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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The financing of the war is a problem which becomes increasingly dangerous as inflation phenomena make the appearance. Although Switzerland has no actual war financing problem, she is compelled to spend impressive sums to ensure national defence and maintain stability of her economy, which has inevitably become self-sufficient. Up to the end of 1941 expenses for mobilisation and defence constructions amounted to four milliard six hundred million francs. This was subscribed for by loans, which started in 1936 at three per cent. interest when the average yield of money was nearly four per cent. The State needed 300,000,000 that year, was offered 370,000,000 but took only 332,000,000. Between 1937 and 1942 the Swiss Confederation borrowed, by conversions and new loans, one milliard at the average interest of three-and-a-half per cent. If the State needed another milliard it would be found within the country. Therefore, the national defence problem was solved three years ago, thanks to the Government which has fixed new taxation. First of all, a two per cent. tax was put on the sale of all goods except essential foodstuffs. The Swiss population accepted a first levy on capital and an increase of from six to 11 per cent. in the tax on dividends. Industrialists are paying a tax on war profits; this sometimes rises to 70% of their income. These measures were adopted in 1940, but as they were not sufficient to cover expenditure, the Government planned new taxation, such as a second levy on capital, an increase of the tax on dividends to 25 per cent., as well as other charges on labour, capital, succession and the sale of luxury articles which should cover war expenditure within twenty years.

Opinion is divided concerning the new taxation. On the one hand it is pointed out that if the war lasts another year or two, the four milliard and six million war expenditure will have increased to seven or eight milliard. On the other hand, the redemption of this debt within twenty years seems a very difficult task. Before passing judgment, it will be necessary to find out the principle on which future economy will be based. Meanwhile, Switzerland has chosen the path of duty and privation, by giving up approximately one third of her national revenue to loans of all kinds.

An important economic agreement is stated to be the outcome of the long drawn-out negotiations which took place in Berlin between an official Swiss delegation and the German ministry concerned. No particulars have so far been published but "vital questions of supply and various problems arising out of the counter-blockade have been settled by agreement which also provides a basis for increasing trade with "other countries" according to a Bernese spokesman.

The Federal Council passed a decree providing State relief for damage caused by bombs dropped "in violation of neutrality." The Government and the Cantons will jointly supply the money in cases not covered by insurance.

According to official statistics to end of July last the cost of living has risen since the outbreak of the war by 42.6% all round; 54.8% are claimed by the food section, 81.3% by the price of clothing and 33.3% for fuel lighting, cooking and heating). Rents have remained practically stationary.

A Committee composed of different parties and circles of the population has just completed the collection of signatures for an initiative demanding the conversion of the equalisation of salaries and loss of earnings funds for soldiers into an insurance for old age and surviving relatives. More than 177,000 voters having signed the petition, the initiative will have to be dealt with by the two Councils and afterwards submitted to a plebiscite. A change in the nature of the equalisation of salaries and loss of earnings funds can

CITY SWISS CLUB.

All members, their families and friends are cordially invited to a

TEA PARTY

which will take place at the
DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.1
on October 3rd, from 3 to 6 p.m.

Eminent Swiss Artistes and Max Newman and his Band will entertain.

Tickets 3/6d. each, payable at table.

Will members please advise the Secretary (H. BINGGUELY, 167, Clapham Road, S.W.9. Tel. Rel 4150) of the number of seats required.

of course only be undertaken at the end of the war. Moreover, the Federal Council in conjunction with the various authorities directly responsible for the accumulation of these funds has already a different use in view for the surplus, namely the appropriation of a part for the extension of the Unemployment insurance and the other for the financing of distress relief emergency work. The deciding factor, however, will be the draft of the bill for the insurance for old age and surviving relatives and to obtain an agreement on this, will undoubtedly be most difficult.

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In the fifty years during which the Federal Initiative operated (the right of any fifty thousand voters to demand a modification in our Constitution or the addition of a new article) this privilege unknown in any other country has been taken advantage of exactly fifty times. One initiative was declared void, seven were subsequently withdrawn by the petitioners and nine are still pending. Of the remaining 33 only six were finally approved by a full plebiscite and became law. The first Initiative in 1892 secured 83,000 signatures and the largest since tabulated was in 1938 when over 384,000 voters demanded the enactment of a Federal law regulating goods transport.

