

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1943)

Heft: 1017

Rubrik: News at random

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: Clerkenwell 2321/2.

Published Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

Vol. 25 — No. 1017.

LONDON, OCTOBER 29th, 1943.

PRICE 6d.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

REMARKABLE TRIBUTE TO SWITZERLAND.

On Tuesday, October 19th, 1943, Mr. Richard Law, Minister of State, in reply to a question in the House of Commons gave a lengthy account of the exchange of wounded prisoners of war between Great Britain and Germany. The Minister of State ended his account with a tribute to Switzerland, stressing that he thought he was speaking in the name of the House in placing on record H. M. Government's gratitude to the Swiss Government for this unflinching co-operation which alone made the exchange of wounded prisoners possible. The House showed its appreciation of this declaration by loud and prolonged cheering.

Federal

The Swiss Federal Council ratified the Swiss-German Agreement, signed on the 1st October, 1943, regarding new regulations of the two countries' commercial exchanges. After many months of negotiations, discussions were broken off on 15th January, since when commercial exchanges were regulated by treaty. The new Agreement adheres to the clearing principle. It contains certain modifications concerning transfer of payments for delivery of goods and accessory charges. Payments to Switzerland are subject to new regulations which will mean progressive prolongation of delay of payment. The ruling of the old Agreement on transfer of German capital to Switzerland, on payment to Swiss insured in Germany and on tourist traffic has been altered. It has been possible to make arrangements considerably to the interest of Swiss citizens domiciled in Germany and those who formerly living in Germany and have now returned to Switzerland. The new Agreement also guarantees Switzerland the delivery of important materials and permits the transfer through Germany of Swiss bought goods. The new Agreement is valid until the end of this year.

Recent political events have obliged the Swiss Government to take certain preventative security

measures to protect the country's neutrality. This has caused an increase in expenditure for national defence. To meet this expenditure and commitments connected with the country's food supplies, the Swiss Confederation needs increasing funds. The Federal Council has just taken the decision to issue a new loan of a nominal amount of Frs.300,000,000. This will serve to consolidate the floating debt and to provide the Confederation with the necessary capital to cover current needs. The Federal Council has reserved the right to increase the nominal amount of the loan if subscriptions exceed the prescribed amount. As in the case of the loan issued in June last year, three different kinds of bonds will be offered to subscribers. It is a normal operation which has been under consideration for some months. At present the Confederation has a credit (rescription) with the Swiss National Bank amounting to a round figure of Frs.100,000,000 and it is logical and normal that this debt should be consolidated. The new Loan of Frs. 300,000,000 divided into three blocks. The first has an interest of 2.5 per cent., repayable after five years. The second, at 3.25 per cent., is repayable after 10 years, and the third, at 3.65 per cent., after 20 years.

During the session of Parliament the Deputy of Basel-Stadt said no one should be deprived of citizenship by political administration but only by Court judgment. Federal Councillor von Steiger agreed, but the situation had forced the Federal Council to take action. Grober of Inner-Rhoden demanded the study, by a commission, of intercantonal Poor Law, and the member for Berne demanded an amendment of the Federal Law regarding the cost of feeding the sick and burial of the poor of other cantons. Both

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu mardi le 2 novembre à 7h.15 et sera précédée d'un dîner à 6h. précises au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

" European Utilities and Common Institutions "

sera le sujet d'une Conférence par Mons. Douglas Woodruff, Editor of " The Tablet."

Les Membres sont priés de s'inscrire pour le dîner par écrit au plus tard le 30 octobre auprès de Mons. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Sec., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2. Prière de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

LE COMITE.

demands were accepted by Steiger. Escher (Wallis) proposed the conversion of compensation fund for soldiers (Wehrmannsausgleichskassen) and agricultural group into family compensation fund and said agricultural workers should be taken out of operation of wages compensation regulations and subjected to the agricultural earnings compensation regulations. His motion was re-drafted to make it obligatory and was agreed by the Council. Parliament ratified the German-Swiss agreement for the welfare of single women and the Ständerat accepted *en bloc* the bill relating to unfair competition, passed by Parliament. The Democratic Parliamentary Party under the chairmanship of Dr. Maag (Zurich) rejected the proposed clearing tax. It demanded a general tax at source and a revenue equalisation scheme.

