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In a distinguished program at the Opera House at Zurich appeared Kirsted Flagstad as Isolde and Brunhilde, also in the title role of Gluck's "Alceste". The newest Swiss opera: Othmar Schoeck's "Schless Durande" had an enthusiastic reception in the same month.

Choice offerings were also a feature of the Zurich Municipal Theatre, among them Hoffmannsthal's allegorical play "Turn".

An interesting Premiere of Fritz Hochwalder's play "Das heilige Experiment" took place in the municipal theatre of Bienne. It relates the tragic story of how the Jesuit Fathers in Paraguay attempted in the 18th century to found a collective state where the uncivilized natives were to be treated in a Christian manner and paid for their labors like human beings. However, this "holy experiment" was frowned upon by the Spanish Crown and the church and could not be carried out.

Excellent new dramatic offerings were moreover enjoyed at Berne, the Federal Capital, and at Basle.

Lucerne, now widely known for its yearly "International Festival Weeks", proved a mecca for all music lovers. Since it has become more and more difficult to secure the support of foreign musicians the program features Symphony Concerts and some recitals.

BURIAL OF AMERICAN AIRMEN IN SWITZERLAND.

The small English Church in Bad Ragaz, where the coffins of the 14 American airmen, killed in air-crashes, were lying, could hardly hold the official representatives and the 75 interned American airmen who arrived to attend the funeral of their comrades.

After a short service the funeral procession proceeded to the cemetery to the tolling of the church bell. The procession was headed by a military band and a guard of honour, followed by the long line of coffins, each covered with the Stars and Stripes, carried by the interned Americans. Then came the representatives of the American Legation, military attaches of many nations, representatives of the Swiss army and a long line of mourners.

The service at the common grave was conducted by the English clergyman and the American Minister read out the names of the 14 victims. The guard of honour fired three salvos and the sounding of the Last Post concluded the burial and the American interned airmen, led by the military band, marched back to the station.

This event left a deep impression on the Swiss people present and many a silent prayer will have risen to Heaven that our country may be spared the horrors of war.

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

In a message of gratitude, Mr. Cordell Hull, Secretary of State has expressed officially the appreciation of the American Government for the services rendered by the Federal Council in handling American interests in enemy countries.

A dispatch from DNB from Rome announces the recall by the Fascist republican Government of a number of ambassadors, ministers and other high officials who have remained loyal to the royal Italian Government. Among the dismissed is the Italian minister to Berne, Count Magispati.

The mail service of the International Red Cross in Geneva recently reported the 30 millionth letter mailed from their office. The number of communications received from September 1939 to December 1943 was 29 million. The total of incoming and outgoing Red Cross mail for the Geneva Office is now over 59 million.

The reduction of the livestock necessitated by the precarious fodder situation, had an unfavorable effect on the production of milk. From November 1943 to January 1944 the milk production was from 20 to 25% lower than a year ago. In

February, the convertible coupons for butter, fats and oils will only be redeemable for fats and oils. The total quantity of fat will not be reduced by this measure. For children, a special ration of butter has been granted.

It has been decided to undertake the cultivation of rice on the Magadino plain in the Ticino. The climate and the soil of this part of Switzerland is quite similar to those of the Lombardy in northern Italy, where rice grows in abundance. It is hoped therefore that good results can be obtained in the cultivation of a product which so far has never been grown in Switzerland.

The University of Fribourg has at present 1,195 students enrolled. In addition there are 257 listeners. Of the total, 940 are Swiss, and 255 are foreigners. There are 282 students in theology, 234 in law, 194 in philosophy and 327 in sciences. The foreign students represent 27 different nations. France is represented with 72 students.

In order to give the students interned in Switzerland the opportunity of getting in contact with their Swiss comrades, an exchange of correspondence has been organized. No doubt a large number of Swiss students will be greatly interested in the plan for it will afford them the opportunity of perfecting their knowledge and use of certain foreign languages.

The net profit achieved last year by the Swiss committee for the National Day (August 1st) through the sale of stamps, postal cards and badges and through a collection, amounted to more than a million francs. This sum will be used to help Swiss youths in their preparation for life. The total will be divided up among the different works coming into account in April after a meeting of the general assembly for the national day.

