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HOME AFFAIRS.

by Dr. Max Nef.

In comparison with former years, the legislative activities of the Confederation have increased to a considerable extent; the same applies to the measures taken by the Administration and the number of administrative Orders which have been promulgated. The reason for this is due partly to the fact that the Plenary Powers with which the Federal Council was invested at the beginning of the year will no longer be operative after the end of the year, and with them the measures based on these Plenary Powers, unless they are confirmed by way of normal legislation or replaced by a form better adjusted to present requirements.

As regards the more extensive activities of the Administration and the numerous interventions into economic matters, the cause for this lies in the Economic Articles of the Federal Constitution which were approved by the People, which is now to be ratified, or else in the State interventions which are based on this new constitutional competency.

During the last few days, two lots of measures in this direction have just been passed: one is in respect of agriculture and the other in that of trade.

The Law on Agriculture, which will probably come into force in 1953, because it has to replace various decrees issued at the time of Plenary Powers, provides, *inter alia*, for the regulation of milk production and the dairy trade. With this aim in view, the Federal Department of Public Economy has prepared a Draft for a Milk Law, which is at present being examined by the relevant associations, before being submitted to Parliament for its final decision. The basis for the relevant marketing orders is set out in the Law itself. For outsiders, what is of particular interest is the fact that the greatest attention has been paid to the promotion of good quality in milk in the instructions for the execution of the Order. These regulations are to be declared binding on everyone connected with the trade, producers and tradesmen, whether or not they are members of any Association. It must be acknowledged that already now, the Associations have done a very great deal to improve the quality of the milk, but of course, their influence could have no effect on those farmers and dealers who are not members of any association. The duty of delivering milk is bound up with the reciprocal duty of purchasing it. The provision of the country with milk for drinking purposes is safeguarded. Owing to the growth of towns and the

decline in cattle-breeding this could hardly be possible without proper regulations for its distribution, — in certain regions of the country, anyway. Included in the Law, are to be found also regulations for the marketing of cheese and butter. Imports of cheaper foreign butter make it possible to provide financial means for the cutting down of the prices of cheese for export and for covering other administrative expenses, for which, as a matter of fact, there are also other compensation problems to be solved.

A further recent Decree, for which the new Economic Articles serve as a legal basis, is the Draft elaborated by the Federal Council for a Federal Law on the introduction of a certificate of capacity in respect of shoemakers, saddlers, cartwrights and hair-dressers. These four trades have fallen more and more into distress, because, whereas the number of such businesses has hardly decreased at all — and has in fact expanded in some cases — possibilities of employment have declined. The saddlers have less to do as a result of mechanisation which is bringing about a steady decline in the number of horses to be found in the country, and the cartwrights existence is menaced for the very same reason. In view of the fact that the manufacture of shoes has become more and more mechanised and has been taken over by industrial concerns, the shoemakers have been forced, for the greater part, to go over to merely repairing footwear. And, even here, they are faced by a very noticeable competition on the part of mechanical sole repairing, and even more so by the preference which is now being shown for rubber, instead of leather soles, which factor has contributed towards a number of shoemakers suffering from unemployment. As regards the hair-dressers, their possibilities of employment began to decline from the time when men started to shave themselves.

Official enquiries have shown that possibilities for earning money in the above-mentioned trades have declined, on the average, to the value of several thousand francs per year and per establishment. In the protective measures which it is intended to decree, it is provided in the first place that permission to open a new business or to take over an existing business will depend on the possession of a certificate of capacity. In this way, it will be possible to direct the present surplus in these trades and, above all, to prevent unsuitable people who do not possess the necessary qualifications, from taking up these trades, as they will be the first to suffer therefrom.

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