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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Some improvement in the postal service from Switzerland has recently become noticeable. Recent airmail letters have taken from three to four weeks and of course exhibit the two black eagles of the German censorship and a liberal use of scissors and paint brush, the latter obviously for the purpose of detecting invisible ink. The English censor obligingly includes a printed slip informing the recipient that "the British Examiner is not responsible for the mutilation of this letter." Some of the airmail of an older date seems to have gone astray altogether, while we have seen an ordinary letter which shows no sign of having been handled by the German Censor.

According to a decision of the Federal Council in November 1941, naturalisation can be withdrawn from newly admitted citizens, who obtained the Swiss citizenship by knowingly false declarations or who are showing anti-Swiss sentiments. Parliament and Federal Council have up to now shrunk back from withdrawing the citizenship of hereditary Swiss who proved themselves unworthy of that right. Events in the last few years, however, have induced the Federal Council to close this gap in the constitutional law. On several occasions it has happened that actual traitors of the country, as well as people who have become alienated from their homeland, have gone abroad and from there have incited against their own kith and kin. From Swiss Societies abroad complaints were received that "Swiss" came to them who expressed entirely anti-Swiss tendencies. To stop the proceedings of these offenders, the Federal Council has decided to extend the law of acquisition and loss of Swiss citizenship in such a manner, as to empower the Federal Department of Justice and Police to cancel the citizenship of any Swiss residing abroad who has offended against the political or economic security or independence and dignity of the country, either at home or abroad, and thereby proving himself unworthy of Swiss citizenship. At the same time a decision is to be taken as to which member of the family this withdrawal shall be extended.

This decision has been submitted for the consideration of both houses and it is not expected that it will

be materially altered, as it represents the will of a great majority of the population.

* * *

The Council of the Swiss Socialist party in reply to a letter from Mr. Leon Nicole, of 23rd February, has decided that in confirmation of the decision taken by the Federal Council, the party refuses to enter into any parley for a common action with the Swiss Communist party and the federation of Swiss socialists. Since then it has become known that the Federal Council intends to lift shortly the ban on the Swiss Communist party. The latter together with the Socialist Workers party was outlawed immediately after the fall of France. The ban on the small groups supporting and disseminating Nazi conceptions remains in force which has intensified German attacks on our Government.

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The Political Department has received information that all Swiss residents in Tunis are safe and well. On the other hand it is reported that our Legation in Sofia has instructed Swiss citizens living in Bulgaria to send their wives and children home to Switzerland.

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The National Bank has stated that the expenses in connection with the war have up to the present reached 5,700 million francs of which 1,100 million have been obtained by a capital levy and a quarter by taxation. The issue of an internal loan of 300 million francs is under consideration for the purpose of paying off floating debts and procuring the necessary funds for current requirements.

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The customs receipts amounted to frs.12,800,000 or an increase of frs.1,600,000 compared with those in January 1942.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE ANNUELLE.

aura lieu Samedi, 10 avril, 1943, à 2h.30, au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1. Elle sera précédée d'un lunch à 1 heure p.m. précise.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Rapport du Trésorier et comptes de l'exercice.
Admissions.	Rapport des Vérificateurs des Comptes.
Demissions.	Election du Comité.
Rapport du Président.	Divers.

Prière de s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès du Secrétaire Mons. Henry Bingguely, 167, Clapham Road, S.W.9. (Phone RELiance 4150).

Les membres sont instamment priés de réserver leur place par écrit et de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

Cantonal

In 1833 Zurich numbered about 11,000 inhabitants and at the end of 1943 about 340,000. The first 100,000 was reached in 1891 with the nearest suburbs since included in the town, the second 100,000 was reached in 1913 and the third in 1931. The inhabitants therefore have increased by 100,000 in every 20 years. To-day more than half of the population of the canton of Zurich are living in the town.

The Zurich tramway management has decided to engage part-time workers to assist during the heavy peak-hour traffic when extra cars are put into service.

The Zurich school authorities propose to include as an experiment in the school pensum a five-day course in model-building of aircraft. The course is optional and limited to boys who are in their eight and ninth school-year; it will be held during the spring vacation.

Otto Heinrich Schilt died in Zurich at the age of 55. He originally studied law and obtained his Dr. jur., but was more interested in sculpture to which he devoted his life. He was the sculptor of many monumental fountains, statues and memorials throughout Switzerland.

