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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

A new Federal loan of 300 million francs has been offered for subscription; 175 million are 3½% 22 year stock and 125 million 3¼% 10 year stock. Both are issued at par and the first lot can be called in after 15 years. The last Federal loan was submitted in June last for 500 million when the whole of the 940 million subscribed was retained by the Confederation.

A communication from the Swiss National Bank on the 16th inst. states that the loan has been heavily oversubscribed, 675 million francs having been applied for; an allotment pro rata is expected.

At a meeting of the liberal party Fed. Counc. Petitpierre reviewed a few problems of our foreign policy. Though we could not expect to be admitted to peace conferences, questions affecting our own interests, such as frontier rectifications, could not be decided without our own council. There were three problems, our foreign minister continued, that claimed our immediate attention. Firstly the compensation to be paid to our compatriots for damage suffered in foreign countries; secondly the abrogation of the black list and thirdly the fate of German credits and assets in Switzerland. As regards the desirability or necessity of our country joining the United Nations organisation, the matter was being thoroughly investigated by a special commission which had its first meeting on the 14th inst; in the end a proposal would be submitted to our parliament and the final decision rested with the people (referendum). The names of the six members of this expert commission were published in our press and are: Dr. P. Bolla, President of the Federal Tribunal; Federal Judge Huber; Col. Gonard; Prof. W. Rappard; Dr. von Salis and Dr. Schindler, both professors at the E.T.H. Zurich. Working with this expert body there will be a large advisory or consultative commission, the members of which have been selected from Parliament, the Army, Red Cross, Universities, Trade Unions, etc. Some names that may be familiar in our Colony are: Nat. Counc. Oeri (Basle), Dr. Hotz (Berne), Prof. M. Huber

(Continued overleaf.)



DAYS OF HOPE

(Espoir: Sierra de Teruel) (A)

by

ANDRÉ MALRAUX

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(Red Cross), Prof. Secrétan (Lausanne), Prof. de la Harpe (Neuchâtel) and Nat. Counc. Schmid-Ruedin (Zurich).

In reply to an enquiry the Federal Council stated that a third daily postal delivery in towns was at present not contemplated. The budget for 1946 of the Postal Administration already foresaw a deficit of 15 million francs and the re-introduction of the pre-war service would claim 400 additional workers and a further three million francs.

The preliminary Federal budget proposals for 1946 were published on the 2nd inst. and will in due course be debated by the two houses of our parliament. The deficit on the ordinary accounts is estimated at 360 million francs and on the extra-ordinary accounts (mobilisation) 160 million, i.e., 520 million against 1688 million for 1945, the final figures for which are not yet available. Tax reductions have not come under consideration.

According to unconfirmed references in the Swiss press the negotiations between America and our own authorities as to the engagement of Swiss nationals in the American zone of occupation in Germany have been successfully terminated. No official details have so far been given to the press.

Our first minister to Canada is Dr. Victor Nef, who was born 55 years ago in St. Gall though citizen of Herisau. He started his career in the embroidery trade and has always been a keen student of national economy; he subsequently studied at the Berne university where he obtained his doctorate at the age of 25. Dr. Nef entered the consular service and spent all his time at New York; in 1933 he was appointed our consul general to the U.S.A. and as such has been instrumental in concluding several commercial agreements with our great sister republic.

Minister Henri de Torrente from Sion, a professional diplomat, has been appointed Swiss minister to China. Originally he had been intended to go to Paris as successor to Minister Stucki, but the French Government was disinclined to grant the traditional agrément.

For the first time, as far as we know, an avowed socialist has been made an extra-ordinary and plenipotentiary minister. He is Dr. Anton Roy Ganz, who goes to Warsaw. Born 42 years ago in Chicago, where his father is still director of the musical college, he spent his early youth in Berlin and just before the outbreak of the first world-war he returned with his parents to America. He subsequently studied in Basle and soon after his Dr. juris was appointed public prosecutor and nine years later in 1941 president of

the criminal court of this canton. Dr. Ganz enters the diplomatic service without any previous experience; he is an active member of the socialist party, which he represented in the Grosse Rat, and a conspicuous linguist.