* * *

The States Council accepted an initiative by the Young Farmer's party to sanction measures against speculations.

* * *

The States Council considered a petition for an amnesty for Hofmeyer, Nicole, Vogue and Grezier as well as a petition for the discontinuation of the ban on worker's organisations and their papers. Eggli said the Sub-committee was unanimous for the rejection of both petitions. After a prolonged discussion the Council rejected the petition by 34 votes. There were individual abstentions. The petition for discontinuation of the ban on workers' organisations and their papers was rejected by 34 votes to three.

* * *

The States Council approved the bill to introduce the discount tax (Verrechnungssteuer). It then continued the discussion of the Postulate (Kloeti) concerning the exploitation of water power. (de Weck) Catholic Conservative Fribourg, moved an amendment that the promotion of the Swiss electricity system did not call for a centralised measure, but should be left to private initiative, the cantons and the parishes. Various speakers supported the amendment and the Federal President said there would be a detailed report, intimating that de Weck's solution seemed to him to be the best. Kloeti agreed to support the amendment.

The Council accepted the laws against unfair competition, and the revision of the penal measures in the laws of protection of work (Arbeitsschutzgesetze).

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The Glarus representative made an interpellation concerning the delay in the building of the Prugel road. This will be answered in the next session. The Berne representative made an interpellation concerning the refugee question which the Federal Councillor von Steiger answered in similar terms to his answer in the National Council. This was accepted.

* * *

On the last day of the autumn session of the National Council, its President, Keller, gave a short report on the important legislative period of the past year. He said the Chamber had always been united behind the Federal Council in questions of importance to the country. This was proof of confidence in the Federal Council and its far-seeing and, when necessary, energetic policy. It was of vital importance now to remain united. Thanks to the Federal Council and to the understanding support given by the Councillors, the country had not yet known real hardship and could live in peace "Let us pray that Switzerland may never fare worse." He expressed his thanks to the Council and to his collaborators. Thirty-one members of the Council, including some prominent personalities, are not standing again for election. They are thanked for their services. The President wished the others good luck in the coming elections and said the country would have need of the advice of experienced men in the near future. He concluded:—"May peace be maintained for Switzerland." In the name of the Council, Vice-President Giesler thanked the outgoing President for his 30 years' work on the National Council, which he is now leaving.

* * *

M. Valloton, appointed Swiss Minister in Rio de Janeiro, last Sunday bade farewell to his political colleagues before leaving for South America. He said: "It is with pleasure that I have accepted the post of Minister in Rio de Janeiro. I am convinced that Brazil, a new country with infinite possibilities, may prove a precious adjunct to Switzerland, especially after the war, both as buyer and seller. I shall do all I can to encourage economic and financial relations between the two countries and to help our export industry."

* * *

The Chamber has unanimously adopted the project to revise the Federal penal code regarding the protection of labour. A postulate was presented requesting a complete recasting of the whole of the legislation for the protection of the working classes and an interpellation was made to make the law to apply to home industry, particularly to ready made clothing and to tailoring. The chief of the Department gave an all-round answer to all the speakers.

* * *

The head of the Department of Justice and Police reported to the National Council on the case of the Journalist-deputy Herr Graber, an influential member of the Socialist Party. Graber was stated to have declared in a West Swiss newspaper that "the flag of Switzerland must always be that of mankind and that it was preferable to dispense with the ideal of a united country than to forego that of united mankind." This statement offends the most important Swiss principle of unqualified neutrality. Von Steiger, however, while admitting that an offence had been committed saw many mitigating circumstances. Graber was undoubtedly a good Swiss and he was not the only one

who did not restrict his ideals to within the borders of the country. Disciplinary measures will be taken by the military authorities.

* * *

An inquiry was opened in connection with about 100 extremists of the right, whose centre of activities was at Zurich. The Federal Court has just ordered a first group of 12 defendants to appear before the Federal Penal Court, charged with infringing the Federal Council's decree of 5th December, 1938, suppressing acts contrary to public order and the institution of measures to protect democracy.

* * *

The 16th volume of the Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations, just published shows that the birth rate has continued to rise sharply during 1942 in Switzerland. The death rate has dropped.