The Bernese Grosse Rat has examined the initiative of the "Young Farmers" party with regards to the introduction in the canton of Berne of an old age and dependents insurance. The Council of political action has lodged a proposition asking that a Commission of the Grosse Rat be appointed to work out for the May session a project based on the initiative of the canton, as foreseen in the Federal Constitution, regarding the realization within 3 years of a Federal old age and dependents insurance. The project of the "Young Farmers" was rejected by 143 to 21 votes. The meeting has invited the Council to adopt the new proposal of the Council of action, since the States Council and the Young Farmers had agreed to the proposal.

On the occasion of his 85th birthday, the contractor and builder, Fred. Widmer, who is living in England, has, through the intermediary of his brother who resides in Interlaken, made donations to the amount of frs.25,000 to a number of Oberland and Bernese cantonal institutions. The generous Oberländer emigrated as a young man of 20 years to London.

Throughout the canton of Berne the use of telescopes has been forbidden and they have to be surrendered to the nearest police station; ordinary field-glasses are not affected. No reasons are given for this measure.

A new maternity ward in the form of an annex to the cantonal hospital was opened in Lucerne. The work of reconstruction lasted for two years and the costs amounted to frs.6,000,000.

The board of education in Obwalden has issued a decree prohibiting children under sixteen to stay in the public highway after 8 p.m. unless in the company of their parent.

A popular vote of about three to two in the canton of Aargau empowered the Grosse Rat to grant and fix

salary increases for the duration to cantonal school teachers.

Carl Vock, the former senior partner of Georges Meyer & Co., Ltd., died in Wohlen at the age of 85 after a short illness.

A bill strengthening the existing cantonal sickness insurance and guaranteeing increased benefits was declined by the Basle voters with a ten to six majority. The new scheme had already been passed by the Grosse Rat and under the emergency powers would have become law had not the communists demanded a referendum. The Bill was endorsed by all the other parties and its rejection is considered to reflect the dislike of the Basle voters against the arbitrary and costly legislative measures enacted under the emergency powers.

Towards the evening of February 8th a heavy thunderstorm raged over Basle. Intense lightning and thunder claps followed each other rapidly. In some places hailstones completely covered the roads.

While there are still districts or communes where naturalisation is a matter of mutual arrangement or bargaining, the new conditions under discussion in the canton Baselland insist on a continuous residence in Switzerland of at least fifteen years of which ten must be in the canton; the production of a medical report or certificate is also a *sine qua non*.

The Government of the town of Schaffhausen, following the example of Zurich, proposes to revise the imposition of income tax to assist large families. The Grand Council is requested to increase the rebate to the taxpayer from frs.200 to frs.400 per child. The parishes of the canton should be authorised to do likewise.

The well-known Hotel-Restaurant Bellevue near the Rhine falls in Neuhausen has been taken over under a three years' lease by the Federal authorities; it is being converted into an emigrants' camp to house about a hundred female refugees.

A new administrative statute has been worked out by the Regierungsrat of the canton Thurgau for discussion and decision by the Grosse Rat. The canton is to be divided into eight boroughs (Bezirke), 32 districts (Kreise), 32 municipalities and 203 communes.

The diminution in the population of St. Gall seems to have come to a halt, the residents having increased during the twelve months to the end of December last by 465 to 62,980. Included in the figure are 6,955 foreigners whose number decreased by 487 due mainly to the departure of German nationals.

Experts have just completed the examination of a big find of coins, which was made during the enlargement of a farm house in the neighbourhood of Oberried in the St. Gall Rheintal last autumn. It was a matter of 1,089 coins of the late Roman Emperors' era, which were in a well preserved ornamental pot of burnt clay. Most of the coins were in a state of splendid preservation, so that only about 150 pieces could not be definitely identified.

In the alpine valleys there are many places into which the sun never shines for weeks on end during the winter months, owing to the high mountains. To compensate this there is at Valendas in the Prätigau a farm on which the sun rises and sets seven times a day by clear weather on the shortest days of the year. On the south side of the farm is the Signina Berg, which by its high peaks again and again covers the sun and allows it to be visible again, until it has passed the mountain completely.

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The state Council of the canton of Vaud appointed Mr. Jacques Freymond professor of modern and contemporary history at the faculty of Arts at the University of Lausanne.

* * *

For the second time the voters of the town of Lausanne rejected the municipal budget for 1943 which would balance with a deficit of nearly five million francs. Only about 30% of the citizens troubled to record their opinion, 7,762 being against and 1,177 for the fiscal estimate.

