opinion of the meeting that the French project, which involves the construction of a lateral canal to the Rhine on French territory, would seriously impede the free traffic of boats on the Rhine, in addition to retarding passage on account of locks and attendant customs formalities, and therefore urging the British Government that its delegates on the International Rhine Commission should support the technical objections of the Swiss Government to any scheme which would impair free and quick navigation on the Rhine between Strasbourg and Basle.

The meeting further resolved to draw the attention of the British Government to the necessity of abolishing passport visas between Great Britain and Switzerland, the restriction being an unfavourable handicap to Anglo-Swiss relations.

The Administrative Council of the Chamber also expressed its disapproval of the boycott which has been declared by the Schweizerische Tabakverband against the Swiss Branch of the British-American Tobacco Co., Ltd., considering the action a repressive measure by which the Swiss Union not only injures Anglo-Swiss trade relations, but also shuts out free competition, thereby fostering maintenance of high prices to the detriment of Swiss consumers.

\* \* \*

On January 31st the roll of unemployed in Switzerland registered 96,580, an increase during that month of 7,613. Emergency employment was provided for 19,662.

The building trade was represented by 18,924 unemployed, the textile industry by 21,514, the metal, machinery and electrical trades by 29,996, and the watch and jewellery trades by 26,188.

Unemployed foreigners in Switzerland totalled 7,804, of whom 4,388 were recipients of unemployment grants.

The Italians considerably outnumbered other nationalities with 4,316 unemployed (2,331 receiving relief), then follow Germans with 2,002 (1,473), French 885 (421), Austrians 193 (56).

\* \* \*

The new taxation proposals put forward by the Social-Democratic Party of the Canton of Aargau have been rejected by the cantonal voters by 29,865 against 19,001.

\* \* \*

The index figures of the cost of living, which are periodically compiled by the Association of Swiss Co-operative Societies, show an average drop of 22 per cent. compared with the January figures of 1921.

The following table illustrates the fall in prices of certain commodities:—

	January, 1921.	January, 1922.
	Fr.	Fr.
Milk (per litre)	—.49	—.49
Cheese (per kilo)	5.00	5.00
Butter	8.18	6.74
Bread	—.75	—.60
Flour	—.85	—.68
Veal	5.44	3.37
Beef	4.74	3.43
Mutton	5.76	3.61
Pork	6.20	4.86
Potatoes	—.19	—.19
Eggs (each)	—.41	—.26
Haricot Beans	1.14	.62
Peas	1.32	1.15
Macaroni	1.45	1.18
Sugar	1.70	1.10
Rice	1.15	.69
Coffee	3.08	2.39
Anthracite (100 kilos)	25.20	14.54
Briquettes	17.00	9.95
Paraffin	—.70	—.46
Soap	2.74	1.72

At the 1922 prices the increase of the present-day cost of living over that in 1912 still indicates a rise of from 70 to 80 per cent.

\* \* \*

The electors of the Canton of Zurich have decided by 68,600 votes against 24,490 that the existing laws of taxation shall be revised and a Bill adopted which will bring relief to the smaller tax payer by increasing the burden of the propertied classes.

The credit of 10 million francs asked for to combat unemployment by means of providing emergency work has also been adopted by the voters with 71,194 against 25,506 votes. Both these results show with emphasis that the majority of the electorate of the Canton of Zurich are fully conscious of the necessity for social solidarity under the present difficult conditions.

\* \* \*

At Berne an exhibition of drawings by Swiss scholars