* * *

By a decree of the Federal Council the summer time, introduced for the first time last year and in force again since May last is to come to an end on October 5th. In the night of 5th to 6th October all clocks will be put back to Central European time.

Cantonal

That frontiers can be moved in perfect harmony has recently been proved by the people of the Appenzells. Since time immemorial the citizens of the half canton of Innerrhoden had ground properties in Ausserrhoden while the citizens of Ausserrhoden owned estates in Innerrhoden. By agreement between the two half-cantons, which are both sovereign states, a frontiers settlement took place, whereby the political frontiers now coincide with the land properties frontiers.

* * *

The Federal Court has confirmed a judgment by the Zurich Cantonal authorities prohibiting the display of a German film entitled "Ich klage an"; the story favours a doctor's act of putting to death an incurable patient at the latter's request.

* * *

The municipal council of Langenthal requests the Government of the canton of Berne in a petition to rename that part of the canton now called the Oberaargau, comprising the districts of Wangen and Aarwangen and to call it the Bernese Unterland, to correspond with the Bernese Oberland and Bernese Mittelland. Up to the present the name has often led to a misunderstanding, particularly amongst people whose geography is not very up-to-date.

* * *

The Government of the canton of Valais some time ago prohibited corrugated iron roofs to houses and barns, it now has created a cantonal department which has the duty to protect villages and municipalities from spoiling their picturesqueness and to preserve practices and customs, particularly the old village costumes and to prevent art treasures from ruin and from being bartered away as well as to promote folks arts and crafts.

In the canton of the Grisons the old, historically valuable farm houses are to be officially listed and are to be restored true to style. Already the village of Guarda in the Unterengadin has been so restored to show what a typical Engadin village looked like before the advent of the new architecture.

* * *

After several years of work the old Freuler palace at Näfels has been thoroughly restored. Throughout the whole of the canton of Glaris everybody seems to be pleased about it. The palace is a valuable historical monument of the builders' art and has been placed under Federal protection. The centre part of the building serves as a cantonal museum and thus has been again opened to the public. In the side wing the municipal council of Näfels has obtained beautiful offices, particularly a dignified historical council-chamber.

* * *

In memory of the great fire which 375 years ago on July 18th, 1567 destroyed the little town of Altstätten in the Rheintal, all the church bells are rung three times in the second hour of the afternoon on the Friday before Jacobi (24th July) of each year. This custom which is now nearly 400 years old has never been disregarded.

* * *

Burgdorf arranged to honour some faithful servants recently, when 305 employees with together 4,564 service years were presented with a distinguished service diploma and a gift of honour. In the honour class with 25 years service with the same employer 57 men and women with together 1904 years service years were specially distinguished.

* * *

The Council of the Canton of Geneva discussed the question of fodder and hay shortage. It was announced that the authorities have arranged for 100 loads of hay to be sent to this Canton. This year the army will not get any hay supplies from this Canton and straw deliveries to the army have been curtailed by 50 per cent. The Canton of Geneva is, according to the latest estimates, short of 11,000,000 kg. of hay this year.

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On August 10th, 1942, 150 years had passed since the heroic death of the Swiss Guard in the Tuileries in Paris at the beginning of the French Revolution. To commemorate this glorious feat, which is symbolised by the Lion Monument in Lucerne, patriotic and professional societies of Lucerne arranged a commemorative exhibition of relics of these times lent by the historical museum, the town library and by private citizens.

* * *

A lady-curate, the first one in the canton, has been installed last month at the St. Leonard Church in Basle; she is Fräulein Anna Hartmann from Aarau.

* * *

The fate of the proposed large power works on the Hinterrhein (Grisons) seems to be definitely sealed. The application for the necessary concession was voted upon by the three communes mainly concerned (Splügen, Medels and Nufenen) and unanimously turned down; no less than 93% of the citizens recorded their votes.

