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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The chief of the Federal Economic Department, Federal Councillor Stampfli, in reply to several parliamentary requests, has explained in the National Council the Swiss social programme for after the war. The first place in these measures is given to the provision of work in time of a possible crisis which might arise through lack of raw materials. Some considerable time ago a very extensive program has been evolved and prepared to put into action as soon as need arises. For this purpose a part of the salary and wages equalisation fund for serving soldiers, which at the moment amounts to 260 million francs is to be used. Conditional to every efficient social policy is the preservation of a healthy and vital economy and for that purpose prices and wages must be kept in check in order that the possibility to compete with foreign countries is not totally lost. Unfortunately the enormous weight of the mobilization debt will press heavily on the whole economic system for two or three decades, so that there are less means at the disposal for social schemes. However, the Federal Council proposes the following measures: Creation of a motherhood insurance, extension of the compulsory health insurance with the assistance of the Confederation to economically weak sections of the population, extension of the compulsory accidents insurance to agricultural labour, increased federal subsidies for the insurance against tuberculosis, preservation of a healthy agricultural industry and of a vitally strong trade in the after war period, provision for a bill about labour in the retail trade and small concerns, safeguarding of legal holidays for certain categories of employees. Towards the general old age and survivors insurance and the introduction of a family wage, which is the object of several initiatives, the Federal Council will further consider the various proposals before expressing an opinion. The whole of the federal social program is therefore built up on already existing foundations and will be advanced step by step. It is not a paradise on earth, but an endeavour for an economically bearable and social utility measure.

It is officially announced that the Federal Council has suspended the Eidgenössische Sammlung and the Nationale Gemeinschaft Schaffhausen and banned their papers "Die Front" and "Der Grenzbote." The Eidgenössische Sammlung was emphatically warned in April 1942 that its existence, with that of its organ, could only be continued provided an absolutely clear Swiss policy was observed in future. The meetings, which were under official observation raised no objections, but the purging of the movement of treacherous elements was not drastic enough. Many sentences by criminal courts — such as that inflicted on Leutwiler; the incorrect information given by the leader of the movement regarding the membership of the traitor, Zuercher, who had been condemned to death; the trial of Reutlinger who belonged to the Eidgenössische Sammlung and was also condemned to death; the sentences passed towards the end of June 1943, on Dr. Waldwirt, and the leader of the Nationale Gemeinschaft Schaffhausen, Dr. Eisenhut; show clearly that the leading organs of the Eidgenössische Sammlung and of the Nationale Gemeinschaft Schaffhausen lack the will for an energetic purge of their organisations, though labelled Swiss. In these circumstances their continued existence is out of the question.

M. Pilet-Golaz Chief of the Federal Political Department, in a report on June 29th referred to the ill-feeling existing on the Swiss frontier by the firing

SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

Sunday, August First, 1943
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Will those ladies and gentlemen who act as Stewards or Programme sellers kindly be at the Stoll Theatre not later than 2 o'clock.

practice of the German A. A. guns on the northern shore of Lake Constance and the damage caused by it.

* * *

At the first meeting of the newly-opened session of the National Council, two new Councillors for the canton of Vaud whose life ran on extraordinary parallel lines were sworn in. The two new National Councillors Brochon (radical) and Piot (farmers' party) were born in Le Timonet, a large village in the canton of Vaud in the same year, went to the same class at the village school and proved to possess the same intellectual gifts, so much so that the teacher generally called them up together. Now they have been elected to the National Council at the same time.

* * *

The name of the new general director of the P.T.T. is Dr. Alois Muri (not Mouri as previously reported in our last issue) who has been chief of the Telegraph and Telephone section of the P.T.T. since 1921. He started his career in 1921 when he was appointed technical manager of the number 1 division of the Telegraph service stationed at Lausanne. The E.T.H. in Zurich bestowed upon him the doctor honoris causa in 1934 in recognition of his work in extending and improving the telephone and telegraph net throughout Switzerland. Dr. Muri is taking the place of Dr. Hans Hunziker who is now in charge of the central office of International Railway Transport from which director Schrafl has resigned.

* * *

Pending judicial enquiries into certain allegations of a political nature National Councillor Dr. Sonderegger has temporarily withdrawn from his official mandate. Dr. Sonderegger is closely identified with a movement under the name of "Schweizer Freiwirtschaftsbund" which in a recent resolution repudiated some of his statements.

* * *

The Federal Department of Justice and Police has announced that the proceedings for the denaturalization of several traitors and enemies of the country who have fled abroad are about to be terminated. Named are in particular the one time Major, Ernst Leonard, and the Journalist, Franz Burri, but there are other renegades who also come into consideration, who by their nefarious behaviour have proved themselves unworthy of the citizenship of Switzerland. Those who are threatened with denaturalization have been given an opportunity to be legally heard within a certain time.

* * *

The Swiss Consulate at Marseilles has been moved to Montelimar and the Swiss Consulate at Nice to Grenoble.