Cantonal

Two thousand five hundred leaders of the *Jungmannschaft*, Switzerland's Catholic Youth Organisation, gathered in the famous Einsiedeln Abbey, in the Canton of Schwyz, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their organisation's foundation. The Holy Father sent his blessing.

After Solemn High Mass, offered by Mgr. van Streng, a great rally was held during which the main principles for the formation of character in youth were laid down. Impressive religious ceremonies ended the celebrations.

* * *

The National Council has given the Federal guarantee to the constitution of the canton of Nidwalden.

* * *

The Regierungsrat of the Canton Basel-Stadt has appointed the famous Basle Professor, Carl Gustav Jung, living in Zurich, Professor Ordinarius, to the Chair for Medical Psychology at Basle University.

* * *

Swiss scientists, supported by Basle's great chemical industry and the authorities, have recently constituted in Basle the first Swiss Academy of Medical Science. The young generation all over the world is in arms and has little leisure for disinterested art and science. There is a danger that the rising generation will show a serious lack of scholars, that progress in science will have a setback. The new Swiss Academy will make it possible for gifted young people to consecrate long years to study and research. Switzerland feels it her duty to create an organisation which will facilitate the resumption of intellectual exchanges as soon as peace is restored. The new Swiss Academy's Members are not elected for life, but are delegated by the Swiss Universities and the medical profession, and hold their seats only for eight years. Professor Wägelin, from Berne, has been nominated President for a period of four years. The originator of the project has emphasized the aims of the institution and the importance of the scientific researches for our little country.

* * *

A few years ago the räto-romansch language which is spoken in two dialects in some parts of the Grisons, was declared the fourth language of Switzerland by a decision of the people and the cantons. Since then everywhere efforts are being made to preserve this very

old language and to revive that cultural possession. Recently the members of the family von Planta Samaden have started a fund for the purpose of building up a public library in Planta house and for its upkeep in Samaden. The founders put at the disposal of the fund a beautiful old house which contains old and valuable furniture and a number of priceless works in the family library, also a sum in cash which is sufficient for the alterations and upkeep of the house. The library is to contain foremost literature of the Grisons, but above all there shall be a complete collection of works in the ladin (Engadine) language.

* * *

At the opening of the "Fiera Svizzera" in Lugano, Federal Councillor Etter, Head of the Federal Department for Interior Affairs, pointed out that the Lugano Fair was not merely an event of local importance, but formed, with Basle Fair and the Lausanne Comptoir Suisse, a proud triangle in the work and creative genius of the country. The centre of this triangle, which proved our economic strength, found expression in the "Redit National," the nucleus for our spirit of national resistance along the ancient passes, always ready to defend neutrality and independence if the need arose. The "Fiera Svizzera" truly expressed the spirit of the Italian districts of Switzerland, with whom the other parts of the country were linked by the close bonds of common history, by the same desire for freedom, and the strength of a sacred pledge binding all generations. The Army was the embodiment of the determination and will to resist. Behind it, much firmer to-day than ever before, must stand the closed ranks of the whole Swiss people.

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The Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne was visited during one night by a burglar who broke open the stand of a Jeweller and decamped with Frs.1,000 worth of jewellery!

* * *

The canton of Valais has been granted a Federal subsidy up to the highest amount of frs.1,144,000, being 40% of the total costs for the completion of the Rhone correction between Chalais and Vernayez.

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The small town of Boudry on the lake of Neuchâtel celebrated in connection with the historical Society the 600th anniversary of the granting of its French Charter by the Count Louis de Neuchâtel on the 12th September 1343. Jean Paul Marin, member of the National Convention who was assassinated in Paris in 1793 by Charlotte Corday was born at Boudry.

Xmas Greetings

Following last year's practice we propose to publish in our December issue a collective greeting. Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Friday, 10th December 1943, together with remittance for 5/-.



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The State Council of the canton of Geneva proposed to the Grand Council numerous alterations in the taxation law.

* * *

The proposed budget of the canton of Geneva for 1944 foresees receipts of 44½ million francs and an expenditure of 49 millions. An amount of 5 millions for amortisation is included in the proposed expenditure.

* * *

Jacques Brun, apothecary, died at the age of 73, at Geneva. He was a past President of the Municipal Council and also a Grand Councillor.

