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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

The postal services between this country and Switzerland continue to shine by their failure, no papers nor letters having been delivered for nearly four weeks. We have also been disappointed in our endeavour to gather news via the Swiss Radio but the complaint about bad or indifferent reception seems to be general. A new short wave transmitter (48.66 metres) from the rebuilt Schwarzenburg station is said to be operating between noon and 1.45 p.m.; though interference on the lower band is not so insistent, very few listeners will be able to pick up messages.

This unsatisfactory state is further illustrated by the scarcity of Swiss news appearing in the English press. The only items of importance are to be found in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, both of June 27th; they are practically identical.

The Times Geneva correspondent says :

M. Pilet Golaz, President of the Swiss Confederation, in a broadcast to the Swiss people, said that although France had signed an armistice the future for Switzerland was still uncertain.

It would be possible to demobilize part of the Army, but the new circumstances would deeply affect trade and industry, with the result that rapid and important decisions would have to be taken. Every one must forget his old self, must cease arguing, enjoying life and seeking his own advantage, and must think, work, produce, and give. The Government would assume its full responsibilities and would devote all its efforts to serving the whole people.

The message seems to foreshadow modifications of the Government's policy, which may include more widespread nationalization, the distribution of wealth, and the establishment of an authoritative democracy.

From Zurich the *Daily Telegraph* reports that:

In a Government declaration broadcast yesterday President Pilet-Golaz urged the people of Switzerland to meet the new conditions in Europe by sacrifice, unity, confidence and the maintenance of the strictest order.

He forecast that the Government would be bound speedily to take serious decisions affecting the comfort and the lives of all. Partial demobilisation was now possible, because war was no longer raging on Switzerland's frontiers; but illusions about an untroubled future would be dangerous.

The President dwelt on the necessity for supreme sacrifices in the economic field, and pointed out the necessity to work for the smallest profit. The nation's traditions were maintainable, but it might be necessary to abandon some of its customs.

The refusal of the Bank of England to purchase any more Swiss Notes for the present is referred to in the *Daily Telegraph* (July 2nd :

Suspensions of dealings yesterday in Swiss franc notes occasioned no surprise. Since the collapse of France, Switzerland has become isolated so far as London is concerned and Swiss notes cannot be remitted from this country for repayment. Permission remains for dealings in exchange — telegraphic transfers only.

Both countries have in each centre substantial credits on which they can draw, so that for the present debts can still be paid by this means. A week ago the Swiss rate of exchange in London was adjusted. It remained at 17.75-17.85 to the pound yesterday.

According to *The Times* (July 2nd) 22 incendiary bombs, described as British, fell on Sunday in the canton Schwyz, east of the lake of Lucerne, but caused no damage. They were dropped by two aeroplanes. Several other bombs, apparently dropped by the same machines, fell near a lonely farmhouse in the Jura.

We have also come across a letter addressed to *The Times* (June 26) which is typical of the hardships inflicted on a large number of old residents in our Colony. We are, of course, ignorant of the merits of this particular case and we reproduce the complaint with the usual reserve:

An acquaintance of mine, a Swiss national, having lived in the country for 35 years, married to an Englishwoman, with two sons, both born in this country — one at the moment serving in the Merchant Navy, the other in the Army, both fighting for freedom and democracy — has been given 48 hours to clear out of his house and home, under the new order.

Is this compatible with our British sense of fair play? Several similar cases have been brought to my notice during the last few days. Is the order meant to cover cases like these, or is some stupid bureaucrat exceeding his authority?