* * *

A tragic coincidence has occurred in the deaths of two of the most prominent actor members of the society for Tell's play in Interlaken. One was "Tell"

who played that part for many years and the other, the actual founder of Interlaken's open air theatre. The latter, George Wäckerlin, produced "Wilhelm Tell" for the first time in 1912 to 1914 in the open air. But war and the crisis brought the fine undertaking to a standstill, until the untiring producer was able to create a new "Tell society" which eventually in 1932 appeared with a grandiously conceived presentation of "Wilhelm Tell." Since 1932 until the summer of 1939 more than 150,000 spectators have regained fresh and unforgettable patriotic impressions from the great natural sceneries of the Rugenpark in Interlaken. The creation of Wäckerlin will be continued in the same spirit when peace again reigns.

* * *

Corresponding to its economic importance the town and canton of Zurich may well take pride of place for having paid to the Confederation the largest amount of crisis tax (Krisensteuer). In the third collecting period the federal crisis tax actually paid amounted in the town of Zurich on an average to frs. 54.20 per head of population, whereas the average for the whole country came to frs.17.20 only. For the canton of Zurich the average reached frs.37.10. If the corporate bodies (limited companies, associations, etc.) are added, then the average rises to frs.76.90 in the town and to frs.54.— in the canton of Zurich, yet the average for the whole of the country works out at frs. 28.90 only.

Army

In the Schloss-Kirche at Interlaken, the ceremony of receiving into active citizenship young men and women of the municipalities of the "Bödeli," who reached the 20th year, took place on August 1st, when General Guisan personally explained to them their duties and rights as citizens. He reminded the young men, that the greatest and loftiest duty towards the mother country is to protect and preserve it. As soldiers, under arms is the best way of carrying out those duties . . . , of you young women citizens, the army expects that you not only prepare yourselves for motherhood and the management of a home, your home, or gain experiences in your occupational capacity, but that you are prepared at all times to take the place behind the front of the men who are serving with the colours.

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By order of the Army Command, no more weather reports for farmers are to be broadcast by the Swiss wireless.

* * *

The Sixth Army Competitions ended at Fribourg. The Champions' Battalion was reviewed by Gen. Guisan who, in a speech heard by 10,000, called army sport the soldier's preparation, the educational value of which would be enhanced in future. Schools would be affected.

Economical

According to official index figures the rise in prices to the end of June, 1942, was 195.6 points (June 1914= 100 points). Since the outbreak of the war the cost of living in Switzerland has risen by 42.6%. The cost of victuals stands at 203.2% and clothing at 217.6% compared with 1914.

A commission of wages experts appointed by the Federal Council has already some time ago drawn up guiding lines, declaring that at first half the actual

percentage increase would be sufficient, as the consumption of a great number of goods had decreased owing to rationing, whereas the most important provisions like bread and milk had suffered no great increase in price at all. Lately the rates of cost of living increases have been raised according to the family income, which is not to be allowed to drop below a certain minimum sufficient to provide the necessities of life.

* * *

A picture of our position in regard to provisioning is reflected in the following figures of our external trade balance:—

	Import	value in Millions.
1st half year	Trucks	
1939	406,800	862.5
1940	407,600	1193.1
1941	225,900	916.4
1942	213,700	1049.3
	Export	
1939	32,500	670.6
1940	20,500	636.7
1941	28,200	662.0
1942	17,900	721.3

* * *

In the last years of peace Switzerland imported annually 3 to 3½ million tons of coal, of which more than half came from Germany. Since the supplies from almost all the other coal producing countries have stopped, we are practically dependent on Germany. The import in 1940 still amounted to 69% of the figures of 1939, whereas in 1941 it dropped to 57%. In the first 5 months of the current year the figures as compared with 1940 were as follows:— bituminous coal 26%, coke 53%, lignite 98% total 42%. There is therefore only 15% of the quantity available necessary to heat apartments.

* * *

The Government has taken an inventory of all possibilities of work in the country, use of which will be made according to needs and to the extension of unemployment. The Government finds that the best measures against unemployment are those which fight it at its source. Among the measures contemplated, are all those for the development of import and export and for tourist traffic, and others to increase agricultural production, as well as that of industry, trade and production connected with artistic, commercial and technical professions. The Government programme also includes the development of water power. A plan to fight unemployment has thus been set up, which can be carried out as soon as events make it necessary.