Army

The military tribunal IIIA, sitting from September 13th to October 4th, dealt with 24 defendants who were accused of violating military secrets between October 1941, and October 1942. The following judgments were pronounced against the principal accused:— (1) Marc Erwin, born 1912., foreigner, to twenty years hard labour and fifteen years expulsion from Switzerland. (2) Rück Paul, born in 1896, from Zurich, travelling agent in Zurich, to twenty years hard labour and ten years loss of civil rights, degradation and expulsion from the army. (3) Schulthess, born in 1912, from Zurich, representative in Basle, to twenty years hard labour and ten years loss of civil rights and expulsion from the army. Further five accused, whereof, one a foreigner, were condemned to various terms of imprisonment of from ten to three years.

It was officially announced that from the 17th to 18th September, 1943, a trial took place at Territorial Court IIB against 23 accused, who from November, 1941, to October 1942, violated the military, political and economic news service. The following were condemned to penal servitude for life and expulsion from the army: Fusilier Daumüller, Albert; born 1920, from (Grenchen) Solothurn, last place of residence Interlaken, labourer, private in an army supply detachment. Fourier Dörfinger, August born 1902, from Schaffhausen, Basle, Bank clerk; Sapper Heuser, Martin; born 1916, from Oberwil, Baselland, locksmith; Meier, Richard Leo; born 1902, from and in Basle, architect. Six more of the accused, among whom were four civilians, were condemned to penal servitude for periods of fifteen to three years. Three of the four civilians were foreigners. Thirteen accused were condemned to imprisonment.

* * *

The violation of the air on Friday, 1st October, is the subject of an official communication. American air planes overflew Swiss territory where they were pursued by German fighter planes. One of the flights took place at 11.15 over the lower Engadine in a south east to south west direction. A second flight between 11.26 and 12.27 in a southerly direction, overflew Switzerland between the entry of the Rhine into Lake Constance and Kreuzlingen and leaving between Magadino and the Bernina. The alert was sounded in the eastern part of Switzerland, also in the Grisons, Glaris & Ticino. Aerial fights took place over Herisau, the Säntis, Sargans, the Lenzerheide and Filisur. According to verifications made up to now four American aircraft were shot down by our Air Defence Corps and by fighters, two of which over Landquart. Some of the occupants could save themselves by taking to their parachutes. In Landquart the bodies of seven Americans were found. The exact number of bombs dropped on Samaden, Albula and near Landquart has not yet been established, but only damage to property and to crops has thus far been reported.

* * *

It is officially announced that on the following night foreign aircraft in large numbers again violated Swiss territory at various places. An alert was sounded throughout the country except in Geneva, Lausanne and the canton of Valais. The aircraft flew in over Switzerland between 21.29 and 22.28 from west to east and from south to east, north of the line Brugg, Olten, Sargans and Martinsbruck and between 23.09 and 00.60 from east to west, north of the line Alstätten, Wegel, Lucerne, Langnau and La Chaux-de-Fonds. They also flew over the Engadine, crossing between 22.00 and 22.30 from south to north and from north-east to south-east over Bernina and Martinsbruck. A.A. went into action. No bombs have been reported so far.

* * *

The Head of the Swiss Military Department, Federal Councillor Kobelt, spoke at the National Union of Women's Societies. Emphasising that the present times demand exceptional moral strength on the woman's part, he spoke of Switzerland's present and future problems. In the army, where women were playing their part, there was only one supreme command — to fight if Switzerland is attacked; active resistance by the army, passive resistance by the civil population. Switzerland had also to take all possible

measures against violation of her neutrality, especially in the air, for this neutrality is absolute towards every belligerent, whatever its aims or chances of success. "It is," he said "the privilege of Swiss wives and mothers to awaken in our country's youth the sentiments of love, truth and justice, which will make the coming generation independent and responsible citizens."