"Switzerland and the New League" is the title of a well-reasoned treatise which appears in the November number of the "Contemporary Review." As the question of our adherence will before long become a major issue in our country we recommend this exposé to the close study of those of our readers who wish to form an unbiassed or *neutral* judgment.

The Minister of Labour, Mr. G. Isaacs, stated in the House that about 6,700 Swiss were residing in England but he could not say how many occupied paid positions; against this the British Consulates in Switzerland had on their registers 2,320 Englishmen of whom 551 were in salaried situations. This information was given in reply to an interpellation criticising sharply the restricting employment conditions to which foreigners were submitted in our country.

Cantonal

The last section on the Uri side of the Susten road having been completed, the first car gaily decorated, drove across to Wassen on Wednesday, October 31st. After the official ceremony the whole population celebrated the unique event in the conventional manner.

For the first time in history Zurich received on October 31st the visit of a fully-uniformed American band; it was the one from 84th Infantry Division (Rail-

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splitters) and consisted of about 80 musicians. Though the event was scarcely advertised a tremendous crowd witnessed the arrival at the station. The band wended its way along the Bahnhofstrasse to the offices of the American Consul General, who was treated to a lengthy serenade. The versatility of the "tambour major" and some of the strange instruments, not yet incorporated in our own brass bands such as the Sousaphons, filled everybody with admiration. The police had to be reinforced to keep in check the excited crowds that besieged the Kongresshaus (Tonhalle) where, in the evening, the visitors from "God's own land" gave a concert; even the pergolas in the old Tonhalle gardens were used as a vantage point to obtain a glimpse of the idols. (Well do we remember taking part in a similar manifestation when during our school years the "Konstanzer Regimentsmusik" invaded our country.)

Following an official enquiry into conditions prevailing at the cantonal teachers' college (Lehrerseminar) at Künsnacht two of the professors have been dismissed by the Zurich Regierungsrat. Both of them, Dr. Fritz Rittmeyer and Dr. H. Corrodi, are charged with being influenced by Nazi doctrines.

The Zürcher Kantonalbank is acquiring the local building of the Eidgenössische Bank for the price of about 4½ million francs.

The heavy storms at the end of last month released several avalanches (Runsen) in the canton Glarus causing widespread if not serious damage. A factory in Diesbach, Legler & Co., was entirely submerged in the water and came to a standstill.

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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, 14th December, 1945, together with remittance for 5/-

The former Berne notary, Hans Lindt, who, together with four companions, was sentenced during the war for violation of military secrets, is reported to have been shot in Berlin by a Russian patrol for being in possession of a revolver.

The riotous proceedings in Bulle, when months ago Federal food inspectors met with a hostile reception, formed the subject of elaborate enquiries and protracted court proceedings which came to an end on October 18th at the council chamber in Fribourg. All the accused, a dozen of them, were bound over for from three months to 14 days. The conciliatory judgment was hailed with great satisfaction and the accused, some of them in local costumes, posed on leaving the court with their counsel for a "souvenir" photo which will hardly compensate the heavy cost of the trial which has to be born by the defendants.

Mgr. François Charrière, a lecturer at the Fribourg seminary and director of "Liberté," has been appointed to the bishopric of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg; he takes the place of the late bishop Marius Besson.

No more than Frs 15,000 is required by the village of Luterbach (Solothurn) for handing each of their "warriors" the 10 cts. bonus per day of service decided upon by the voters.

In the elections for the local council (Bürgerrat) at Basle the parties of the right had to concede four seats to the left but still retain a slight majority, i.e., 22 seats out of a total of 40. A striking victory was gained by the new "party of labour" which increased its strength from three to ten seats; the socialists lost two mandates and now hold eight against the former ten.

The accounts for 1944 of Basle balance with a deficit of about three million francs instead of the 14 million originally budgeted for. The improvement is due to larger returns under all revenue items, more particularly taxes; the municipal undertakings, especially the electricity works, have shown gratifying results. The consolidated debt of the town is about 250 million francs, the interest service of which appropriates about 14% of the total revenue.