The International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva has been informed by a message from their delegate in Japan of the death of the Red Cross delegate there Dr. Fritz Paravicini. Dr. Paravicini was from Ennenda in the Canton of Glaris. He went out to Japan a long time ago, taking up residence first in Yokohama, then in Tokio where for many years he was the official physician for the Swiss and British Legations. He was the Red Cross delegate during the last world war and he represented the Federal Council at the International Red Cross Congress held in Japan. During the present war, too, Dr. Paravicini who has passed away at the age of 70, has been the chief delegate of the Red Cross in Japan. The reports he has sent on his visits to the camps for prisoners of war have been very useful to the committee.

In honor of the 500th anniversary of the battle of St. Jakob an der Birs, the Federal Council decreed, on the 29th of August, that 100,000 Memorial five-franc pieces be coined and designed for this purpose. A contest has been opened for the designing of the coin.

M. Stampfli, President of the Confederation, has accepted the Honorary Presidency of the 500th anniversary celebration of St. Jakob an der Birs.

Out of the intake of the national luxury tax the Canton of Zurich gets every year almost one million francs. In 1943 more than 300,000 francs of this million was spent for cultural purposes. Among these the purchase of the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer estate. 50,000 francs were used for research work and scientific purposes and what remained went to charitable funds. So, for instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross received 100,000 francs, the Zurich Society for the Fighting of Tuberculosis 150,000 francs, and the funds for old people 200,000 francs.

The city council of Lucerne has been presented with a project for the purchase of the Rigi Staffel Hotel. This building was to be fixed up for a vacation home for the children of the upper classes of Lucerne's schools particularly during the winter for skiing. It has come to the conclusion, however, that the plan would be too costly. It is hoped that a better occasion will be found after the war. It is to be noted in this connection that the city of Lucerne already has three vacation homes at the disposal of her school children.

In Schwyz almost two years ago the cantonal authorities had decided to have the eventual possibilities for the use of the water powers of the river Muota in the Bisisthal examined by experts. These investigations have now shown that these water powers are well to be exploited and under these conditions the project for the construction of a new power station will be worked at, while the investigation for the remaining part of the plans will be carried on.

Nearly 500 young Swiss people both boys and girls, residing in Germany, Alsace and former Austria, arrived in Zurich for a stay in the homeland. They are to spend a vacation in Davos and Pontresina in the Grisons where they will follow courses in skiing. These young people will also receive instruction on problems of all kinds now up before the people of Switzerland. This contact with the homeland will certainly be highly appreciated by our young guests.

An unusual manoeuvre is being enacted at Brunnen where two houses -- lock, stock and barrel -- are being moved backwards in order to make room for a second track of the Brunnen-Sissikon railway line. One residence has already been shifted eighty metres and turned round 90 degrees.

The Socialist party of the town and canton of Zurich gave a banquet to M. Ernest Nobs, the new Federal Councillor. In the presence of about 1,500 people, M. Nobs declared himself honoured to possess the confidence of the working classes. "Switzerland must not stay behind, but follow its way firmly, for it befits a democracy to be active." The speaker added that a socialist not remaining true to himself as a Federal Councillor would be valueless.

The electors of the canton Zurich voted a credit of 35 million francs to combat unemployment. The communes were invited to submit projects for canalisations, construction of roads and reservoirs and other public works. Plans anticipating an expenditure of 45 million francs have already been deposited with the Council.

Prof. Alfred Vogt, the well-known eye-specialist, died in Zurich at the age of 64. He enjoyed international fame and was probably the greatest authority on ophthalmology of modern times.

In the municipal elections of Berne the five members whose term of office expired were re-elected. The budget of the town was agreed to and a project for the enlargement of the home for aged people was sanctioned.

The municipal council in Berne has voted a subsidy of Frs. 30,000 to the organisers of the Swiss Art Exhibition which is to be held this year in our capital.

The radical party of the canton Fribourg has launched a successful initiative demand insisting that all expenses approved by the Government and exceeding Frs. 500,000 should be submitted to the electorate.

In an address to high officers of the army assembled on the battlefield of Sempach on December 28th General Guisan said: "To command does not only mean to know, to foresee, to have the will, it means above all to believe, to believe in one's country and in its freedom. Whatever will be the destiny of our country in future, it will no doubt be hard, even if we are spared the last upheavals of the war." One minute's silence was then observed by those present, in memory of those who fell on the battlefields during the past centuries, for the independence of our country, and of the soldiers of 1914-1918 and of 1939-1943.