* * *

Since our country has often been overflowed by foreign aircraft during the last few weeks, voices have been heard to demand the relaxation of the black out, in order that the lit-up districts could be recognised as neutral country and thus could be evaded. To these demands, however, the Federal Council and the army command state, that a not blacked-out Switzerland would be a guide for foreign aviators, a matter which could not be made to agree with absolute and unconditional neutrality. Switzerland does not wish to take part in any belligerent acts and therefore the black-out will remain from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Economical

Price levels have been stable for some weeks. So far, the approach of every winter has made the increased cost of living a serious problem, and the authorities have done everything possible to stabilise prices. During the past year the cost of living index, now 48 points above that of August 1939, has risen only six points. On 1st September, the State-controlled milk price was raised by one centime per litre, the price of bread was lowered. The increase in wages has only slowly followed the increased cost of living; in all branches the wage-earner has to bear some half of the higher expense himself. The lowest wage-earners have been given the highest increase. State employees are granted a special bonus every autumn — a step imitated by most private businesses to cover the cost of winter fuel, potatoes, winter clothing and shoes. This autumn new shoe and textile cards have been issued after a marked drop in sales because of high prices. Since the outbreak of war, the price of beef has more than doubled, that of pork has trebled. Eggs cost three times as much as in 1939. Coal and wood prices have doubled. The tariff for public works, gas, electricity and railways, had remained practically stable. The worst strain on small incomes is the cost of clothes and shoes. A qualified mason earns about two francs per hour. In 1939 he earned only Frs.1.70 and in 1914 Frs.0.67. Between 1914 and 1939 mason's wages thus increased by 152 per cent. In the same period the cost of living only rose by 45 per cent., so that the masons' surplus buying power was large. Since the war, the cost of living has risen another 84 per cent., and wages only 20 per cent., which shows that if the war goes on long enough the whole improvement achieved in the workers' situation during the past 25 years might disappear. That is why stabilisation of prices, strict rationing and strong measures against the black market are so essential to the internal social peace of the country.

* * *

Rents, except in the new buildings, have remained as before. Taxes have enormously increased on a progressive scale which bears only lightly on the small pocket. The lowest wage classes especially in the towns, can buy potatoes, coal, clothes, shoes, etc., at prices kept artificially low by the Government. This

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is not charity, but an emergency Government measure to prevent hundreds of thousands of people having to fall back on public or private charity. Naturally, it is the farmers who profit most from the increased cost of food, and it needs a strong hand in the Government to prevent agricultural prices from rising still higher. On the whole, the price and wage discussion has become much milder this autumn than during the past two years, when the price curve was climbing steadily up.

* * *

The stability of the cost of living seems well maintained. The Index of Retail prices, calculated by the Swiss Cooperative Society, registers no noteworthy changes for the period 1st June—1st September. On the whole prices are below those of the corresponding period of the first World war.

* * *

According to official estimates the harvest of wheat and corn of about 12 to 15,000 tons will be handed over to the Government. The provisioning of the country which is becoming more and more difficult has caused greater restrictions. The War Provisioning Department has decreed that farmers may no longer retain 200kg. of grain per head of people employed on the farm, but have to cut down the amount to 175kg. per year and her head. If the harvest produces more than the self requirements of the farmer, the surplus has to be delivered to the Government at a fixed price. In spite of a good medium harvest and in spite of rationing of bread, roughly 60% of the grain necessary for bread will have to be imported.

Hostilities on the Italian peninsula and the closing of the port of Genoa have aggravated Switzerland's export and food supply problems. The blockade did not permit the importation of raw materials through Genoa. It was chiefly food supplies that came through. These will be most affected by the partial interruption of communications. Switzerland looks upon the situation with composure. Nobody forgets that Switzerland's economic structure has, since the beginning of hostilities proved its capacity to adapt itself. Nor are the efforts of the Swiss Government to build up stocks, increase cultivation and improve agricultural lands forgotten. The Government has recently granted a credit of 30,000,000 frs. to assist the fourth stage of agricultural land improvement programme. Since 1941, 180,000,000 have been allocated. In the first and second stages more than 1,900 firms dealing with agricultural land improvements received subsidies amounting to more than 100,000,000 frs. The third stage, which ended in the autumn of 1942, was chiefly devoted to land reclamation and improvements. The fourth stage will be devoted to land improvement and the intensification of cultivation. As an extension of agricultural land can be obtained only by cutting forests it means bringing virgin soil into cultivation to make Switzerland as independent as possible of foreign food supplies.