* * *

The death is announced of Dr. Emil Traversini, our minister in Rio de Janeiro, who passed away on the 3rd of June after a short illness at the age of 60. He was a Vaudois and had been in the service of the Confederation since 1913. His first appointment as Minister brought him to Tokio in 1928; after that he was Minister to the Argentine from 1932 to 1937.

* * *

Apart from the municipalities and cantons the Confederation is collecting taxes in an ever-increasing measure to cover the colossal expenditure for the defence of the country and the war economy. The list of the federal taxes has become quite an impressive one.

It includes the following:— Military tax, stamp duty, federal crisis contribution, equalisation tax, war profits tax, federal defence offering, emigration defence contribution, federal defence tax, goods purchase tax and luxury tax; to these must be added as indirect taxation the customs tariff and the impost on tobacco and alcohol.

Cantonal

Whereas the financial position of the Confederation is growing noticeably worse owing to the gigantic expenditure for the defence of the country, the finances of the cantons show increased improvement. (The floating and funded debt of the Confederation at the beginning of this year amounted to 5,081 million francs.) The 21 cantonal accounts so far published, with the exception of Schwyz, Nidwalden, Baselland and Thurgau, which have not yet been made known, show together a deficit of only 6.9 million frs. for 1942, whilst in the first year of the war their total deficit amounted to 32.5 millions. Yet all the cantons have considerably increased the repayment of debts in the past year, so that they can start the after-war period with a better financial outlook. A similar development is also noticed in the municipalities.

* * *

The final results of the election held on Sunday, June 20th, for the re-distribution of seats for the Lucerne Town Council show only minor changes: here are the figures: 17 Radicals (18), 8 Catholic conservatives (6), 9 Socialists (11), 5 Independants (2), 1 Christian-socialist (3).

* * *

Since the middle ages the old defensive Musegg wall in Lucerne with its eight watch towers had been preserved from destruction. Unfortunately the development of the building operations on the south side of the town already years ago grew closer and closer to the wall, whereas the north side remained free of buildings. About four years ago the town bought a strip of land alongside the wall to protect it from being built over by turning it into a green belt. New building projects induced the town authorities recently to purchase another strip of nearly 13,000 square metres in order to preserve its distinctive mark for all times. To the great satisfaction of all lovers of ancient monuments, the office of works has caused neatly executed heraldic shields to be placed over the gateway of the towers of the Musegg wall.

* * *

The Zurich town council has voted a contribution of frs. 50,000.— to a special committee which is being constituted in order to take care of the children of Lyons (France) who are enduring great hardships under existing conditions. Food provisions are to be sent to those who have been unable to enter the special nurseries (crèches) or other places of refuge; in exceptional cases private homes are to be found for those badly affected. The scheme is being worked in conjunction with the Lyons authorities and is a manifestation of humanitarian solidarity between the two great centres which have always been keen rivals in the silk trade for centuries.

* * *

The Appeal Court of the canton Zurich has slightly increased the sentences of the lower tribunal before which 67 persons were accused of communist propa-

ganda and activities. 48 (among whom were eight women) were allotted three to 120 days imprisonment or an average of 17 days which is now increased to 24 days.

* * *

More than a hundred years ago the greater part of the marsh and bogland of the area between the Walensee and the lake of Zurich was reclaimed through the correction of the river Linth. The remaining part is to be turned into arable ground through melioration. The drainage of the St. Gall-Schwyz part has already been started and now Glaris wants to make their part cultivable at a cost of 4.6 million francs. The next Landsgemeinde is to vote 1½ million frs. towards this project.

* * *

National Councillor Dr. Rudolf Gallati died in Glaris at the age of 63; he had been in bad health for the last two years. Like his father he took a keen interest in the welfare and economic advancement of his canton holding government offices at different times.

* * *

The oldest inhabitant of Glarus, namely Frau Anna Katharina Gallati-Michel, widow of the late Catholic sexton, died two months short of her 104th birthday. It is only 11 years since the happy couple celebrated their diamond wedding.

* * *

Berne Municipal Council has approved the Municipal Budget. It contains current expenditure totaling Frs.65,500,000.— and special reserves of Frs. 1,600,000.—; surplus revenue amounts to Frs.114,000. The result is Frs.3,600,000.— better than estimated.

* * *

The Collection for the old-age fund made in the Canton of Berne, for the first time passed the million mark with Frs.1,050,000.—, i.e. nearly Frs.96,000.— more than last year.

* * *

The military department of the canton of Berne together with the Aero Club Berne are intending to train this year 500 Bernese youths as glider pilots.

* * *

A few days ago, at a little festivity in Sumiswald, honours were conferred upon servants who worked for their masters for more than five consecutive years. From Trachselwald alone, a predominantly agricultural district, nearly 300 farm labourers, men and women, were present. At the head of the long list of faithful servants were men and women who were with the same family from 30 to 60 years. At the very top is Jacob Blaser who has been with the family Muhmenthaler in Vorderholz for 60 years.

