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PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS FINDS JOB DIFFICULT.

Today the President of the International Red Cross Committee is M. Max Huber. He is 69 years of age and has held the post since 1928. He was formerly a permanent judge on the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague. Because he has to work the Axis and Allies alike, the job is delicate. Because the misery of war is great the job is a big one.

In an interview he said: "The most difficult task is to maintain the impartiality and patience necessary to conduct negotiations with belligerent Governments, taking into account that their main business is to make war and that everything else must be relegated to second place. We must look after all our prisoners and these prisoners are held by all belligerent countries. If by some thoughtless action we displease one country we may be debarred from helping prisoners and internees in camps there. We cannot take sides even in face of conditions which conscience urges should be alleviated".

He hinted that his past experience as an international judge, as a member of important Swiss foreign commissions and as a collaborator with the world's experts on international law was sometimes hardly sufficient background for dealing with the delicate and complex situations arising among belligerents.

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

SWISS POTATOES FOR SPAIN: A Ruter dispatch from Barcelona announces that a cargo of Swiss potatoes arrived there which were bought by the Spanish government for the reprovisioning of the Province of Barcelona until the next crop. The reason for this Swiss export of potatoes is the same as the reason for the temporary admixture of potatoes to our bread. The potato stocks stored during the winter have to be consumed by a certain date in Spring, as with the beginning of the new crop season they are exposed to the danger of deterioration. The potatoes exported to Spain are also forming a valuable article of trade compensation for Switzerland. However, there is no question of an over-production of potatoes in Switzerland. A reduction of the Swiss potato cultivation is out of the question as potatoes, in case Switzerland would be entirely cut off from abroad, would have to become the main element of our food, even more than they have already been.

The total indebtedness of the Confederation at the end of 1943 was 5553.6 million francs, an increase of 1116.7 million francs compared with the previous period.

Considerable damage was caused when the agricultural establishment including a distillery, large stables and stock, machinery, etc., belonging to the communal councillor Anton Büeler, in Hasli near Seewen (Schwyz) was practically reduced to ashes on Friday night, February 11th.

The municipal theatre in Lucerne is to receive a subsidy of Frs. 205,000 for the next winter season. A further considerable sum has also been voted by the town fathers to enable the steamship company on the lake to carry on; for the last twenty-five years this undertaking has been enjoying financial tonics.

The canton of Fribourg in view of the anticipated post-war boom conditions has decided to make a strong bid for attracting tourism to its regions.

A new political party has come into being in Basle and styles itself "Partei der Arbeit"; it is a counterpart of a new group in Geneva under the name "Parti Ouvrier Suisse" and promises to support the socialists whenever possible.

Inoculation against diphtheria has been made compulsory in the canton Vaud for all children up to twelve years.