Traffic

A railway accident occurred at the station of Schüpfheim on the Berne-Lucerne line, of which the Regional Administration of the Federal Railway announces the following details: On 17th October, at 21.20, the man on duty at Schüpfheim switched over prematurely the point for the incoming express train which had left Lucerne at 20.47. Consequently the last coaches, crowded with passengers, were derailed, and flung against the waiting passenger train, which had left Berne at 19.23. The two coaches of the express were partly smashed in and all the tracks were blocked. Four fatal casualties occurred and 27 persons were injured, five of them seriously. The injured have been taken to hospitals in Lucerne, Langnau and Berne. The material damage is considerable.

The Grand Council of the Swiss Railway Union discussed the report of National Councillor Kertsche on Union policy and the railways' financial position.

LADIES' CLUB RUTLI

It has been suggested that a Club of Swiss Ladies called "RUTLI" should be founded at 74, Charlotte Street, W.I. All ladies of Swiss nationality or descent are eligible. The aim of the Club is to create a Centre of homely atmosphere with songs, games, and other entertainments, and to arrange dances and outings from time to time.

Ladies should apply for membership by letter to the undersigned and attend the inaugural meeting to be held on Sunday, November 21st, at 4 p.m.

M. BOLLA (Mrs.)

Advert.

The Union was requested, in a unanimous resolution, to try and obtain a more favourable co-ordination of wages with the actual cost-of-living during the next financial year. The Union welcomed the supplementary message of the Federal Council, which referred to a financial improvement of the railways; the latter is dealt with in a new directive of the Railway Union's Council. The resolution hoped that this new directive would succeed quickly in improving the railways' financial position. Congress finally resolved that railway tariffs should be adapted to the increased index arising out of war conditions.

* * *

The Council of Administration of the Swiss Federal Railways has decided, in view of present conditions, increase in prices and rise in salaries, that the construction budget will amount to Frs.33,500,000 so the budget allows for a total debit balance of Frs.68,000,000. The Swiss Parliament is considering a project for refloating the Federal Railways, and the authorities are studying a rise in railway tariffs. The decisions may considerably modify the railway budget.

* * *

A ski-lift is being erected in two sections in Montana-Vermala-Crans for the benefit of winter sports enthusiasts. The lower section will be built by a firm of Zurich, whereas the upper part will be entrusted to a local firm.

Humanitarian

At the meeting of the National Council, National Councillor Grimm demanded information about the new influx of refugees, particularly about the regulations concerning their billets, maintenance and eventual employment. He criticised the fact that on the night of 17-18th September, the canton of Berne had been suddenly allocated 15,000-16,000 refugees without previous notification.

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The Chief of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, Federal Councillor von Steiger, replied that from 17th to 27th September, 21,860 refugees and 960 escaped prisoners of war crossed the southern border of Switzerland. Including all previous internees the number of soldiers now on Swiss territory amounted to approximately 58,000 men. The present influx amounted to about 200 to 300 persons per day. The refugees had to be removed from the border district and taken into quarantine camps to prevent the spreading of disease such as typhus. No cases of typhus had been discovered so far, but numerous others had. The need to establish reception (Auffang) and quarantine camps in the interior was why the great number of refugees of 17th-18th September had to be taken into the canton of Berne. After a certain period some refugees who had a clean bill of health were being employed on suitable work such as timber cutting and road improvements (Melioration). All competent authorities agreed that no refugee had the right of employment. Our own people had a prior right. Suitable work could be found in quarries, in forestry and on road-building.

Federal Councillor von Steiger said that, contrary to various rumours, no border incidents had been reported. Precautions were being taken to reduce the influx of refugees to a tolerable scale. The Federal

Council were attempting to continue to grant the right of sanctuary and to do human work, but were not in a position to do this without bearing in mind the welfare and the security of the country, its principal aim. The National Councillor who asked the question declared himself satisfied with the reply.

Here are a few remarks from some of the leading Swiss Papers:—

“*La Suisse*” says: “Switzerland cannot go as far in the exercise of charity as she would like. It is impossible to let the despairing masses who rush to our frontier enter freely. Should we do that, we would create a dangerous precedent, for it is possible that soon, on some other frontier of Switzerland, yet more grave events will take place. At such a time great strength will be required. Above all it will be necessary to have acted wisely if we are not to be submerged.”