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In a lengthy report issued by the new director of the department regulating meat supply and cattle traffic, Dr. Feisst, it is stated that in September 1939 (the outbreak of war) we held a record stock of 1.7 million horned cattle and about 880,000 pigs. The feeding of this comparatively enormous quantity emanated to the tune of 80% from home-produced fodder the remaining 20% (chiefly fattening feed) being imported. No conclusive reasons, anyhow as far as the layman is concerned, are given to explain the present unsatisfactory position of the meat supply.

* * *

The latest reports are to the effect that, thanks to improved organisation in the control of cattle for slaughter, the supply of meat will permit a doubling

of the present rations, notwithstanding the continued delivery of meat into the refrigerator stores. Instead of the 500 points with which a monthly ration of 500 gr. of meat including bones can be obtained, 1,000 points are now allowed to be used.

* * *

The National Price Control office announces that maximum prices for cattle were fixed for the first time in March this year. The percentages used in calculating the dead-weight figures on which the slaughter prices are based, have generally been fixed too high, since in the spring it was not possible to foresee the effects of the shortage of concentrated feeding stuffs. The live-weights prices for steers and cows will be raised by between 5 to 20 centimes or about three to ten per cent. The prices for cattle and oxen, remain unaltered. As slaughter prices govern meat and sausage prices, the latter will be slightly revised this month. Uniform prices on a national basis are to be fixed for roast and stewing meat. The rise in comparison with prices fixed in the spring will be five to ten per cent.

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It is further announced officially by the National Price Control office that prices have been fixed as from the 3rd September, at which huntsmen and breeders will sell game and rabbits to retailers and consumers.

* * *

The Department for National Economy states that as from 1st September, the cheese trade will be reorganised, a State-administered Cheese Syndicate taking the place of the former Cheese Union. The Department for National Economy has set down compulsory regulations concerning quotas in lieu of the quota system in operation hitherto. Further a marketing plan for the domestic cheese trade in all its stages has been drawn up, which is to replace the previous provisions. The new Cheese Trade Syndicate undertakes all the functions previously vested in the Cheese Union — concerning production, import, export distribution, storage, transport, trade and rationing, as well as to utilisation of cheese and related milk products in accordance with the regulations.

* * *

Each year, as autumn approaches, the production of eggs diminishes. In order to keep it at a reasonable level, calcium and certain other chemicals must be used. The use of these has proved expensive, and has caused a certain rise in the cost of eggs; hence, from 4th September, the controlled price was raised by two centimes per egg, bringing the new price to 35 centimes. The price of dried eggs has fallen by 10 centimes per 50 gr.

* * *

Farmers have asked that an increase of 2 centimes in the price of milk be made in the autumn if possible in September. The Swiss Price Control Commission, decided by nine votes to eight, to advise the Federal Council to reject the suggested increase. The minority favoured an increase by at least one centime. The final decision will be taken by the Federal Council, which is not bound by the advice of the Commission. Switzerland is to-day producing 13 per cent. less milk than before the war. In the lowlands this can be remedied by intensifying the cultivation of pastures. However, in the mountain districts, there are farms where production has decreased by 20 to 30 per cent. At present, many Alpine districts are suffering from drought, in particular the area from Neuchâtel to

Geneva. The lowlands are sending approximately 100,000 litres of milk to the Cantons of Ticino, Valais, Grisons and the Bernese Oberland. At present the mountainous regions are densely populated by troops. To sum up, it would appear that an increase in the milk price is justified in the mountain regions but that farmers in the lowlands could do without it. There arises the question of where to draw the line. In the lowlands, if farmers get no increase for their milk, they might use certain supplies for the rearing of their calves. As such a difference cannot, therefore, be made in practice, the problem arises whether or not an increase in price is to be introduced for the whole country. The milk price is considered to form a sort of key position in the price system, because fluctuations in the milk price would affect wages and prices of other commodities. The question arises as to whether the State could subsidise an increase. If it is increased by one centime the total cost per year would be 18,000,000frs.