The Basle notary, Dr. P. Neidhart, after prolonged proceedings, has been sentenced to four years penal servitude, a fine of 2,000 frs., and subsequently to a temporary deprivation of civil rights. As an agent of the Gestapo he had to meet a long list of charges, incl. the falsification of documents, supplying regular information about notable Swiss residents and extort-

ing large sums of money on the pretence of liberating Jews from German concentration camps.

A singular revelation about the coming generation in the canton Schaffhausen is reported in some of the Swiss papers. During the last 60 years the population in the canton has practically doubled but while then 7,617 youngsters received compulsory school instruction the attendance in the present term is 6,485 only. In Schaffhausen itself, with a residential population of about 12,500 in 1887, the schoolchildren numbered 2,159; to-day with nearly twice the inhabitants the number has increased by 10% only and is 2,382.

The village of Buchthalen has been incorporated with the town of Schaffhausen; the voters of both communities have sanctioned the "amalgamation" with overwhelming majorities.

Wood in quantities of five to six thousand tons daily is being handled by the Rhatian railway and loaded at Lanquart on to S.F.R. trucks.

The recent fair at Lugano was visited by 120,123 persons, an increase of 42% compared with last year's figure; commercial interests from Italy are said to have been much in evidence.

On both sides of the Italo-Ticinese frontier the guards are being strengthened in the hope of breaking the cunning smuggling traffic that has become a regular trade and against which the 2,500 frontier guards can make little impression. Rice seems to be the prin-

cipal contraband as it commands a high price in Switzerland; in one shop alone Italian functionaries seized 60 tons which were waiting to be hustled across.

A serious fracas occurred near Roggiano about three kilometers from the frontier. A couple of guards who took over early on Tuesday morning (Oct. 30th) noticed in the pouring rain three spectres and shouted "Halt." The answer was a volley of machine-gun bullets which placed them hors de combat at once. The three smugglers beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind them large bales of tobacco; the two frontier guards were transported to the Mendrisio hospital where one of them, the 27 year old recently married Maggi, died the same evening from the wounds received. The other one, named Pelli, is expected to recover.

A more subtle plan was concocted by two cautious merchants. "Se non è vero" it has the merit of being "bon trovato." Ecce: A Swiss trader used to get from Italy an excellent honey which he sold at a substantial profit to his Swiss customers. When the export of Italian honey was prohibited last year this trader hit upon an idea which proved very successful. He managed to send a message to his Italian purveyor summoning him to the border. There, through the barbed wire, he instructed him to bring his pots of honey and to leave them open at the edge of the forest; he undertook to do the rest himself. While the Italian purveyor was doing this, the Swiss trader moved his beehives to the other side of the valley, about a thousand yards from the place where the pots of honey stood. Within three days the Swiss bees had brought back some 200 lb of Italian honey into Switzerland, in spite of the Italian ban and in face of the Swiss Customs officials.

The Ticinese authorities have approached the Federal Council for assistance in preventing the re-opening of the gambling houses at Campione which are, of course, under Italian jurisdiction.

A strangely noiseless burglary is reported from the neighbourhood of Cabbio. A few armed men entered the homestead of E. Abate and after browbeating the whole family forced them to watch quietly the ransacking of the house. Having secured sufficient portable booty the robbers withdrew, probably across the Italian frontier, as a subsequent search by the police revealed no clues.

The Marcel-Benoist foundation has awarded the 1944 prize of Frs 20,000 for the most notable achievement in scientific research to Prof. Dr. Robert Matthey, director of the zoological institute of the university of Lausanne.

One of the latest distinctions that has been bestowed upon General Guisan is the *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Lausanne. For once, the General is not in the best of company for on the list of those similarly honoured by this *alma mater* figures Benito Mussolini.

Particulars of the murder in 1940 of the cattle dealer Bloch of Payerne are likely to be revealed by the advent of Pasteur Phillip Lugin in Lausanne. The latter was a well-known personality in the frontist movement of the canton Vaud and when rumours im-

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plicated him in this crime he disappeared mysteriously; he was discovered in Francfort a/M. by the American occupation police and promptly deposited on our side of the frontier.