* * *

During melioration works in the neighbourhood of Nyon on the lake of Geneva, another piece of Roman aqueduct was discovered, which was built by the Romans about 2,000 years ago and which led the water from the present-day French Pays de Gex over a distance of 9 km. to Nyon, the Roman Novodunum.

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The former police corporal of Fribourg, Jean Grivel, died at the age of 68. He was a passionate lover of animals and a founder and leading member of several societies and movements for the protection of animals.

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At a meeting held at Geneva called for the purpose of discussing the unsatisfactory financial aspect of the hotel industry, the presidents of two local tourist associations stressed the importance of Geneva as a traffic centre and recommended strongly the erection of new hotels along the lake so as to be ready for the influx of visitors after the war.

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From 21st to 31st of August a fortnights' fashion display will be held in Geneva when models of "haute couture" will be on show. Horse racing will be held at the same time on Plainpalais.

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A committee was formed for the organisation of a musical festival which will take place in Geneva on the 29th and 30th May.

* * *

The proceedings against Nicole and his consorts terminated after a week's trial in very mild sentences. They were charged with offences against the decree enacted by the Federal Council on August 6th, 1940, which prohibits any communist activity or propaganda whatsoever. The accused appeared before the Federal Penal Court at Lausanne and though a large number of witnesses were called by both sides no startling revelations came to light; communist activities were not disputed and it was even admitted that the propaganda was distributed through the Federal Post Offices. Leon Nicole was sentenced conditionally to three months imprisonment, i.e., the sentence was remitted subject to five years probation. The other four accused

were mainly engaged in the printing and distribution of communist propaganda leaflets and were similarly dealt with the exception being Karl Hofmaier who will have to spend six months in the Basle prison. Some of the stock of leaflets found in the printing works and elsewhere are confiscated. Leon Nicole on arriving on his return at the Geneva station was the centre of a demonstration and was carried shoulder high like a conquering hero to the former headquarters of the movement.

* * *

People living along the shores of Lake of Geneva are likely to witness some strange spectacles. Some 200 Italian sailors have arrived at Evian and Thonon on the southern side. Fast motor patrol boats will be keeping guard and it is expected that the peaceful waters will be turned into a landing surface for flying boats.

Army

Mother Helvetia requires that her sons are preparing themselves physically for the military service prior to the recruit examinations. At this year's examinations the young men liable to register for service have to undergo a severe test: a sprint over a lap of 80 metres, a long jump, putting the weight weighing 500 grammes, climbing a pole, a distance run of 3 km., and a route march of 25 km. Those unable to comply with the minimum requirements will have to undergo a special compulsory training during the year.

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THE JAR AFTER EACH

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A Federal Central Office has been established by the Federal Military Department to which is attached a Committee of experts for the furtherance of breeding mules in Switzerland. This organisation has the object, in conjunction with breeders and the cantonal governments, to encourage the rearing of that animal which is of such great importance to the army and to mountain agriculture.

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Two soldiers of the Frontier Guard have been sentenced by court martial respectively to life-long and 12 years' imprisonment. They were accused of high treason and betrayal of military secrets.

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By the crashing during exercises of an army plane near Lausanne, the pilot, Lt. Maurice Schneider, from Geneva, lost his life.

Rationing

The Federal Office for Food Distribution has issued the following directions for April: The ration of oats and barley of 250 gr. is replaced by a ration of rice; the stock of oats, barley and maize laid in before the war are now practically exhausted. The fat allowance is to be reduced by 100 grammes. The ration card for April has no tea coupon, but to replace this the holder is entitled to 4 eggs as against 2 previously. The milk production has slightly improved, and an increase from 4 to 5 dl. is now promised for a whole card, but only adults born between 1883 and 1923 will benefit by this, as will also workers in heavy trades. Regarding adolescents born between 1924 and 1937 and people born prior to 1882, the milk ration will remain unaltered and they will receive a special ration card. The allowance for children will remain at 7 dl. per day.

Cheese — believe it or not — is scarce owing to abnormal exports(!) and a decline in production.

* * *

Black market activities are keeping the police busy. Excellent reproductions of the sugar coupons enabled a large number of amateur traders to pocket illegal profits until the forgeries were discovered; these coupons were printed both in Geneva and Basle. Other rationed foodstuffs and articles obtained by a wholesaler in Zurich were disposed of at exorbitant prices and even students of the local university tried their luck in this lucrative trade.

