

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 9 (1943-1944)
Heft: 6

Rubrik: Sundry news from Switzerland

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The Eichelbergers, from the beginning of their American career, have always evinced a keen interest in public affairs of their adopted country, and they have also most honorably fulfilled their military duties whenever the country needed support. It is, therefore, in accord with their family tradition when also in the present war, the Eichelbergers appear on the list of heroes. Among those killed at Pearl Harbor, during the Japanese attack, was Pvt. Paul R. Eichelberger, whose father, Harry Eichelberger, resides at Camp Hill Pa.

GENERAL HERSHEY AND EDGAR HOOVER. Researches into the family history of these two prominent Americans have not been completed so far, but the Swiss American Journal promises the publication of these biographical sketches later on.

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Department of Economics has given to a committee the task to investigate and report on the increase in cost of living expenses and to recommend figures on which a general increase in wages could be based. This committee gives now the following figures which are based on the income and expenses of a family of four persons.

Pre-war family income S. Frs.	Basis for wage-increases.	
	in % of pre-war income	in % of increase in living-costs.
Up to 3000	44	91
3000 - 4000	36	73
4000 - 5000	30	61
5000 - 6000	29	60
Over 6000	27	55
Average 5259	29	59

Swiss fighter planes shot down a twin-engined German aircraft flying over Swiss territory when the German plane, ordered to land, replied with gunfire, the British radio said Sunday, quoting an official statement from Berne. The British broadcast, recorded by United States Government monitors, said that the plane had been shot down in a dogfight over the Bernese-Jura Mountains.

Literary production in Switzerland, which had been on the decline during the first two years of war, not only shows now an upward trend, but has exceeded all previous output. The average number of books published annually was about 2000, but in 1942, 2870 was registered. The subjects which show the greatest increase are education, agriculture, trade, industry and geography; statistics have doubled, or more than doubled, since 1940. Each of the four linguistic groups of our country has had its share in this revival of literary activity, but French and Italian predominate proportionately over German. In its modest way, Romansch has shown remarkable vitality.

A direct, 18 hour, nonstop air route from Switzerland to the United States will be established as soon as possible after the war, Henry Pillichody, American representative of the Swiss National Office of Transportation, revealed last Wednesday.

Plans already are under way for a big new airport for intercontinental planes, Mr. Pillichody said in the current issue of Air Transportation magazine, and the Swiss Government is prepared to finance its construction as well as the enlargement of existing air terminals in the Alpine country.

The proposed operating schedule calls for 18 hour service direct from New York to Switzerland.

A Spanish-Swiss trade agreement, signed in 1940, has been renewed after an exchange of Notes between the two Governments. Spain will continue to export to Switzerland wines, oranges, almonds, hazel nuts, dried apricots and cork. Switzerland's exports to Spain include the basic products of our chemical and pharmaceutical industries, as well as other goods vital to Spain's economy.

It is rumoured in Berne that the Federal Council has recently considered the expediency of taxing the tremendous amount of foreign capital which since the outbreak of the war has sought refuge in the vaults of our banks. This fugitive capital which is continually increasing exceeds at present sixty milliard gold francs. A tax of only one per cent. per annum would cover very nearly six months mobilisation expenses, i.e., the extraordinary cost imposed upon our country by the present world conflagration.

In reply to an enquiry in the States Council relating to the subsidy to be granted to the cantons Glaris and Schwyz for the construction of the "Pragel" route, Federal Councillor Stampfli stated that the cost originally estimated in 1937 to reach two million francs would exceed now four million francs.

Swiss tourism and the international art of cooking are to form the main items of an exhibition which will be held at Berne after the war as soon as circumstances permit.

The farmers in the canton of Berne are employing a considerable number of Italian military and civilian refugees whose temporary work on the land is of vital importance. These refugees have, of course, no knowledge of German or French, nor have our peasants found it necessary to study the language of our southern neighbours. The widely-read "Schweizer Bauer" has come to their help by publishing in its columns agricultural phrases and words in Italian with their equivalents in German and French.

The commune of Herzogenbuchsee has granted a credit of Frs. 224,500 in order to assist in the establishment of a chocolate factory which is a new industry in this district.

Appenzell A.Rh. is petitioning the Federal Council with a request to devote more attention to the difficulties caused by the mobilisation to cantons and communes and to create an inter-cantonal fund of compensation.

The impact of a stray bomb which descended harmlessly in the village square of Samaden on October 1st blew out over 5,000 glass windows in 92 adjoining buildings.

Coal mining in the canton Valais which promised to solve some of our fuel difficulties has come to a standstill. Out of about twenty mines originally exploited only one or two pits are working and about 2,000 workmen have been dismissed. Unexpected obstacles have arisen in selling this particular coal which has not found a ready and well-disposed market. It is stated that large quantities of coal (anthracite) have accumulated at the pitheads and that present deliveries of the superior German coal will cover our country's requirements for this season.

According to recent statistics Neuchatel is the canton that employs the largest proportion of its inhabitants in the watch industry, namely 53.4%.

The abnormal drought has brought our rivers down to their lowest level for the last forty years. Drastic economies in the use of electric power are being enforced and street lighting is being reduced by half.

A "vintage" year can be expected from the present vine harvest as far as the western part of our country is concerned. Though only 65 million litres of wine - against 75 and 83 in the last two years respectively - are likely to be the result the quality is of a rare excellence. This is under present conditions in the nature of a windfall as our viticulture is practically relegated to districts where the ground is too steep and arid for any other cultivation. For example the celebrated vineyards of Lavaux on the banks of the upper Lac Lemman are situated along a steep slope rising to a very high

altitude where for generations stonewalls or terraces have been built and maintained by carrying up from the lake stone and boulders to the extent of about three million cubic metres.