In La Chaux-de-Fonds 6,000 watchmakers held a demonstration in the station square unanimously declaring that the moment had now arrived for insisting on a general improvement in their working conditions. In the forefront of their demands is the right of changing the place of their employment without restrictions and the abolishment of different pay between male and female labour.

Marcel de Coulon died at Cortaillod (his birth-place) at the age of 63. He held many administrative offices in the canton Neuchâtel and was on the board of the Cantonal Bank and several industrial undertakings. For twelve years he represented his canton in the States Council (Ständerat) as a liberal.

A remarkable political upheaval emerged from the elections for the 100 seats in the Geneva Grand Conseil which took place at the beginning of this month. The new "party of labour" (Nicole) which, until about a year ago, was banned from the political arena rose phoenix-like to eminence and secured 45 seats captured from all the opposing parties with the exception of the socialists who retained the nine mandates held in the old council. The independants otherwise Landesring (Duttweiler) have failed to hold a single seat. The socialists with their nine seats practically hold the balance between the two antagonistic groups. The election campaign was fierce and exciting, the voters' participation exceeding 80%.

Geneva is gradually replacing Zurich in the importance of the aerial traffic. During October last no less than 248 planes started from — or landed on — the airfield of Cointrin in the Stockholm, Paris and Marseille services.

An unusual law-suit, dating back to an event in 1938, was finally disposed of by the Geneva court. A couple, accompanied by a guide, were caught in a snow storm whilst making the ascent of the Mont-blanc. They had to take refuge in an icy cleft on the Col du Maudit where they stayed without food and exposed to an extreme temperature for three days until they were succoured by a relief column from Chamonix. They were both in a deplorable condition suffering from frozen limbs. In the end M. Marcel Gallay had to have his foot amputated. He now sued his former rope-partner, Mlle. Erica Stagni, for 30,000 francs damages, maintaining that his mishap was solely due to the care and chivalry bestowed upon his lady friend in complete oblivion of his own preservation. The court found that he had but obeyed the unwritten law of mountaineering by exhibiting and practising the solidarity and comradeship expected in moments of danger, adding that he should have considered the aggravated risks which such a venture in the midst of winter concealed. The claim was dismissed and M. Gallay became liable for the payment of the somewhat heavy costs.

Army

Our military tribunals continue to be busy re-sentencing malefactors who, in spite of previous sentences during their absence, have now been discovered in Switzer-

land. One St. Gall butcher, L. Oehler, a 32 year old sergeant, who already in 1941 and 1942 came before the courts for minor offences, is now sentenced to penal servitude for life and subsequent expulsion from the country which, if true, certainly looks like a piece of antiquated red tape as already in July 1944 he was denationalised.

Early this year an anonymous pamphlet was distributed in our army, chiefly amongst officers, which reviewed military matters and government policy in a critical fashion. At that time such comment or criticism was prohibited under the defence regulations. Seven persons, all Swiss, were at the beginning of this month charged at Berne before the military tribunal 3a and sentenced to from four to 14 months imprisonment. They all pleaded guilty with apologies; among them are two printers, a notary and an architect, all from Berne.

Traffic

Thanks to an agreement with the French occupation authorities, shipping on the Rhine and Lake Constance is now permitted again. The full benefit of this traffic will, of course, not be derived until the whole of the Rhine, from Basle to Antwerp, becomes navigable; it is expected that the necessary clearing and correcting of the Rhine bed will be completed by the end of January next.

An optimistic opinion of the likely development of aerial traffic with the U.S.A. has been given by Mr.



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Henri Pillichody, who has returned from a two years' tour of America. He is reported to have been sent there by the Swiss Tourist Office to study the prospects and possibilities of the intercontinental passenger trade. He says that on the basis of calculations established by U.S. air transport organisations, 200,000 American passengers to Europe are expected; some aircraft factories even reckon a total of 500,000. He thought that Switzerland should improve her air transport and put into service machines for non-stop flights from Switzerland to the U.S.A. The Hotel industry should adapt itself to new conditions and consider an important increase in American middle-class passengers. The U.S.A. Government intended spending 1,500,000 dollars to encourage travel abroad, in which Switzerland would figure prominently.