* * *

When the Bernese captain Bartholomäus May in the year 1513 brought home with him some young bears which he took from the French Commander La Trémouille at the battle of Novarra, he hardly thought that the town of his birth would have nothing but joy from the descendants of the living animal which graces the coat of arms of Berne. Actually the "Mutzenstadt" is worried about its bears. Last winter seven little bears were born in the Bärengraben, which now not only eat the food of the six old ones, but also compete with them for accommodation. The three stud pairs, really fine specimens should be preserved, equally a pair of the young ones. The other five comical youngsters will have to be sold or killed, be-

cause, on the one hand, lack of fodder, as no bread must be given to them except specially baked from a meal flour, and on the other, the number has to be kept small on account of the rebuilding of the Bärengraben, as the inmates cannot very well be given to animal lovers as boarders whilst the old home is being modernised.

* * *

According to the "Catholic Times," July 2nd, the Pope has expressed to Cardinal Maglione, Papal Secretary of State, his appreciation of the action of the Canton of Fribourg, in consecrating itself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The consecration took place on May 30th.

This act of piety towards the Mother of God, said Vatican Radio on Monday, which was at the same time an answer to the wish expressed recently by the Head of the Church did high honour to the Councillors of the Canton.

"May we express the hope," the speaker added, "that other Catholic governments will follow this splendid lead in public devotion to Our Lady."

* * *

On the 26th August, 1944, it will be 500 years since the memorable battle of St. Jacob on the Birs, where 1,500 Confederates stood up against more than 30,000 Armagnaken commanded by the Dauphin of France, later Louis XI. They resisted that army to such an extent that he gave up the campaign against the Confederates and concluded an alliance with his former enemies. In memory of the heroic death of the 1,500, a commemorative book will be issued by the Historic Antiquarian Society of Basle and the canton of Basel Stadt.

* * *

On a Saturday morning during the spring planting time a strong group of drummers marched through the streets of Basle. In this manner they called out the employees of cantonal and private administrations to fulfill their duty in helping with the planting of allotments and for which purpose they had obtained a holi-

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Members are informed that instead of the August Meeting a

Tea with the Ladies

has been arranged for Saturday, 28th August, 3.30 p.m. for 4 p.m., at the Dorchester Hotel, London.

Members are also advised that tables of eight can be reserved and it is suggested that parties up to that number are formed. Chapman and Dorchester Hotel Band will provide music.

Admission is by ticket only at 4/- each obtainable from the Hon. Secretary, P. A. Moehr, Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2, or from any member of the Committee but not later than Tuesday, the 24th August. Kindly remit with order.

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day. After the day's work they were thanked by a representative of the cantonal government.

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M. Ernest Ansermet, the well-known orchestra conductor, celebrated recently his 60th anniversary and was made an honorary citizen of Vevey, his birth-place.

In Mumenthal near Aarwangen, Samuel Elsässer, one of the last survivors of the 1870/71 mobilisation, celebrated his 100th anniversary in the best of health.

Army

With the beginning of the war the Swiss Military Insurance which is in force for over forty years has experienced a grave increase of liability through the inclusion of those liable to supplementary service and air raid precaution personnel, as just these services are manned by people who in peace time were relieved from military service owing to failing health. Now is to be added the long and strenuous active service by great forces of the army which has naturally increased the number of cases of sickness and accidents. Actually the number of cases of sickness reported has risen to 80,000 annually, in other words more than ten times

the cases in peace time. The cases of insurable accidents, however, have remained within very small limits. Generally it has been established that the state of health of the army is very good. A detrimental influence by the more strenuous and longer service has not been proved. The frequent medical examinations bring hidden illnesses to light much sooner and in spite of the general food shortage, the provisioning of the troops has always been incontestable. Both these last mentioned reasons are responsible for an improvement in public health.

The Federal solidarity work for compensating soldiers for the loss of wages and salaries has been now in force for three years and it is learned that the fund has paid out five hundred million francs in a round sum. The fund is made up from a deduction of 2% from wages or salaries from all employed people, from a fixed contribution from trades and agricultural undertakings and from 2% on wages and salaries paid by the employers. In the four years of the last world war the sum paid amounted to about sixty million francs. The present day arrangement, which gives every soldier a legal claim on the fund is cementing army and people firmly together.

When mother Helvetia fits out her budding soldiers she has to dip deeply into her treasure chest. To clothe and fit out a rifleman she has to spend Frs.344.— as against Frs.281 pre-war. For a dragoon she spends equally Frs.344.— but the horse has to be provided by the man. For an artilleryman the cost is Frs.405.— and for a driver Frs.450.—, for an aviator she lays out 435.— and for the most costly of all the cyclist, Frs. 488.— are necessary. To this must be added the training.

The army administration has already applied for a credit of 41.4 million francs to cover the cost of outfit and schooling material for the 1944 class of recruits and officers; this year's expense amounted to 43.1 million francs. The sum will of course be included in the ordinary budget for 1944.