Traffic

Although the last two years have shown good results, the administrations of the Federal Railways as well as of the private lines find it necessary to prepare for the introduction of a war surtax. For some time lately the receipts have diminished, whereas the expenses, through higher costs of materials and the large war bonus payments to the staff, have steadily increased. The surtax, however, will not be applied according to a fixed percentage, but will be adjusted in consideration of the possibility of the existing fares being able to stand an increase. Also relief for families will be taken into consideration and the age limit for free travel of children will be raised from four years of age to six years, and for half-fares from twelve years to fourteen years of age.

* * *

The problem of the financial rehabilitation of the Rhaetian Railways was the discussion at a public meeting by the chief of the financial department of the canton of Grisons. The Federal law for the assistance of private railways foresees a sum of frs.43,000,000 for the Rhaetian Railways. That sum is not sufficient. Based on this amount, the company would not be in a position to reduce the ascent surtax which is a third higher than those of the federal railways. The company asks for a special subsidy of 4.5 millions in order to abolish the surtax. The best solution would be the purchase of the Rhaetian Railway by the Federal Railways.

* * *

Mr. Robert Egger has been appointed Chief of Workshops, Swiss Federal Railways, in succession of the late Mr. Jakob Schnurrenberger. Mr. Egger was born in Biel in 1886 and studied there and in Zurich; afterwards he was engaged in a boiler works at Richterswil and in the Swiss Locomotive & Machine Works at Winterthur. He was appointed to the railway technical staff in 1915, and served in various localities in the Traction Department before becoming Supervisor of the Olten Workshops in 1936. He took up his present appointment in July of last year.

* * *

The tunnel between St. Ursanne and Porrentruy in the Bernese Jura caved in just prior to the entry of a train. It was possible to stop the train just in time and no one was hurt. The enquiry proved that an air shaft of 125 m. which was constructed at the building of the tunnel some forty years ago, in the course of time through wind, water and rain filled up with rubble and loose earth, which mass pressing upon the arching of the tunnel, caused it eventually to give way. The work of clearing took several weeks and in the meantime the traffic was carried on by postal coaches across Mont Terrible. By the fall in the tunnel, the conducting wires of the railway have been torn and the rail traffic in the cut-off Porrentruy corner had to be carried through with old steam engines. As luck would have it during these critical times, there were none of these on the north side of the mountain and to bring some over the neighbouring French or Alsatian tracks was not allowed. Therefore two light steam engines had to be mounted on a road transport trolley and drawn by a powerful tractor across the mountain. This strange transport, although accompanied by great difficulties was successful. The enormous stone sentry on Les Rangiers, which is the memorial to the Swiss Soldiers fallen during the guarding of the frontiers

1914/18 has for the first and probably the last time seen a railway engine pass at its feet.

* * *

Planning for after-war civil aviation is one of the favourite subjects discussed by many a municipal council. Lucerne wishes to be connected with the European Air network and claims an airport to serve central Switzerland. A similar proposal is being debated by the Grosse Rat of Zug which maintains that this central Swiss airport should be constructed between Cham and Zug. Geneva is going to enlarge the existing Cointrin airfield and fancies to convert "le petit lac" — the lower end of the lake of Geneva — into an anchorage for large seaplanes; it also plans for two motor roads, one to Basle and the other one to Schaffhausen.

Economical

The Federal Council decided to propose to the two Chambers the prolongation of the federal decree, which gives general compulsory power to collective labour agreements, until 31st December, 1946.

* * *

One of the fresh taxations to pay for the heavy expenses of the mobilisation is the "defence sacrifice" (Wehropfer), which takes the form of a graduated capital levy, starting in 1945 for three years. As the Confederation, however, requires already to-day large sums and as many of the taxpayers might be in a better position to-day than in two years time, the Federal Finance Department has issued interest bearing tokens, which the taxpayer can buy at any bank. These tokens are intended for the payment of that particular tax and are bearing in the meantime interest of 3%, whereas for deposit accounts only 1-1½% and for savings accounts only 2 - 2.75% is obtainable. The tax payer, by buying these tokens now is putting aside the tax due to be paid later on and at the same time is well rewarded for his willingness to pay and the Confederation is receiving the necessary money well in advance.

* * *

A fresh statement by the Vichy Government announces the definite stoppage of interest payments on French loans subscribed in Switzerland. The total of French state issues placed in Switzerland amounts to 168 million Swiss francs.