* * *

The Swiss Forest association has been discussing in detail the country's timber supplies and the future of Swiss forestry. The Swiss Forest Association is aware of the seriousness of the country's foodstuff resources and of the necessity of using forest soil for the growing of foodstuffs. In their resolution, the Association opposed forest clearance on the grounds of short time measures with disastrous effects, and requested the Federal Government to reconsider the question. Compulsory regulations should be drawn up, the merits of forests as a protection should be borne in mind, the detailed projects should be examined and the areas to be cleared should be reduced.

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The Mines Department has forbidden producers of coal, anthracite, lignite and slate-coal in Switzerland to mine coal containing 50% ashes. This will prevent inland coal that cannot be used for fuel from reaching the market.

* * *

In order to provide their workpeople with cheap potatoes, the large firms in the machine industry had planted large tracts of land in the cantons of Ticino and Valais with potatoes. In the present year the Association of Machine Industrials has extended this action over 63 ha. in various cantons, so that their workmen's families can expect an addition to their provisions, which is everywhere welcome.

* * *

This year was an excellent year for cherries. In the cantons of Baselstadt and Baselland 6 million kg. of cherries were gathered compared with 2.5 millions last year. The average crop per tree amounted to 40 kg. but many trees produced as much as 200-300 kg. of cherries. To gather the fruit 100,000 workdays were required.

* * *

The "Comptoir Suisse" at Lausanne was held from 12th-27th September, the floor space occupied showing a considerable expansion. There were halls for painting and sculpture, wireless, tourism, agricultural machinery, electrical machinery watches and examples of the goldsmith's art, and "ersatz" products. There was also a cattle market and a horse and poultry show. Switzerland is also participating in the Commercial Fairs of Marseilles and Lyons. At Lyons there is a special Swiss book section and even a small Swiss

library and a stand of lace work; Swiss textiles and watches are the principal articles exhibited.

* * *

The management of the Swiss Sample Fair in Basle has chosen from a competition among different artists its poster for the next fair, which will take place from 1st to 11th May next year. The principal motive of this poster is a strong chain with welded links, a symbol both of the economic union of Switzerland and of Switzerland's wish to form a solid link in the world economic order.

Rationing

The extension of arable land and the absence of foreign forage has caused the contraction in the number of cattle to such an extent, that the authorities in the first place had recourse to the fixing of a quota for slaughtering, later to rationing of meat and finally to a two weeks prohibition of sale of meat. After these meatless weeks have passed, the monthly meat ration of 1 kg. (inclusive of bones) was provisionally reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ kg., but with prospects of a temporary increase. Further a reorganisation of the whole dealing of cattle was prepared, which came into force in the middle of September and which is to secure an even distribution of meat. By this arrangement the whole of the cattle for slaughtering is placed under the control of the authorities, the farmers can sell their cattle only at fixed places to an official reception centre, but not to a dealer nor a butcher direct. The price is fixed by a parity commission and the amount paid out by cantonal clearing stations. In order to create extensive meat reserves for the critical next year, cold storage buildings are erected or extended all over the country.

* * *

The Milk and Milk Products section of the Ministry of Food has temporarily prohibited, as from 28th August, 1942, the delivery of first-class butter to shops in order to ensure stocks for the coming winter. This butter is better than ordinary butter. Supplies of ordinary butter (Kaesereibutter) which, in fresh condition, is a perfectly good table butter, will be available as before. When supplies of the latter are exhausted, first-class butter will be available.

* * *

The Ministry of Food announced: As is usual at this time of the year, supplies of sheep for slaughter have increased. To facilitate the disposal of these supplies, the points value of lamb will be temporarily reduced from 7th September. The points value of goat meat is correspondingly adjusted. To obtain 100 gr. of lamb or goat meat, in future only 50 points will be required. The same points value applies to horseflesh, as well as to sausages and cooked meats derived therefrom.

* * *

Lack of metals has compelled the Government to decide that iron or steel may be used in factories only under licence. Several founderies have had to slow down their work in consequence of the dearth of coke; and because of the lack of wool and cotton all textile works may be closed for two months, in which case the workers would be employed on public works.