In consideration of the greatly increased physical demands which are made on soldiers of to-day, the conditions at the gymnastic examinations have been made considerably more severe. Young men who have been found medically fit, but cannot fulfill the physical requirements are called to a training camp for six days prior to the entry into the service, where the exercises of the voluntary training are gone through with them. Those who cannot stand up to them will have to pass later on a second preliminary course.

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Particulars are now to hand about the sentences promulgated at Lucerne in the middle of last month. Nearly all the accused belonged to a political group (Nationale Bewegung, Bund treuer Eidgenossen, etc.) since prohibited and directed by Leonard and Burri who amongst other publications edited an anti-Swiss news sheet called the "Eidgen. Korrespondenz." Most of the chief malefactors have already fled the country.

some time ago such as Franz Burri, born in Entlebuch in 1901, and Ernst Leonard, born in Basle in 1885; the charges in this instance were not very serious and they got away with six months imprisonment but both of them had already been sentenced previously by a military tribunal to five years penal servitude each. Other "absentees" are Alfred Nikles, born in Worben in 1907 (alias Dr. Hutten), who received two years imprisonment; Werner Suter, born in Lucerne in 1906, 18 months imprisonment.

A not very satisfactory explanation has been given for a serious accident which happened during army manœuvres on the Linth near Benken (Zurich) when six soldiers were drowned. An emergency crossing of the river was being practised when the barge (or ferry) began to take water and sink; it is stated that the vessel was unevenly loaded. In the ensuing excitement six soldiers jumped overboard: they were Erich Sauter, age 31, of Galgenen; Walter Reifler, age 21, of Flawil; Anton Brühwiler, age 22, of Jonschwil; Karl Rüegg, age 23, of Jonschwil; Johann Metzler, age 22 of Nesslau and Joseph Müller, age 29 of Trimbach.

Other military mishaps are reported from Wallenstadt where, during firing practice, Lieut. Henri Delachaux, age 27, born in Le Locle and residing at Lausanne, was mortally wounded. On another training ground automatic pistol firing was in operation when five recruits received bullet wounds, one of them, Maxime Gay DesCombes, aged 20, from Finhaut (Valais) having since died.

Lt. Fritz Kessler, age 23, a dentist from Hedingen, was fatally injured during manœuvres as well as Jacob Furrer, age 47 from Horgen.

Two brothers from Villa, Casanova and Kaspar Matheu, aged 25 and 26 respectively, made a fatal fall during army manœuvres at Versam (Grisons). Corp. Rolf Sterki, aged 22 from Basle, while out on patrol duty during the night was shot by a stationary guard near Sotto Ceneri.

The R.A.F. raid on Friedrichshafen on June 22nd has given the people residing on the southern shore of Lake Constance the first opportunity of witnessing a night attack of some magnitude. Alerts were sounded throughout Switzerland with the exception of the western areas. Reports state that foreign aircraft flew over our territory on a number of occasions but are not conclusive as to the cause of damage and casualties done in the canton of Thurgau. First bombs were mentioned but after due investigation a semi-official communiqué from Berne indicated that our own anti-aircraft batteries were to blame, and again later a report was given out that the damage was done by German shells. The only undisputed fact is that three people were killed at Kümmertshausen (Thurgau) while damage was also caused at Jonschwil and Haselberg near Frauenfeld. The desire for sightseeing seems to be primarily responsible and an official warning has now been issued not to leave shelters during an alert.

Later reports state that a shell flew across the lake and exploded in the village of Kümmertshausen near Frauenfeld in the midst of a group of people. The

68 year old innkeeper, Eduard Wellauer, and his two sons aged 25 and 28 were killed, while the local teacher, Jacob Herzog, was badly injured.

In the Monday night (July 12th) raid on Turin, two R.A.F. aircraft seem to have lost their way when flying over Swiss territory. One of them was seen to drop flares to find a landing place; bombs were also jettisoned and did some slight damage in several districts, notably in the canton of Valais. One machine is believed to have run into the slope of Mont Grammont and came down at Bouveret on the eastern end of the lake of Geneva; it was destroyed by fire after an explosion. The second machine is said to have hit an electric cable and crashed not far from Sion (Valais). An official announcement by the Swiss Army Command issued on July 15th stated that both bombers were hit by Swiss A.A. shells.

The crews of the two R.A.F. bombers which crashed early on Tuesday morning (July 13th) were buried with military honours at Vevey on Friday, July 15th. The guard of honour consisted of officers of the Swiss Air Force. Apart from the British Minister in Berne and his colleagues representatives of the Swiss Government and Army attended the funeral which was witnessed by several thousand persons. A gorgeous display of flowers received the fourteen coffins draped in the Union Jack in the picturesque cemetery on the lake of Geneva. The religious services were followed by three volleys fired by a Swiss squad and the sounding of the Last Post.



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sea-going ships and their amortisation at a post-war value can be fixed provisionally. The fund is also intended to pay off special expenses, many of which are caused by the war.