The immediate outlook for workers in the cotton trade is not promising, work and wages already experiencing a serious slump. At a trade union meeting in Zurich the threat of total unemployment led to an animated discussion.

Conditions in our watch industry are reflected by a report which appeared in the "Star", January 18th, "to the effect that Longines, one of Switzerland's biggest watch factories, has ordered a 50 per cent cut in production from January 31st. Other Swiss factories are expected to follow suit, because these firms, who are selling mainly to America, are unable to convert more than about 50 per cent of the dollars they receive into Swiss francs. The National Bank objects to increasing the frozen dollar credits of the Government, and the agreement now effective covers conversions up to about 50 per cent.

The steamer "Santis" which has been fitted out with new Diesel motors will be the fastest boat of our mercantile marine; it will do about 12 knots to the hour and is destined for the transatlantic route. Another boat is now being overhauled, the "Chasseral", and will be engaged in the service between Lisbon and Marseille.

Heavy penalties have been imposed on five butchers in Allschwil who during about two years have slaughtered unregistered cattle and sold the meat coupons free. Altogether about 47 tons have escaped rationing. The fines varied from Frs. 20,000 with three months' imprisonment to Frs. 2,500 with one month. The meat controller who negligently countersigned the fraudulent declarations of the butchers earned three months' imprisonment with a fine of Frs. 3,000.

The Federal Office for food distribution announced that for the present only Emmenthaler cheese with large holes would be available. The exceptionally warm summer during the making was responsible for these large cavities which rendered the cheese unsuitable for storing.

A sportsman of singular achievements is the epitaph of Ernst Kaufmann, who died in Zurich at the age of 49. A cyclist of merciless enthusiasm his name is recorded in the annals of all the international cycle races where he was in the habit of carrying off top honours. His performances have been described in articles and books which serve as classics for would-be-emulators. Like with most athletes the forced expenditure of the natural powers of endurance and resistance in his early days cut short his chances in later life. Kaufmann had retired from active sport about ten years ago and became interested in a local cycle business.

In answer to a request by a socialist deputy, demanding the immediate establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union which Switzerland has still not recognized officially, the head of the foreign department will have the opportunity to give an expose on the government's position in this matter. Undoubtedly, the Federal Council does not intend to neglect the study of this question in the postwar period. But, for the moment, it is not probable that our government will change its policy with regard to foreign questions.

The large commission of experts charged by the Department of Justice and Police with the preparation of farm legislation for the postwar period has come to the conclusion that the revised economic articles of the Constitution would constitute an adequate juridical basis for a new farm legislation. Unanimously the commission decided to invite Parliament to resume its decision of September 1942 and to submit to the people in the shortest delay possible the articles under discussion.

The first session was held of the consulting commission created by the Federal Department of Justice and Police to study the question of refugees. M. de Steiger, head of the department, presided at the meeting of this commission which comprises the representatives of the federal, military and civil services who in one way or the other must deal with the refugees of all kinds, and the representatives of the private welfare societies. The task of the commission is to re-establish a contact between the different services and between charitable organizations working in behalf of the refugees and the authorities. M. de Steiger's department, which is the most directly interested in these problems, will thus have a surer means of gathering information on the various aspects of this delicate question than persons and

groups often irresponsible and misinformed on the complexities of the refugee matters. To divide the work of the commission, three subcommittees were appointed, one will deal with the material needs of the refugees, such as running of the camps, food, clothing; a second will be in charge of the organization of intellectual activities, and the leisure time of the refugees; the third will deal with the juridical problem and discipline. Later, perhaps, a fourth subcommittee will be organized, preparing for the return of internees and those hospitalized in Switzerland.

The Federal Council rejected an appeal by Ernst Leonhard against the decree of the Federal Department of Justice and Police from July 29, 1943, depriving him of his Swiss citizenship. Another appeal against a similar decree for Franz Burri has also been refused.

Swiss transportation companies have again decided to issue this year between April 1st and October 31st vacation tickets with a 50% reduction on the regular fare. The price of the ticket remains at 10 francs. This measure is designed to encourage travel during regular vacation periods.

A recent report of the Swiss Society of hail insurance declares that Swiss agriculture has been relatively spared of this calamity during the last year. Throughout 1943 the society has paid 3,390,000 francs indemnities against 10,250,000 francs in the preceding year. Results of 1943 are the most favorable of the last ten years.