* * *

Much discomfort will be experienced in the coming winter by the latest decree which stops the electric heating of private houses altogether and generally reduces the consumption of electricity. These restric-

tions have been rendered necessary by the impossibility of knowing what quantities of coal will be available, and because the production of electric current is likely to be reduced by the low rainfall of the past year, so that the reservoirs feeding the power turbines are insufficiently filled. The authorities also explain that the rationing of electricity must be accepted in order to enable the industry to be kept working at its fullest capacity.

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The term "black market" is acquiring a very wide meaning and is covering all kinds of infringements which to the ordinary man must appear ludicrous. In St. Gall a wholesale bakery has been heavily fined for obtaining from another manufacturer a certain quantity of wholesale coupons for fats and sugar for which the latter in his own business had no use within the stipulated time period.

Traffic

It is with satisfaction that the Swiss public has learned that a new line of communication from Portugal has been opened, namely a new pendulum service between Lisbon and certain south Portugal harbour towns and Bilbao in northern Spain. In Bilbao the goods, mostly Portuguese products, are taken over by the lorries belonging to the Swiss Auto Transport Co. and taken to Canfranc at the Spanish-French frontier where they are reloaded on to the French railways. This new line of communication not only lightens the shipping between Lisbon and Geneva, but also relieves the heavy traffic on the 1,500 km. long motor route between the Portuguese-Spanish and the Spanish-French frontiers.

* * *

The highest railway station in Europe, Jungfrau Joch 3,457m. (11,342 feet) above sea level, has on August 1st concluded its 30th year of existence. Many hundred of thousands of visitors have during this time admired the beautiful high alp panorama from the Joch.

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To effect reductions in electric current consumption, various tram service curtailments have recently been brought into force. In Zurich, the schedules have been revised so that trams now run every 8 min. instead of every 6 min. Sunday services have been reduced considerably in Zurich, and are reported to have been discontinued altogether in Berne and St. Gallen.

* * *

A few weeks ago a man to whom the people of Switzerland owe a great deal of gratitude has completed his 70th year. He is Erwin Matter, the chief of the War Transport Department and late chief engineer in charge of the Federal Railways. As one of the most important service chiefs of the S.F.R. he had a deciding influence on the development and modernization of the States railways, and in questions of management of railways he enjoys a European reputation, which was of great value to him at many an international conference. He no sooner retired to well-earned rest when the creator of the War Economy Department, the late Federal Councillor Obrecht, recalled him to the important position as chief of the War Transport Department. As such he was instrumental in concluding a treaty with those European States which came into consideration, only a few weeks prior to the outbreak of the war, which guaranteed the undisturbed use of 114,000 tons of shipping space, either own or chartered, even during a war. Without

this agreement the building up of a Swiss Mercantile Marine on the high seas enabling imports of overseas goods to Portuguese or Italian harbours would have been impossible.

Humanitarian

Since early spring an uninterrupted stream of children of Swiss from abroad has arrived in the homeland to stay for three months in order to regain their strength. By the middle of July already 1,800 children profited by these arrangements. There were from Germany 450, from Italy 300, Paris sent 230, whereas 400 arrived from unoccupied France. Algiers sent 120, Belgium 250, Holland 50 and from Prag 15 arrived. At the beginning of August another 1,500 were received of whom 1,100 alone came from occupied France, the remainder from Vorarlberg, from Mannheim, Mulhausen and Lyons. With this contingent the greater part of this immigration of Swiss children will come to an end. Besides this, the dispatch of parcels of provisions under the supervision of the Federal Department of Justice and Police continues and proves an inestimable assistance to families of Swiss abroad.

For the last few weeks especially on the frontiers of certain cantons there has been an influx into Switzerland of refugees fleeing from their country of origin for political reasons. Many of them have no identity papers, no means of existence and naturally no authorisation to enter Switzerland. According to the existing decrees, those who have entered Switzerland clandestinely would have to be deported. Switzerland cannot afford to receive tens of thousands of emigrants of this type, however tragic their circumstances. There was a question of returning across our frontiers all those who crossed them without authorisation since 31st July. Swiss opinion was much distressed about this decision. Steps have been undertaken, particularly by organisations affiliated to the Swiss Central Bureau, for the relief of refugees. It has now become known that under temporary decrees of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, it is not for the moment contemplated to take back to the frontier those who have entered our land up to now. On the other hand, much stricter measures will be taken in future on the frontiers to avoid a new influx of political emigrants.