* * *

The annual report of "Swissair" for 1942 exhibits a notable improvement as compared with the 1941 figures. After liberal reservations for depreciations and replacements a net profit of Frs.85,266 has been earned which clears the debit balance of Frs.70,041 carried forward from the previous year. The revenue from passenger and freight traffic has been more than trebled, with a corresponding increase in the mileage flown. Practically the sole source of income was the Zurich-Stuttgart-Berlin line which since the beginning of this year has suffered a serious setback. The management states that efforts have been made — so far unsuccessful — to establish a line to Spain and Portugal.

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The railway tunnel which collapsed in February on the line St. Ursanne-Porrentruy in the Bernese Jura will be opened for traffic again on 1st August. The work of restauration proved particularly difficult as for quite a while there were still falls of rubble. The examination proved that the material which was used to fill up the perpendicular shaft which was driven to build the tunnel, softened up and thereby caused the collapse. Owing to this incident, which happily cost no human life the federal railways have ordered a close examination of all the tunnels at the construction of which such perpendicular shafts were used.

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* Some time ago the line Winterthur-Schaffhausen of the Federal Railway was changed over to electric traction. Besides the usual increased amenities of the new method, the change over to "white coal" will mean an annual saving of about 2,600 tons of coal at a value of roughly frs.300,000.

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* For two years the German customs agents were authorised, by application of the German-Swiss commercial treaty, to operate a customs post at Lapaline. From July 31st, the German Government intends to transfer the customs post to Bellegarde, which in 1941 was in the occupied zone, and the control of Swiss exports will be made on French territory.

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To secure a continued supply of Swiss seamen the "Schweiz. Reederei A.G." in Basle has some time ago put a training ship "the Levantine" into service, in which already 120 sailors and apprentices have been introduced into the secrets of the mariner. They are all now in service with the units of the Swiss Rhine and high-sea fleet.

the silk and rayon, metal and machine, as well as the watch industry; unsatisfactory are the conditions in the building trade, the cotton, linen and woollen industries.

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Whilst Swiss rayon manufacture can look back on a long development, the making of cellulose wool (Zellwolle) is really a product of the war. Both branches of the artificial fibre production, however, have advanced to an unanticipated importance during the last year. The total production for the year has reached the amount of 16,500 tons. By the complete utilization of the full production capacity of the factories, the selling prices were able to be kept unaltered for the whole year in spite of constantly increasing costs of production. The lack of import of raw cotton and wool could largely be made good by artificial fibres and in this manner could the textile industry continue to work.

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According to investigations by the Swiss Hotel Proprietors Society the four war years so far have resulted in a loss of revenue of 450 million francs. The hotel industry is one of the heaviest hit in our country.

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One of the most important organisations for the purchase of provisions and general necessities is the Association of Swiss Co-operative Societies. Founded in 1890 by a few enterprising idealists who sought to achieve a lowering in the cost of living for the less well-to-do's by buying wholesale and selling at a small profit, it counts to-day about 450,000 members. From a turnover of frs.45,000 in the first year it controlled a figure of 263 million frs. in 1942.

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To prevent the possibility that the share capital of Swiss firms may be bought up unnoticeably by foreigners and thus be gradually denationalised, several large industrial firms have converted their bearer shares into registered shares, the subsequent transfer of which to another owner will have to be officially approved by the administrative council. Such a measure was recently introduced by the well-known engineering firm of Gebrüder Suizer A.G. in Winterthur. Down to a very small number all the 40,000 bearer shares were reported for registration. The great majority of the capital of 40 million francs is now as before in Swiss hands and at a new issue of shares the administration will adhere to the principle that new shares will only be issued to Swiss. By this a foreign influence will be prevented at the source.

* * *

For some years past there exists a contract between employers and employees in the metal and machine industry which imposes the duty on both parties to solve all problems of labour conditions by common negotiations and agreements. This peace in the metal and machine industry has since been of great advantage to all concerned, even to the whole economy of the country, so that in several other industries similar plans are being proposed. In the meantime the legal foundation has been created for a general declaration of a compulsory recognition of such contracts for all undertakings of the same nature. A few days ago representatives of the Swiss Trades Association and important Trade Unions arrived at an understanding whereby a peaceful settlement of all future differences is stipulated.

Economical

An official inquiry into the position of industry, at the end of the first quarter of 1943, gave the following results. Of 2,850 concerns with roughly 250,000 employees, about a quarter reported full employment, roughly half mentioned satisfactory business and 22.6% stated that the business situation was bad. About one third of the undertakings consider the outlook for the near future as being good, one sixth as bad and about half of them consider it uncertain. Fully employed are the paper and leather industries,

Although our soil is poor in ore, coal and oil, yet it produces enough salt to supply the whole of the country. An actual salt mine is worked at Bex not far from the lake of Geneva, which supplies the canton of Vaud with salt. All the other cantons obtain their salt from the salt works of Schweizerhalle and Rheinfelden in the neighbourhood of Basle. During the last year over 8,300 tons of salt were delivered from these works, a large part thereof with a small addition of iodine, which has proved an excellent remedy for combating goitre. One of the salt works has been fitted up with an electric evaporation plant in order to save a great quantity of coal.