An air-taxi company has been formed in Geneva under the name of "Tarsa" (Taxis aériens rapides S.A.). It is intended to acquire a number of small planes that need not necessarily be dependant on the facilities offered by the aerodromes, and that could land on meadows and lakes. Machines of the Helicopter and Seaplane type will be used.

Over 800 French railway trucks are at present being repaired or overhauled in the S.F.R. repair shops of Yverdon and Zurich as well as a few private engineering establishments. It is expected that during the coming year over 3,000 French trucks will be reinstated in our country.

Economics

No time is being lost by the Federal price control in taking advantage of the improved conditions on the world markets and bringing about a general lowering of retail prices. In order to facilitate this perhaps premature action a hundred million francs are taken from the war damage insurance fund to temporarily subsidise wholesale prices of vital articles of food, such as cereals, milk, oats, maize, cooking fats, etc. An illustration of the changed outlook is supplied by the present cost of cereals: the average maritime freight rate for one ton of bread cereals amounted to 214 francs in 1944, i.e., about 40% of the total cost which meant about 10½ cts. per kilo bread. To-day the freight is about a third which alone constitutes a reduction of about seven centimes per kilo bread. Cuban sugar swallowed at the beginning of this year 24 cts. per

kilo for sea freight; to-day it is no more than eight centimes. Other factors, such as cheaper produce, shorter transport routes and lower insurance rates will also have a material influence. In the ordinary course of events it would take a few months before consumers would derive the full benefit; the stocks at home and the large consignments lying in Spanish and other ports awaiting shipment have all been purchased at war-prices.

A lively black market has developed in fountain pens and all sorts of propelling pencils. They are supposed to be smuggled in from Italy and are said to be of American origin. According to one report something like 10,000 of these pens are being hawked at less than half the price of the legitimately imported article. It is said that this fountain pen fever is mainly due to the absence of genuine imports from America. According to a Federal prescription the gold content of the nib must be 585 millièmes (14 carat). Under war conditions slight variations took place in the purity without affecting the appearance of the nib; the pens supplied to the America troops were, therefore, not up to the mark and would have been rejected or even confiscated had they passed through the Swiss customs in the ordinary way.

Since the beginning of this month the retail prices of most food articles have shown a noticeable drop; it varies from 10 to 15%. Thus one liter table oil costs now 2.86 frs. against 3.36, rice at 0.92 frs. is about half per kilo, oats at 0.96 frs. per kilo is 22 cts. cheaper than before, and so on. Excepted only are sugar, white flour and ground rice (semolina); bread was already cheapened on October 15th by 8 cts. to 47 cts.

The extra-ordinary shareholders' meeting of the Basler Handelsbank confirmed with an overwhelming majority the transfer agreement tentatively concluded with the Schweiz. Bankverein. The vice-president referred to the unavoidably serious reaction which had visited the bank after the collapse of Germany and which was followed by cash withdrawals of about 20 million francs within a few days. The reorganisation of the bank in 1937 would have remedied the unwieldy position had not the second world war intervened.

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Official statistics show the coal imports for the nine months to end September to have been about 70,000 tons against 1.3 million in the same period last year; the latter figure was, of course, actuated by certain reciprocal performances. The bulk of the coal came from America but since then British coal has also been in evidence.

Certificates of origin for goods exported from our country to Great Britain have been cancelled. So far no exciting rush has been reported but a few thousand tons of watches and clocks are said to be on the way.

Contrary to a previous report bread is still rationed though sold at a reduced price; the reason is that an unlimited supply is likely to be misapplied for the feeding of poultry and rabbits.

In our last issue when we referred to the two small Austin cars (said to be the forerunners of a few hundred) that were being driven to Switzerland we wondered how they had managed with the petrol supply. We are indebted to one of our subscribers for enlightenment: the drivers by previous arrangement were provided with French petrol tickets and actually arrived in Zurich 30 hours after leaving Dieppe. Needless to add, this unique performance goes to the credit of a Swiss forwarding firm.

A singular statement appears in the "Yorkshire Post," October 26th, 1945, in an article dealing with the expected visit in Bradford of Sir Stafford Cripps. A prominent member of the wool textile industry made it known that several wool textile firms "have received offers of machinery from Switzerland for which they can pay by exports in the shape of woven wool tissues."