The “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” correspondent in the Federal City writes: “The most noble sentiment of humanity inspires our attitude towards the Italian refugees. We are helping them as much as we possibly can. The Swiss Minister of Justice has made a trip to the South to outline measures on the spot. He will say what can be done and what must be prevented, for even the most unselfish charity has certain limits. Loye for our fellow men must stop short of degeneration into self-destruction.”

“*Thurgauer Zeitung*” makes the following pregnant remark: “If we give full vent to our desire to help everybody, the time will come when we shall not be able to help anybody, not even ourselves.”

“*Zürcher Nachrichten*” gives this report on the question: “The crossing of our frontier by 20,000 Italian refugees throws up tremendous problems. These poor fugitives came hungry and entirely without means. They will have to be clothed and nourished and a roof will have to be put over their heads. First aid was extended principally by our military kitchens. A spontaneous call for help has brought in thousands of articles of clothing and bedding, and the authorities have immediately undertaken the building of huts in different parts of the country so that the refugees may shelter. Thought will have to be given to the labour problem, for Switzerland, due to the shortage of raw materials, there are signs of unemployment. We must see that these Italian refugees, who are good capable workers, do not take away the employment and the bread of our own citizens. But this would mean that the refugees will have to be maintained at the expense of the Collectivity. In any case, the feeding of 20,000 people at a time when import difficulties are acute is a real problem. Here again Switzerland will find a solution dictated by charity and approved by reason.”

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In 1942 Switzerland took in 21,000 children, of whom 2,500 (amongst them a few hundred Yugoslavs) were given hospital care in camps. All the others were received in private families.

* * *

On the last day of September, 450 Swiss and 50 French children left Switzerland via Geneva to return home to the South of France. They were the guests for nearly three months of the “*Schweizerhilfe*” and “*Pro Juventute*.”

It is good to learn how our little guests have been made welcome in order to help them to forget what

they had to go through. Also it proves that mercy and charity still have a home somewhere on the Continent. The Irish Press of 4th of October gives the following illustration of how the Swiss people donated enough ration coupons for 1,353,000 lbs. of foodstuffs, nearly 475,000 pairs of shoes, 60,000 lbs. of soap, and sufficient textile coupons to outfit 4,000 war-stricken children is described in an article, “Swiss Red Cross Help for Children,” in the October Red Cross Bulletin.

In the first nine months of 1942, 15,134 children came to Switzerland from Belgium, France and Serbia.

Many other activities of Swiss Red Cross Aid-to-Children movement were financed by the Swiss people.

* * *

One hundred tubercular war invalids from the Finnish Army have just arrived in Switzerland, where they will receive care in hospitals at high altitudes. They have been handed over to the Federal Commissariat of Internment and will be subjects to military discipline.

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An exhibition of the International Red Cross held in Zurich was visited by over 11,000 people. The collection in favour of the work amounted to frs.7,200.

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Miss Anna Cécile de Precinte, who died last December in Paris, left a legacy of 300,000 French francs to the Swiss Red Cross and to the Benevolent Institutions in Geneva. This money is deposited with the Banque de France in Paris.

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The badges which are being sold for this year's Winterhilfe are made from clay and are burnt in a pottery in Steffisburg near Thun. They are in the form of the Swiss coat of arms. A large number of home workers in the neighbourhood of Thun have been occupied with these badges during the summer and have formed a welcome addition to their usual earnings. After being burnt they are painted with a red varnish by home workers in the neighbourhood of Frutigen. After this process a red and white ribbon, manufactured in the Baselland from artificial silk is slipped through an eyelet and the badge is ready for sale. 470,000 of these badges have been produced by home workers in the Bernese Oberland and a great

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number of families of the inhabitants of our mountains have thus had the most precious of help, namely help through work. These badges will be on sale at the end of October.

* * *

As the refugees, of whom there are about 61,000 in Switzerland, cannot all be accommodated in schools and other existing buildings, the Federal Council has granted Fr.3,000,000 for the erection of special huts.

At the Fourth Swiss Congress of Employees, Federal Councillor Stampfli conveyed a message of greetings from the Federal Council. He stated that the efficiency of the employee must decide his chances of promotion, and that every employee has a right to receive an adequate salary. He suggested that the regulations concerning retirement grants (Abgangentschädigung) for elderly employees should be investigated. Dealing with the question of old age insurance and insurance of families bereft of the bread-winner, Stampfli stated that it is at present difficult to work out a satisfactory scheme, owing to the heavy burden of debts and the varying conditions in the Cantons. The Federal Council has, therefore, raised the Old Age Pensions, as an interim solution.