* * *

The industrial position in 1942 taken as a whole, had been more satisfactory than in the previous year. Despite fuel shortage and the difficulty in obtaining raw materials, industrial employment remained satisfactory. In agriculture, the application of the Valaine plan had resulted in greater employment and the works of national importance had absorbed considerable labour. In December last the number of totally unemployed was 8,814 as compared with 9,095 in the corresponding month of 1941 and with 52,590 in 1938. Trade returns for 1942 show that the total value of imports was 2,049,000,000f., a rise of 1 per cent. over 1941, and the value of exports totalled 1,571,000,000f., an increase of 7 per cent. The rise is mainly due to increased prices, as the volume of imports was only three-fifths of that of the last pre-war year.

* * *

Efforts to advance the production of Swiss coal have resulted in an increase from 80,000 tons in 1941 to 220,000 tons last year. In 1941 the increase in coal

production was due to the opening of new mines; last year it was due to improved mining methods.

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The campaign for salvaging old tyres is so far responsible for the reclaiming of sufficient rubber to meet the country's needs for several months to come.

* * *

On January 21st the first group of machines of the new Geneva power station at Verbois was put into commission. Two further turbo-generators will be completed during the year, whereas a fourth one is planned for later on. By this new Rhone power plant the supply of electric current for western Switzerland has been greatly improved.

* * *

The supply of bread is stated to be secured for a considerable time, thanks to the action of the authorities in rationing bread and flour, but a warning note is sounded to economise as much as possible. Although every effort is made in extending the planting and growing of cereals, climatic and other causes make it possible to provide only a quarter of the requirements of flour for home use. Three quarters of our necessary cereals have to come from abroad practically all from overseas. This means that annually over 30,000 truck loads of ten tons each will have to be imported. A great number of industrial undertakings are equally dependent on a sufficient importation of cereals as for instance the biscuit and rusks industry, the manufacture of starch, children's food stuffs, soups, preserves, even the Brissago Cigar factories require paste from rye starch, to stick the cover leaf of their long cigars. The possibility for work of many thousands of hands is dependent on sufficient supply of cereals. Yet the available shipping space is steadily growing less, so that the aspect of the future is not very rosy.

* * *

Like numerous other industrial concerns, the Swiss Railway Companies, led by the S.B.B. have placed their unused land and their labour at the disposal of food production, for the benefit of increasing the provisioning of the country. In the last year, nearly 200,000 sq.m. of waste land, belonging to the S.B.B. was cultivated, the area thus planted with food stuffs by the railway workers was increased by 500,000 sq.m. to about 2,000,000 sq.m. Foremost of the produce were

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potatoes, vegetables, maize and cereals. On the steep banks of the railroads hazel nut bushes were planted. By a further co-operative effort, and on a totally voluntary basis, it is the intention of the rail workers to cultivate for food production in the current year an average of 2 acres per employee.

* * *

Since the beginning of the war the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle secured every year an increased number of exhibitors. For this year's fair which is being held from the 1st to 11th May there are already such a large number of bookings that the administration of the fair is forced to provide further buildings. Two new permanent wings are planned, providing 2,000 and 1,000 sq-m. of area space, besides the erection of a tent structure with several large halls. A regroupment is also foreseen by which it is expected to gain more space.

* * *

The idea of a family man being paid higher wages than a single man has been in practice for some considerable time in some Swiss industries and trades, although the payment by production ability is still considered the basis of a contract. The idea gained practical effect through the forming of wages equalisation funds; into which each employee pays a small part of his earnings and the employer pays an equal amount. From these pools family men engaged in the respective trades are paid a graduated allowance, regulated by the number of children. The first of these wages equalisation pools originated from the watch-makers corporation in the Franche Montagnes in the Bernese Jura in 1923. Since then the number of regional pools has increased to ten. Besides these there are at present eight wages equalisation pools which are spread over the whole of the country and are embracing all concerns of certain industries and trades. A large number of trade unions are at present engaged in forming similar pools.

* * *

The hotel school at Lausanne which has been closed since 1941 is to be opened again after Easter. The school which is controlled by the Swiss Hotel Association is being modernised; the fees are extremely moderate and the up-keep is being defrayed from contributions and subscriptions in the trade and a Federal subsidy. Every candidate who has absolved the different courses and successfully passed the final examination is being given a start in life — a paid appointment in a hotel establishment being guaranteed to him for the first twelve months.