Here are a few extracts from a long article in the November Trade and Engineering Supplement of the "Times" — probably contributed by a Swiss economist which deals with some of our transition problems.

"Switzerland is a rich country, rich not because of its natural resources (which are poor), but because of the enterprise and hard work of its people. It is doubtful to what extent future marketing possibilities in impoverished Europe, which used to be Switzerland's main customer, will exist for

CITY SWISS CLUB.

I have pleasure in informing Members that a
CHRISTMAS DINNER
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The Swiss Minister, Monsieur PAUL RUEGGER, will talk to us on "CURRENT TOPICS." Price of the dinner 12/6 excluding gratuities.

Reservation should be made with the Manager of the Dorchester Hotel to reach him not later than Saturday, the 15th of December. Members only.

P. MOEHR, *Hon. Secretary.*

the high quality and to a large part luxury products of the country. The Swiss seem determined to leave nothing to chance and to ensure a policy of stable employment during the difficult period of transition from war-time to peace economy. Ambitious plans for public works involving an expenditure of 2,933,900,000 frs. were passed by the Federal Council. Detailed construction designs for an improvement of the Swiss highroad system, estimated to cost nearly 1,000,000,000 frs. are already being carried out. It is interesting to note that in contrast to most of the European countries no changes in economic principles are contemplated. The heightened activity of the State is a stop-gap measure and not a preliminary to a policy of State participation in industry.

"Switzerland shares with Britain not only the historic fact that both were pioneers in industrialization, having been the two leading manufacturing nations early in the seventeenth century, but also the fact that her people, like the British, are imbued with a quest for individualism and a corresponding dislike of controls. Having survived the war with a negligible reduction in real wages (amounting approximately in all to 5 per cent.), there seems to be a measure of agreement between employers and workers about the desirability of maintaining an economic policy of continuity. Thus it is with the approval of labour that Swiss industry has used part of the production potential of her engineering works — particularly since the summer of 1944 — for modernizing its equipment and bringing mechanization up to date.

"Switzerland's monetary situation is a matter for satisfaction. According to the statement of the Swiss National Bank of September 15th, its holdings of gold and foreign exchange amounted to 4,829,100,000 frs. (against 2,624,000,000 frs. at the end of 1939), while the notes in circulation were 3,520,000,000 against 2,050,000,000. That means that the position of the Swiss franc has substantially improved compared with 1939. That picture may be slightly misleading, since it leaves out of account the problem of the blocked so-called rubric accounts, privately estimated to amount to approximately \$1,000,000,000. These accounts, which in the Anglo-American view are largely owned by Ger-

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mans, are a matter of international controversy. The official request is that the Swiss should surrender these amounts to the United Nations, who would deal with them under the heading of reparations. The Swiss attitude seems to be that even if German origin is established (which has yet to happen in some cases), Swiss losses in Germany and in trading with Germany would counterbalance the Swiss holdings in question and the Swiss would thus have first claim to them."

Export of paper to France is being discontinued, the old agreement having come to an end; this will relieve the acute shortage from which our daily papers suffered most.

Humanitarian

Together with General Eisenhower and other war leaders, Prof. Max Huber, the 71 year old President of the International Red Cross Committee, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law at Oxford. The ceremony was performed in Latin but each recipient was given a souvenir translation of the respective description. The one to Prof. Huber read "The guardian of the inviolable shrine of mercy and human kindness at Geneva representing the human kindness of all peoples in the world."

Actually Prof. Max Huber is holding his present office during the absence of Prof. Carl Burckhardt, who is now our Swiss Minister in Paris; previous to this, he has been President of the International Red Cross for 16 years.

A committee has been formed by leading personalities in Switzerland in order to give help to Germany which, according to British statesmen, is becoming a centre of physical and moral contagion and a danger to Europe.

By arrangement with the Italian authorities those Swiss who at the outbreak of — or during — hostilities had quitted their "living" are now allowed to take up their former positions again; several small colonies have already arrived at Milan and Genoa.