During a conference at Berne the Minister of Justice, Dr. Steiger, gave more information on the refugee problem. He stated that the new police provisional instructions about refugees were mainly designed to warn refugees from Holland and Belgium, as it was considered easier to prevent their departure than to refuse them hospitality once they arrived at the frontier. The regulations about refugees issued by the Federal Council in 1939, would not be altered, but it was decided to issue a warning, although efforts would be made to avoid hardship. It would be impossible to open the frontiers to refugees, but an adequate compromise would have to be found between the laws of humanitarianism and the safeguarding of the interests of the State.

Many letters to the authorities and to the Press indicate a deep-rooted desire to allow refugees to enter Switzerland. The letters also reveal that Swiss people do not believe that innocent victims of persecution

who sought refuge in Switzerland should be extradited. It is Switzerland's privilege having been spared the hard blow of fate, to show its gratitude by an act of charity. One student writes that if the country were not prepared to such demonstration of charity, the conception of "helping and saving Switzerland" would be nothing but an empty propaganda slogan. Deeds not words, must bear out the old Swiss tradition. The problem of what should be done with refugees who illegally crossed the frontier into Switzerland has been clarified by the Police Department which has issued provisional instructions according to which refugees who entered Switzerland before 13th August — this means the bulk of refugees — are to be allowed to stay; except for those who for grave reasons may be considered "undesirable." Nothing has been settled yet regarding refugees who arrived after that date. This matter was discussed at a conference of Lausanne police chiefs.

A noble competition has arisen amongst Swiss Youths to help in the assistance to children in war ravaged countries. "The help the Children" of the Swiss Red Cross receives every day touching proofs of this will to assist. For instance some pupils of both sexes from some professional school in the German speaking part of Switzerland have pledged themselves within a few weeks to become sponsors to 82 children, which means that they will have to pay frs. 820.— per month to provide parcels of victuals to be sent to suffering children in foreign countries.

To prevent the valiant people of Greece to die from starvation, Red Cross Societies in several countries, particularly Turkey, England, Sweden, the United States of America, Canada and Switzerland and similar institutions have started work. The International Red Cross Committee in Geneva conducted the necessary negotiations with the governments of the belligerent states, to enable the sending and safeguard of the transport of the provisions. Its delegates in Athens are supervising the distribution of the provisions and medicines. In a generous way Canada has offered to supply monthly 15,000 tons of wheat, which will be carried in Swedish ships to Greece. In this manner half of the population, about 3 million people who cannot provide for themselves will be able to receive daily 150 gr. of bread. A few days ago a group of Swiss specialists under the leadership of Dr. Scholder, from Lausanne, left Switzerland for Greece, there to make artificial limbs for maimed warriors. A railway truck with the necessary materials has left some weeks ago.

This year's First of August badges or rosettes have found a ready market, over half a million have been sold. The two postage stamps, however, have not had such good luck. The chief reason is probably the fact that foreign dealers and philatelists cannot effect purchases on account of exchange restrictions. It has also been stated that the stamp market is reluctant to absorb the many special issues which have made their appearance during the last few years.

Despite adverse economic conditions and travelling impediments 179 Swiss have found employment in overseas countries during the six months to the end of June last; the number compares, of course, badly with the 751 who emigrated in the same period last year.

The delayed arrival of the fire escape contributed to the loss of seven lives when a fire broke out during the night in the living quarters of a saw mill and carpenters workshop at Ruswil (Lucerne). The dead include Gertrud and Alice Haupt (daughters of the owner) and Manfred Ypser, head-carpenter.

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A store of hoarded goods consisting of 8,500 pieces of soap of all kinds, more than 1,700 kg. of peas and beans, more than 300 kg. of dried pears, 175 kg. of Californian plums, nearly 400 kg. of soft soap, etc., was found in the possession of a woman with no dependents, living in the neighbourhood of Berne. The goods were confiscated by the police and the woman was fined frs.8,000.— and frs.1,200.— costs.