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The impossibility of importing fodder and the increase of arable acreage necessitated during the first years of the war the slaughtering of an unusually large number of cattle. The counting of horned cattle which was held in April showed an increase, however, of 23,500 head, which proves that the switch-over to home fodder production and rationing of meat consumption has shown its practical consequences. The number of horned cattle has risen to 1,516,400 head. On the other hand, the number of pigs has decreased by 41,000 head to 629,000, while the comparable pre-war figure was double.

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Under pressure of present day circumstances one of the world-renowned hotels on the Rigi will be demolished; it is the Hotel Rigi-Scheidegg. With the hotel, the narrow gauge railway Rigi Kaltbad-Scheidegg of 6,700m. length will disappear into salvage. The hotel was already in existence when the guests used to be carried up this beautiful mountain by pack mules and sedan chairs. In its palmy days the hotel accommodated visitors from every country of the world. A previous owner planted a garden of alpine flowers quite close to the hotel. Two world wars with their crises in the hotel-industry caused the end of this undertaking.

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No less than 45 million francs worth of cigars have been sold last year. The mixture of the half a dozen varieties of tobacco used in the making of these "stumpen" is a closely guarded trade secret. The home-produced leaves are mixed with the imported article from North, Central and South America as well as from Java and Sumatra.

Humanitarian

According to the Federal Council, Switzerland is caring for no less than 19,000 refugees instead of the maximum of 6,000 which the government agreed to accept at the beginning of the war. The average number of arrivals each month is 650.

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The efforts of Switzerland as the protective power have succeeded in arranging an exchange of seriously wounded and sick prisoners of War from Africa between Great Britain and Italy. In three stages over 3,100 victims of war have been returned to their native land in British and Italian hospital ships.

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The central office for prisoners of war of the Red Cross in Geneva has since the beginning of the war to April 1943 transmitted more than seven million tidings about prisoners of war to the most varied addressees. And the number of these messages is daily increasing.

During last March over 506,000 of such communications were sent out. Thanks to the active support of the Red Cross Societies of 86 states it was possible to keep up these communications frictionless and regular.

At the present moment the International Red Cross maintains four large depositories for the storing of charitable gifts to prisoners of war and civil internees. From there are despatched innumerable standard parcels containing 5 kg. of provisions to the prisoners as well as varied consignments of clothes, boots, blankets and other objects of daily use which the Red Cross Societies of Great Britain and the United States of America have provided for the civil internees of the various nations. From October 1940 to March 1943, goods to the value of more than 30 millions of Swiss francs have been distributed from the depositories to these unfortunate people.

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Two members of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Suzanne Ferrière and Lucy Odier, have finished a tour covering 50,000 km. in Africa and the Near-East during which they contacted civil and military authorities as well as representatives of the I.R.C. and associations which are striving to improve the conditions of prisoners of war and civil internees. They went in particular to Cairo, Beirut, Johannesburg, the Cape and Nairobi.

* * *

It is announced that the International Committee of the Red Cross has sent to Germany four orthopaedic specialists to take charge of the fitting of artificial limbs for seriously wounded British and Polish prisoners of war. They are Dr. Burekhardt, of Basle, and Dr. Martin, of Lausanne, and two specialists from Geneva and Schaffhausen. Last year the first orthopaedic mission took casts of 430 persons for the manufacture of artificial limbs in Switzerland.

* * *

At the moment the "Swiss help" foundation is collecting free stations for Swiss children from abroad, who are coming to the country of their fathers for some weeks for their summer holidays. At the end of June 300 children arrived from Italy and later 1,000 are expected from Paris, 1,000 from Lyons, 4,600 from Germany, an equal number from the South of France and 200 from Belgium. A goodly number of these children is invited to stay with their relatives and already in the spring around 1,500 places were offered by families, but double that number is required. The older children are placed into holiday camps, whereas the younger ones go into families. All children will receive ration cards. But they will not only find food and clothing in their Homeland, but also love and care to make them forget their troubles.

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The appeal for free places in families met with such success that it is doubtful whether they can all be filled.

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During last year the Federal Political Department had at its disposal frs. 76,300.— for distribution to the Swiss Benevolent Societies and asylums abroad. Of this sum frs. 50,150 were paid out to Benevolent Societies, Swiss homes received frs. 19,800.— and frs. 6,375 were contributed to asylums and hospitals abroad. To the end of last year 160 reports from the 180 Societies were received at the Federal Palais. 77 Societies renounced assistance in favour of those who were more

in need of help. The many reports received, particularly from those who were the most affected by the war show, that in spite of the prevailing distress the sense of unity and mutual assistance amongst compatriots has greatly increased. Swiss solidarity stands the test best in adversity.