Compared with the extremely liberal assistance, chiefly via the "Don Suisse," which the stricken inhabitants of the war-devastated countries are receiving from us, the lot of the large number of Swiss with their families who have lost their living and savings in foreign countries and are now hospitalised in Switzerland, seems undeserved, to say the least. Most of them are being cared for by relatives or cantonal and municipal subsistence funds and hope, probably in vain, to return to their former fields of activity when a semblance of normalcy is in sight. A few of our unharmed — we might even say war-prosperous — colonies abroad have given tangible and profound proof of their solidarity. Thus, the central office for aid to evacuated Swiss from abroad has received no less than 218,354 frs. from Swiss centres in the U.S.A. sent home by Minister Bruggmann. An appeal launched in Egypt by Minister Brunner has so far produced an amount of ab. 182,000 frs. and the few Swiss left in the Rhine provinces have collected 3,460 frs.

The fate of our compatriots in belligerent countries was dealt with in a statement given to the press on November 12th by Federal Counc. Petitpierre, the head of our Political Department. In Germany

up to the end of March last, 220 Swiss had been arrested of whom 45 died in concentration camps; another ten in France and three in Italy had been executed. About a hundred were missing (*Spurlos verschwunden*); enquiries showed little progress at present due to the disappearance of responsible functionaries in Germany. In France the execution of sixty Swiss had been established, though it is believed that some of them had been murdered. Another 300 had been arrested for having *volens volens* taken sides; our intervention was successful in releasing about half of them, negotiations in this direction were still proceeding. In Italy a few Swiss were taken into custody following denunciations, but steps taken by our consuls secured their liberty. In Yugoslavia about ten Swiss are still under arrest charged with collaboration. In the Japanese theatre 12 Swiss were murdered by troops and another seven were imprisoned, some of them being tortured. The Japanese Government had paid one million francs in compensation for those that had been murdered. In the Dutch Isles and China about thirty Swiss were still in prison.

The present number of about 50,000 evacuated from abroad is likely to be increased by several thousands from Germany and the eastern part of Europe.

A meeting of Swiss refugees from middle and eastern Europe held in St. Gall and attended by over three hundred sufferers called upon the Federal Council to pay without further delay the maximum compensation already agreed upon; it further demanded that the Confederation should fix and acknowledge their claims for damage to property and loss of possessions and grant them an immediate indemnity.

The magnitude of the work done by the Geneva office of the International Red Cross is recorded in a short report from the Geneva correspondent of "The Times," October 22nd, 1945:

"The International Red Cross has reviewed the work achieved during the war. The agency for prisoners of war began with 300 workers, and it had 3,659 — of whom 1,750 were volunteers — at the end of the war. While it received 600 letters a day in 1939, that figure rose to 200,000 in 1944, and the agency received or dispatched over 100,000,000 letters. The card index rose to a total of 29,000,000. The agency forwarded 23,260,000 civilian messages,

UNIONE TICINESE

VARIETY CONCERT

in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society (Fonds de Secours)

will be held at the

DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.1.

on SUNDAY, the 9th DECEMBER, 1945

commencing at 6.30 p.m.

All Swiss and friends are asked to give their support

Tickets 3/6 each, obtainable from Mr. C. Berti, 83, Fetter Lane, E.C.4, from Miss I. Abate, 17, Bryanston Mansions, York Street, W.1, or on application at the Swiss House, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

another 680,000 messages were sent by express, and 500,000 telegrams were received or dispatched for a total of 5,500,000 Swiss francs.

One section supplied 1,280,000 books to war prisoners, over 600 gramophone records, 4,419 games, and 15,000 music scores.

During the war the International Red Cross Committee sent to the prison camps, through Geneva, 32,980,000 food, clothing, and medical parcels, a total weight of 400,000 tons."

A windfall for some of our war charities is expected from an unsuccessful smuggling transaction reported from Delle. When customs officials examined the Paris-Berne express a pile of gold valued about 17 million Swiss francs was discovered hidden under the footplate connecting two sleeping cars. All the passengers were searched and interrogated but the interested traveller could not be identified. Unfortunately the treasure-trove is now claimed by French officials.