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The Swiss Press Association has held its annual meeting at Basle, celebrating at the same time the 60th anniversary of its foundation. Mr. Etter, Chief of the Département for the Interior, thanked the Press for its collaboration in the matters of control rendered necessary by the neutrality of the country. He said this collaboration has bred a sense of responsibility, particularly important now when the war has entered a stage which might make our country's situation very difficult. Thanks to the Press our people preserve sound judgment. The Press Association's spokesman in reply gave an assurance that the Press would always have the interest of Switzerland at heart. No political party, no foreign power could make it depart from this course.

* * *

An international rifle shooting match between Swedish and Swiss Rifle Associations took place in the fourth week of August in which competitions in shooting with small calibre rifles, army rifles, carbines (Stutzer) and match pistols took place. The Swedes were the winners in the small calibre arms with 4,585 points against the Swiss with 4,531 points, the other three competitions were won by the Swiss:— Army rifle 4,146 points against 4,074, carbines 4,326 against 4,234 and match pistols 4,213 against 4,167 points. The several competitions were shot at the same time in Sweden and Switzerland under the control of delegates of both countries and the results transmitted by telegraph. Individual winners in the various arms were:— small calibre rifles, Kurt Johannson (Sweden) 589 points, army rifles, Karl Zimmermann (Switzerland) 529 points; carbines (Stutzer) Kurt Johannson (Sweden) 553 points and pistols, Willy Büchi (Switzerland) 548 points.

* * *

The exceptionally hot and rainless summer has not only caused great damage to some parts of the country by drought, but has caused actual catastrophes. In the Val d'Hérens, in the canton of Valais, a hidden lake broke forth under the Ferpècle glacier

which caused very extensive damage in the valley. Also beneath the glacier on the Gornergrat near Zermatt a great quantity of molten snow water collected, which suddenly broke forth and doing great damage to villages down in the valley. In the Calanda mountains in the Grisons, near Chur, a large forest fire broke out which was only stopped after several days hard work of the fire brigades of the neighbourhood and a large contingent of troops. Only the falling rain eventually extinguished the last embers in the difficult get-at-able mountain forest. Also a well-wooded hill above Waasen on the St. Gotthard Railway burnt for days and the fire was carried further afield by the Foehn. The damage to both forests is very great.

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The section Diablerets of the Swiss Alpine Club has opened the newly rebuilt Constantia hut on the Mountet in the presence of a large number of members. The hut is situated at the edge of the Zinal glacier (2,894m.). The first hut was built in 1872 and enlarged in 1919. The present reconstruction has room for 120 people.

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Not only has Switzerland the highest Hotel in Europe, now it has also the highest altar. The "Catholic Times" of 24th September, states that an altar was erected on the highest peak in the Swiss Alps on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross announces Vatican Radio.

Mass was said at the altar and a cross was blessed. Among the prayers said was one for the protection of the country in its present difficulties.

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The editor of the "Schweizer Illustrierte Zeitung," Redactor E. Pargaetzi, died at Zofingen at the age of 58. For 12 years he was the leading spirit of this very well known undertaking and to him a great deal of its success is due.

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Mr. William Angehn-Wild and his wife Elise commemorated their diamond wedding on September 24th in St. Gall.

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The first German war correspondent to interview the Commander of the Swiss Vatican Guard, Col. von Pfyffer, was *Transocean's* special correspondent, Weber. German officers or soldiers are not allowed to enter the Vatican City unless they have a special permit from the German Military Commander of Rome. Pfyffer said: "Never before have there been so many false reports about the Vatican since the German occupation of Rome. We do not consider ourselves prisoners. The watch at the gates of the Vatican City is stricter than before because political troubles in Italy have caused many people to try and gain access to the Vatican City to escape their political opponents.

15 Swiss youths having enlisted as recruits for the Vatican guard received permission on October 13th from the German authorities at the Ponte Chiasso frontier to enter Italy. They will go to Rome in order to reinforce the Papal guard.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to publish our next issue on November 26th.