An order of the Army Council renders any traveller on the railways or any other public conveyance liable to be stopped and asked for the production of his identity papers.

The International Red Cross Committee disposes in our country of nine large railway yards where something like 4,000 ten-ton lorries are assembled containing essentials and comforts received from all corners of the world for the benefit of the two million human beings herded behind barbed wire and other civil internees in belligerent countries. The daily turn-over in these depots is between 150 and 170 ten-ton loads and since the beginning of the war about 220,000 tons have been distributed to relatives in ten different countries. At present a collection is being made in Switzerland on behalf of prisoners of war for educational and fictional literature which is meeting with a great response; in Basle alone over 145,000 volumes have been accumulated.

The City Council of Solothurn has decided unanimously to confer the honorary citizenship upon Mr. Stampfli, the new President of the Confederation for 1944 and head of the Department of Public Economy, in recognition of his exceptional merits.

In harmony with a recent government decision, freight trains can no longer be used for short distance transportation. This is meant for runs under 5 km. Heretofore freight trains have always been used for certain short distance transportation, because the railways were cheaper than trucks. Now, shippers will have to return to truck transportation for short distances.

As a rubber and gasoline saving measure, it has been decided that taxicabs no longer can operate beyond 15 km from their place of parking.

The association which looks after the cultural interests of Italian speaking groups in the Grison has held an assembly at Poschiavo. It has organized classes in German for the parts of the Grison valleys where Italian is spoken in order that these young people can more easily find an occupation in German speaking parts of Switzerland. On the other hand a recommendation was made that the cantonal authorities require all state employees to have a knowledge of the Italian language.

The first of December, 1943, there were in Zurich 315 vacant apartments, as against 829 at the same time last year. December 1, 1940, there were 2231 vacant apartments in Zurich. The shortage in lodgings is due for the greater part to the restrictions based on the use of building material.

Lack of snow at Christmas time greatly reduced the usual travel of skiers at that period of the year. The trains, however, carried other passengers in large numbers. Many extra coaches were put on, in fact 225 extra trains were run during the Christmas holidays, but this was a much smaller number than before the war.

A great watch factory in Neuchatel has decided to have its 400 workers X-Rayed in the Pourtales Hospital for the prevention of tuberculosis. In this the factory has followed the example of the Neuchatel school authorities. It is compulsory that all school children of Neuchatel have to be examined in the Pourtales Hospital.

A large number of teachers in the Canton of Neuchatel and in the Berne Jura are following a ski course in Adelboden. They are undergoing a special training for the teaching of winter sports to their pupils.

Dr. Karl Kobelt, Federal Councillor and head of the military department, made a statement in Winterthur on the state of our war preparations. He recalled the fighting qualities of our army which are constantly being built up.

Moreover, already before the outbreak of the European conflict, said Mr. Kobelt, Switzerland has taken important measures to insure her defense, thus the frontier and interior fortifications have taken on considerable importance. Most of the work on these fortifications has been completely finished. Armaments have been developed in the light of the experiences made in the belligerent lands. For instance, our anti-tank equipment is constantly on the increase. Our artillery and our aviation have been considerably reinforced. Much progress has been made in this domain since the last war. The spirit of sacrifice and obligation, he went on, which actuates our troops, reflects that love of freedom and liberty, so deeply rooted in the Swiss people, and their determination to remain independent at all costs. Financial considerations, have always taken second place, although war expenditures due to the requirements of active service, have gone well over 5 billion francs. In closing, Mr. Kobelt said great events are imminent. We must never slacken our vigilance. Military measures will differ according to what is required of them. The national stronghold is the mainstay of our defenses and the reprovisioning center for our fronts. And there must be no doubt that if Switzerland means to remain free and independent after the present war she must not neglect her defenses. And as his closing statement: Switzerland has always proved that she never would or never could use her army for any other purpose than to defend and protect her national independence.

A communique issued by the Swiss Federal War Office for Food states that the production of milk has diminished. On the other hand the stronger drop in the importation of fats and oils makes it necessary to manufacture more butter. Under these conditions the manufacture of full-fat cheese has to be cut down. Therefore, total measures are being taken to control the consumption of cheese and the quality of the output. The War Office for Food has asked the Swiss union of cheese manufacturers and merchants to see to it that the more perishable type of cheese be placed on sale first.

SWISS SOLDIERS RELIEF FUND.

It is with pleasure that we can inform members that contributions for the Swiss Soldiers Relief Fund received from fellow-countrymen during the last year, amounted to NZ.£26.16.6, which was remitted to Switzerland as a Christmas gift.

We have now received an acknowledgement of this remittance and the expression of thanks for this contribution from the Committee of the Swiss Soldiers Relief Fund and we hope, that further contributions will be forthcoming during the present year, so that we may be in a position to send another donation at the end of this year for our soldiers and their needy families.

Contributions will be received with thanks by the Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society or the Swiss Consulate in Wellington.

AUCKLAND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

The morning broke sunny and cheery
And Swissies were buttering their bread
For the day of the Annual Picnic
Lay in the few hours ahead.

And once again the picnic for the yearly gathering of Swissies at Point Chevalier is a thing of the past.

The sports this year gave everyone a chance to display their skill. Guessing number of peas in a bottle, weight of onions in a paper bag, and distances all caused amusement and excitement. The results were surprising. A plaque made of New Zealand woods with the "cross" in the centre -donated