The pictures of the new "Pro Juventute" stamps are peculiar. As usual, there is a series of four stamps; they are issued on December 1st and enjoy currency till May 31st next year, both for inland and foreign postage. The 5 cts. and 10 cts. stamps were designed by the Wallenstadt artist Bickel and portray the late Federal Counc. Ludwig Forrer, who brought these charity stamps into existence, and Frau Susanna Orelli, who instituted the alcohol-free restaurants and community centres and whose 100th birthday is thus being commemorated. The remaining two stamps, the work of the designer Hans Fischer in Zurich, represent two typical alpine flowers, the dog-rose and the spring saffron or crocus.

A local earthquake described as fairly heavy was registered on Saturday morning, November 10th, at the Neuchatel observatory. The shock was felt throughout Switzerland, especially in the Bernese Oberland, and the centre is believed to be near Siders.

The famous Cresta run near St. Moritz has attracted a good bit of publicity during the last few weeks; we doubt, however, whether the optimism of some English sports circles is likely to be justified this winter unless some of the sportsmen have been able to hoard money in Switzerland. Here is a small reference from the "Evening Standard," November 3rd, 1945:

"The St. Moritz Tobogganing Club Committee in London have agreed to permit the town of St. Moritz to rebuild the Cresta Run this year. People who will benefit mainly will be the Swiss and American soldiers, who will be able to go there this winter.

The Cresta Run was built and maintained by Britons who each year put up about £2,000 to keep it going. Swiss contributions were negligible. This year there will be no winter sports for Britons, but the committee feel the run should be started up again.

It is stipulated that control of the Cresta must remain in the committee's hands. The run must be organised by Britons. I should not be surprised to see Lord Brabazon, the chairman, and Colonel Jimmy Coates, the Secretary, in St. Moritz this winter for that purpose.

Lord Brabazon's committee agreed to a token contribution of 5,000 Swiss francs (£300). The Swiss should have no difficulty in finding the rest."

Here is an obituary from the generally well-informed "Manchester Guardian," November 8th, 1945; we must have missed it in our Swiss news service, though the name is sufficiently familiar to us to arrest our attention:

"Pierre Ceresole, engineer son of a former President of the Swiss Confederation and founder of the movement known as the International Voluntary Service for Peace, died on October 24 at Lausanne at the age of 66. A friend writes:—

'He gave the small fortune left to him by his father to the Pestalozzi Foundation for Education and educated himself by working in oil wells in the United States, teaching English at Honolulu, and serving with a Baden engineering firm. Twenty-five years ago he organised the I.V.S.P. movement, through which he gathered together international groups to give emergency help where needed. Thus his parties helped sufferers from flood in Liechtenstein and Southern France and victims of Swiss avalanches. He paid two visits to India, where he and his friends did fine work after the Bihar earthquake, as well as at Brynmawr and other distressed areas in this country.

'The respect he was held in in Switzerland did not prevent him from being regularly imprisoned for his refusal to pay military taxes. Twice he crossed the frontier into Germany to deliver a peace message and the Gestapo handed him to the Swiss authorities.'

The stamp auctioneer, Mr. H. R. Harmer, of 39-42, New Bond Street, W.1, has kindly informed us that at the auction of November 5th a 4 Rappen stamp issued in 1843 in Zurich which was used on a piece of an envelope and postmarked with a black rosette fetched £100. A later stamp, the 2½ Rappen printed in Basle in 1845 and in similar condition realised £145.

Special sets which were issued for use by the League of Nations and the International Labour Bureau realised £48 each in unused pairs.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE SWISS LEGATION.

We have received the following communication from the Swiss Legation, 18, Montagu Place, W.1:

"Swiss nationals wishing to return to Switzerland *definitely* will be able to do so in joining a single repatriation group which is to leave London on Wednesday, 19th of December, 1945.

Those who wish to avail themselves of this only opportunity of travelling back to Switzerland direct and who have not already put down their names on the repatriation list, should apply at once to the Swiss Federal Railway Agency, 11b, Lower Regent Street, S.W.1, and ask for the circular giving all the necessary details."

We wish to point out that this communication applies only to Swiss nationals who desire to return to Switzerland for good and *not* to Swiss people wishing to spend some time in Switzerland and return to this country afterwards.