* * *

The department for children's aid of the Swiss Red Cross collected during last year ration coupons for 1.15 million kg. of provisions of all kinds, for about 20,000 kg. of soap and for several hundred of thousands of pairs of children's shoes. Even time-expired coupons may be handed in at the collecting stations and will be used solely for the benefit of children.

* * *

A few days ago a consignment of 1,000 kg. of honey arrived from Buenos Aires, which was collected by Swiss settlers in the Argentines and presented by the Swiss merchant Pablo Fenkart to the Federal War Provisioning Department. The honey was distributed to the children's sanatoria and clinics all over the country. Hundreds of sick children will thank the generous donor for his sweet and wholesome gift.

* * *

33 years ago the Committee for the Swiss National Day Celebrations (Bundesfeier Komitee) started to place the 1st of August at the service of a general utility effort (Gemeinnützige Bestrebung). The result of the first collection of voluntary contributions was handed over to two institutions for epileptic children and since then a great many institutions of general utility and cultural works have benefited from these national day collections. Over 12 million francs have thus been placed at the disposal of charitable institutions and works. Several times the collections were handed over to the Swiss Red Cross, to the foundation for provision for tuberculous people, to the assistance for abnormalities of all categories, also to the Swiss abroad. In a similar manner cases arising through visitations of natural catastrophes were relieved by collections made on these occasions. This year's collection is for the professional education of the young generation.

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The collection of this year's first of August celebration is for the benefit of professional advancement of young people. For this purpose there will be a money collection as well as a sale of badges. The postal authorities are issuing two special stamps at 10 and 20 cts. on both of which there will be a surtax of 10 cts. The 10 cts. stamp represents the ticinese village of Intragna and the 20 cts. stamp bears the picture of the Federal Palais.

The Swiss Bishops met in the Monastery of Einsiedeln under the Chairmanship of Mgr. Bieler for their annual conference. They discussed a pastoral letter to be addressed to the Swiss people.

* * *

The war has not succeeded in extinguishing our wanderlust. On the one hand scores of Swiss are returning, fleeing from the horrors of war and leaving behind them positions laboriously built up during a lifetime. Many are completely impoverished and have to start afresh in their own land which has become estranged to them. On the other hand the urge of the "Walz" is still strong as figures just published seem to prove. During last year 1,416 have emigrated and

1,842 have returned home. Most of these emigrants had, however, to remain in Europe. Only 125 could go to the United States of America, 50 to Africa and 10 were able to reach Asia. Nearly 300 of these emigrants were commercial employees, a similar number were workers in metal and machine industry and greatly behind in numbers were the farmers, the rest were made up by workers in the liberal occupations and industries.

* * *

There are at present more than 750 licensed mountain guides in Switzerland of whom 300 are in the canton of Valais, about 240 in the canton of Berne and 150 in the Grisons, the remainder are distributed over the cantons of Uri, Vaud, Glaris, Unterwalden and Ticino. The largest centres are Zermatt with about 90, Grindelwald with 80 and Saas Fee in the Valais with nearly 60 licensed guides. A majority of them are also to be found on the list of the best skiers as many of them are acting as ski instructors. Since the beginning of the sport of mountaineering in Switzerland the difficult and responsible occupation of a mountain guide has in some cases been handed down from father to son and nephew; each in turn has again to submit to a most stringent state examination lasting for several years. To-day there are many well-known families of guides still flourishing in the Valais as for instance the Taungwalder, Biner, Perren, Julen, Bumann, Supersaxo, Imseng, Kalbermatten and Zurbiggen; in the Bernese Oberland the Steuri, Brawand, Schlunegger, Ogi, Künzi, von Almen and Gertsch.

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According to a newspaper of the Bernese Oberland the two famous British Commanders, General Sir Archibald Wavell and General Montgomery are old and true friends of the Simmental. The former used to pass his summer holidays at the Hotel Terminus at Zweisimmen, whereas General Montgomery often came to Lenk in the winter where he made the acquaintance of his wife.

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To commemorate the first crossing of the alps by air thirty years ago by Oscar Bider (13th July, 1913) the postal authorities are arranging special flights Bern-Zurich and vice-versa for which special stamps

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at 1fr. are issued. The proceeds will go to the foundation "Pro Aero" which has for its object the aeronautical education of youth.

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Recently a goldfish was caught in the lake of Zoug measuring 50cm. (19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches). This fish is giving the zoologists a difficult problem to solve, for his species are usually to be found in the fresh water lakes of China and Japan, whereas they are kept in Europe only in aquariums where their size rarely exceeds 20cm. (8 inches).

* * *

Disappointment prevails amongst Swiss match marksmen, because of the news that the immense Argentine cup, the prize for the best team of "Stutzeschützen" at world competitions has disappeared. The cup made of solid gold and silver, weighing 28 kg. was presented forty years ago by the Argentine Minister for war Colonel Ricceri and won for the first time in 1904 in Lyons by a Swiss team. Seventeen times it was won by Swiss rifle men until shortly before the war a team from Estonia won it at Lucerne. The Swiss hoped to win it back at the next occasion, but now comes the news from Estonia that the trophy had disappeared without a trace, probably during the occupation of that country by Russian troops.