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A typical "Käsehandel" has been discovered in Geneva where in the month of June no less than 17,000 kilograms of cheese were obtained through forged ration cards.

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An invention which may prove of infinite benefit to cyclists has just been patented by a young man from Solothurn. By fixing a cylindrical lock on the handlebar the latter will be rendered useless and the cycle thief who has of late been much in the limelight would have to carry the machine bodily away.

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The death of Prof. Antonio Gallis at the age of 58 constitutes a heavy loss for the canton Ticino. Originally a teacher he was for a number of years one of the editors of the "Gazette Ticinese" and took a keen interest in cantonal politics as member and later president of the radical-democratic Group. For a short time he belonged to the National Council. In later years he devoted himself to historical studies.

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Adolf Dietschi, who was English teacher at the school of the Kaufmännischer Verein in Zürich bequeathed Frs.30,000 to local philanthropic institutions.

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Ben Longchamp, former European rowing champion, has died at Clarens, near Montreux, at the age of 72. Returning from England to Switzerland in 1893, Longchamp formed and trained the famous Lausanne Rowing Club at a time when little was known of rowing in Switzerland. He was regarded as the Swiss pioneer of rowing.

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The death is reported from Saas Fee, in the Valais, at the age of 74, of the well-known Alpine guide, Benedict Supersaxo, who for many years accompanied the late King Albert of the Belgians in his ascents in the Swiss Alps, the Tirol, and the French Alps.

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The canton Ticino lost a popular and widely respected citizen by the death of Carlo Sacchi which took place on August 18th, at his home in Capolago, at the age of 72. Lawyer by profession he has been a member and latterly president of the cantonal appeal court.

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The new "neutrality" decree inflicting heavy punishment for statements, utterances and acts incompatible with a scrupulous interpretation has already led to a disciplinary action against a small newspaper "la Sentinelle" which circulates in the Jura. It was

daring enough to foreshadow a recurrence in Germany of events as serious as those in November 1918; the publication was suspended for a week. Another paper, the "Berner Tagblatt" venturing the opinion that Nazi leaders might have to flee to Switzerland has so far escaped the penetrating eye of the law. In Zurich the local police was reluctant to interfere when a German version of the Dieppe raid was shown at a cinema; the general hissing and shouting accompanied by foul epithets forced the operator to stop the film. The showing of foreign newsreels is now usually preceded by a written police warning reminding the audience that as they are neutral no vociferous expressions are allowed.

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One of our couriers, M. Georges Dessannaz, had a lucky escape when he was attacked and robbed in a Balkan express train; according to reliable information he was not injured. This is what "Cavalcade," September 12th, published about this affair; we do not of course, accept responsibility for the version: "An espionage drama with an Edgar Wallace touch was enacted in a first-class compartment of the Ankara-Sofia express last month.

The victim was a Swiss diplomat travelling with important documents from Turkey to Geneva.

A few miles outside Sofia five masked men entered the compartment and demanded the diplomatic pouch. They spoke French with a marked German accent.

The Swiss offered them his wallet, which contained Turkish and Swiss money worth about £40, but the men insisted on the pouch.

When the diplomat resisted, one of them took out a gun muffled with a silencer, and fired three shots, wounding him seriously.

At this moment the train slowed down and the men jumped out and disappeared.

The Swiss Envoy in Sofia was told by an official of the Bulgarian Foreign Office that a police search for the five gangsters had been unsuccessful.

To reach the bureau of the Bulgarian Under-Secretary, the Swiss Envoy had to pass the offices of Colonel Edgar Huétzel, chief of the Gestapo in Bulgaria, officially "liaison officier" between the German army and the Bulgarian Foreign Minister.

There is no doubt that Huétzel was responsible for planning the hold-up.

The German Government knew that the Swiss diplomat travelled with important documents containing secret information gathered by the Swiss Legation in Ankara on Turkish and Russian affairs.

When two attempts to get hold of the documents in Ankara failed, Huétzel received orders from Berlin to seize the papers by all means before the diplomat reached the German frontier.

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