Switzerland has 140,000 horses. According to estimates, 168,000 are needed to assure the success of the vast installment of the plan for the extension of agriculture. This shortage will be difficult to make up under present circumstances.

In the Canton of Schwyz, the people have voted on a law, providing counter-measures in the event of unemployment. The law was rejected by 4,680 votes to 2,605. Only 35% of the electors went to the polls. The law was supported by the conservatives and the liberals, but was opposed by the socialists.

The Society of School Teachers in the City of Berne celebrated the memory of Pestalozzi. On this occasion, National Councillor Feldmann made an expose of the situation in Switzerland, stressing the fact that the foundation of our future foreign policy as well as of our home policy is the maintenance of our independence and of our liberties. Mr. Baertschi, Director of Schools for the City of Berne, exalted the work of Pestalozzi which was founded on mutual confidence between the teacher and the child.

The relief organization for Swiss children from abroad cared for about 4,000 children in the course of last year. Each child was given a short vacation in Switzerland. These little folks were from neighboring lands, including Belgium. Total expenses for them was 131,000 francs. A further 20,000 francs were spent for Swiss children in bombed areas. Also, foodstuffs for an amount of 174,000 francs were sent to Swiss children residing abroad.

The Swiss Federal Council ratified a new regulation concerning watch exportation destined for countries forming the dollar block. Following the decision of the National Bank not to discount beyond a certain limit, the monthly contingent of exportation was originally brought down to 8.5 million francs. By the participation of private banks and by a guarantee offered by public utilities, the monthly quota was increased to 10,600,000 francs. Thus, the watchmaking industry will be able to work in the same measure as before the restrictions.

It is officially confirmed that following an agreement between the governments of Switzerland, Great Britain and the United States of America, the firm Sulzer Brothers has been dropped from the black lists of the Anglo-Saxons.

The food restrictions for the month of April will be about the same as in March. The daily ration of bread is maintained at 250 grammes. The ration of meat will be 1200 points, but will be reduced in May. There will be no rice nor oatmeal. The worst will be the diminution of milk products.

NOTICE: We herewith wish to inform the friends of Mr. Joe Nideroest that he has left the hospital at Taumaranui, and has again taken up his position as guide and ski-instructor at The Chateau.

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SWISS BROADCASTS: According to cable information received the twice-weekly broadcasts to Australia and New Zealand transmitted from the Swiss National Broadcasting Station at Schwarzenburg are now:

Wave length: 23.14 m and 25.61 m.
Time: 8 - 9.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

We should be pleased to hear from members their experiences regarding the reception of these broadcasts.

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SUBSCRIPTION-FEE: Payments of outstanding fees have been coming to hand more satisfactorily lately, but there are still defaulters. These will receive special reminders and we trust remittance will be made promptly to the Secretary, or to the Treasurer, Mr. W. Ungemuth, Clarence Street, Northcote, Auckland.

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NEW MEMBER: The following compatriot joined recently:

Mr. P. W. Zimmermann, R.D. Mere-Mere, Hawera.

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SWISS COUPLE FOR GENERAL HOUSEWORK AND GARDEN WANTED.

A Wellington professional man and his wife have asked the Swiss Consulate whether they could find for them a Swiss couple for the above position. Special living quarters on the property and good wages are offered. The modern, but not large home is situated in the Hutt Valley, about 15 miles from Wellington, with bus connection handy. We consider this offer as very attractive for a suitable Swiss couple without children. Good references required.

Please write to the Swiss Consulate, Wellington, P.O.Box 386.

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GOATS WANTED.

A lieutenant in the New Zealand Army, a friend of the Swiss Consulate, is anxious to buy 2 GOAT KIDS - one male and one female - and he has asked the consulate whether there are any Swiss in New Zealand in a position to supply these. Buyer will pay freight to Featherston.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T S.

- MR. JOHN BUTLER, Butcher, Tariki: Varieties of Swiss Sausages.
- MR. TONY KOMMINOTH, Wellington: Visit his new "Lido" Tea Rooms, 118 Courtenay Place, Wellington.
- MR. F. GRAEDEL, Orini, R.D., Taupiri: Manufacturing Mountain Chalet Cream Cheese - 4d per cake - plus postage. Orders promptly dealt with.
- MR. L. LEUTHARD, New Plymouth: Visit his "Hygienic Dining Rooms".

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

Please address to the Secretary - Mr. E. Merz, P.O.Box 85, AUCKLAND.C.1.