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News about Swiss and other clocks is contained in the following cutting from the "Christian Herald," 24th June: "Switzerland is still making clocks, despite the war. A little time back an idea came from there of an invalid's clock. This clock may be in any part of the room, but the invalid has no need to turn his head to know the time. He presses a button near his bed or chair, and a large shadow of the face of the clock is projected on the ceiling. A clock without a face is another idea from that country. A button is pressed, and a gramophone speaks the correct time. In the South of France there is a clock with no works. The face is more than sixteen feet across, and behind it there is an old man, who moves the figures every minute. He checks the time by his own watch. The clock was erected to keep this man in employment. The most peculiar clock in the world is to be found in Morocco. Protruding through a wall are twelve beams of wood, and on the ends of these, flowerpots are placed to denote the hour. When the beams are all occupied, the pots are removed, and then replaced one by one every hour."

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Talking about watches we have recently been shown one of the latest catalogues from Switzerland which contains a number of decidedly new designs. Men's wrist watches seem to be larger and predominate in the stop-watch variety. The pocket watch tells the time, day, date and moon phases all at a glance; the silvered dial is replaced by a multi-coloured disc ranging from pink to black.

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It is not often that we find a member of our Legation take an active interest in sports exhibitions but M. Roy Hunziker, our Attaché, competed in a "Diplomats" team in the Men's Relay Race at the Swimming Gala, held at Marshall Street baths, on July 3rd. His team had the misfortune of being deprived, at the last moment, of the co-operation of its chief exponent but the sporting press described M. Hunziker as a "very fast swimmer."

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REFORMES SOCIALES.

Il est naturel, il est humain que les belligérants édifient des plans d'avenir et promettent aux peuples, pour l'après-guerre, une société meilleure. Il serait facile de prétendre que ces plans ressortissent à la propagande et que l'on entend ainsi renforcer la résistance ou l'esprit offensif des nations. Beaucoup plus simplement, les hommes, à quel camp qu'ils appartiennent, ne peuvent supporter les horreurs du temps présent qu'en espérant beaucoup des temps à venir.

Cela est si vrai que, même chez nous qui avons le privilège d'être restés neutres et pour qui la guerre se traduit seulement par quelques difficultés, on caresse des espoirs semblables. Nous ne souffrons pas directement des hostilités. Nos biens ne sont pas détruits et nos vies ne sont pas fauchées. Nous bénéficions d'une sécurité miraculeuse. Même si nous vivons sous le régime de la pénurie, nous ne connaissons pas la disette et la faim. Malgré tout, plusieurs fois par jour, les quotidiens et la radio nous rappellent à la triste réalité qui nous entoure. Moralement, mentalement, on supporterait mal ce spectacle atroce, si l'on ne gardait au fond du cœur la conviction que des temps meilleurs attendent l'humanité.

C'est ainsi que, ces derniers mois, on a vu naître toute une série de revendications, surtout à la suite de la publication du plan Beveridge qui n'a pas manqué d'impressionner les masses. Dans les milieux politiques, on ne s'est plus contenté de demander la réalisation des assurances-vieillesse et survivants dont le principe est inscrit dans la constitution fédérale depuis non moins de dix-huit ans. On a réclamé l'établissement d'un vaste programme de sécurité sociale. Ces revendications ont été reprises par divers députés, lors de la dernière session parlementaire qui a eu lieu au mois de juin.

On était curieux de connaître à cet égard le point de vue du gouvernement fédéral. C'est M. Stampfli, notre ministre de l'économie publique, qui l'a développé. Sa réponse peut paraître décevante. Elle était en fait celle d'un réaliste.

Tout d'abord, il faut constater qu'il est très difficile chez nous de se faire une idée de l'ampleur que revêtent les institutions de prévoyance sociale. La Confédération a pris certaines initiatives. Les cantons ont mis en vigueur certaines réformes. Pour sa part, l'économie privée n'est pas restée inactive. De la sorte, si nous ne possédons guère de grandes institutions dont bénéficient tous les citoyens sans distinction et qui répandent leurs bienfaits sur l'ensemble du territoire helvétique, on ne saurait prétendre sérieusement que l'état social de la Suisse peut faire l'objet de graves critiques. En ce moment même, les autorités fédérales font dresser un inventaire des mesures qui ont été prises. On peut dire d'avance que cette enquête permettra de constater que, sur la route du progrès social, nous sommes loin de marcher parmi les derniers.

Certes, nous pourrions, comme d'autres, organiser un système d'assurances généralisé, consolider la sécurité sociale, donner à chacun des garanties contre les risques et les aléas de l'existence. Toutefois, deux considérations s'y opposent pour le moment, sans compter que nous tenons essentiellement à ce que l'initiative privée l'emporte toujours sur les mesures étatistes et que nous ne nous résignerons jamais à ce que les solutions centralisées soient substituées à