* * *

In an unexplained manner the foot and mouth disease showed itself in the Wegenstettertal in the canton of Aargau and in a stable in the canton of Thurgau. The sick animals were immediately slaughtered whereas all the other cattle in a wide circle from the affected stables were vaccinated with the new vaccine which is prepared in the new institute in Basle. This measure proved highly successful and the disease has not spread.

* * *

A pest of field mice has proved so destructive to the fields and allotments in the neighbourhood of St. Gall that the authorities have opened an official campaign of destruction. The vermin is to be attacked with traps, virus and gas and private land-owners are offered a premium of 10 cts. for every kill.

Humanitarian

The centre of International Red Cross Committee for prisoners of war has on December 30th, 1942, dispatched its twenty millionth letter. Since 1939 more than nineteen million letters have been received at the centre. In comparison it may be mentioned that during the war of 1914/18 the centre dealt with about eight million letters. The telegram communications have also reached tremendous figures, as on some days as many as 2,600 telegrams have been exchanged. Amongst these there are also whole lists of names of prisoners of war from the governments of the belligerent nations, further reports from the delegates of the Red Cross from all parts of the world and numerous enquiries from families asking for news of their relatives.

* * *

The 1st of August collection of 1943 ended up with a net result of frs.1,170,500 — i.e., frs.150,000 more than in the previous year. This increase is principally placed to the credit of the sale of the postage stamp blocks. Of the amount frs.390,000 are given to the Don National for soldiers and their families and frs.750,000 are handed over to the Swiss Samaritan Fund.

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Recently two trains with about 200 Swiss on board arrived in Switzerland from Paris. They were mostly all Jewish Swiss citizens who resided for many years in France. Each was allowed to have 50 kg. of luggage, whilst their other movable belongings were collected and later on sent to Switzerland.

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Since last summer nearly 8,000 refugees from almost every country in Europe have found a refuge in Switzerland. When the great stream started, the army erected thirty reception camps in which the guests are collected, their identity established and their abode settled. The refugees received from the army depot the same provisions as is allowed to the civil population, i.e., they are subjected to the same rationing as any other inhabitant of the country. The health service is carried out by military doctors, the spiritual and welfare services are suitably arranged and the Red Cross has organised a limited intercourse between them and their relatives abroad. Eighteen labour camps and homes have been opened for the permanent reception of refugees, where, to prevent bodily and mental deterioration, suitable work is provided. The men between 17 and 60 have to place their labour at the disposal of public works, like melioration undertakings, drainage, alp improvements, etc., whereas the women in homes are occupied with mending and sewing. People of frail constitutions are placed in separate camps where they occupy themselves with lighter work. Children from 6 to 16 years of age are placed with families, small children with their mothers are put into homes. All the children are going to the local schools. The refugees are told already in the reception camps, that Switzerland will never be able to offer them a permanent home, but will only grant them a safe refuge until such times as the world situation will allow them to continue their travels to a new sphere of activities. Switzerland was forced to take up this standpoint as already previous to last year's great influx, over 8,000 refugees were received. But these 16,000, who have found a sanctuary in Switzerland not only represent a drain on our provisioning capacity, but in a certain sense also form a danger of a political nature.

The proposal emanating from Sir William Beveridge, that Switzerland, like Spain, should receive the Jews from the European Countries, until a new home could be given to them by international arrangement after the war, has caused considerable concern. Against material danger which could result from a further influx of immigrants, even the consignment of provisions and other goods from the Allies, could not help us very much, quite apart from the fact that the other belligerents would have it in their power to oppose any such consignment. The increase of Jewish immigrants would, however, present also a political danger. Our country is experiencing already an over-population and no one, under the existing uncertainty can give us a guarantee that the country could rid itself entirely of the alien elements after the war. Although Switzerland has every compassion for the unhappy and persecuted people, which has been proved over and over again by deeds, it can never be contemplated to set up a reservation for Jews.

A Swiss Institute for the study of foreign countries has been formed. At its head is a Committee formed amongst others by the Rector of the Federal Technical Academy (E.T.H.) and the Rector of the University of Zurich. This institute is to make scientific and objective studies of foreign countries and particularly those which are of special interest to Switzerland.

The Swiss House in Milan has been destroyed in an air-raid on February 15th. There were some 27 people actually in the building but they had escaped to the basement shelter and nobody was hurt. The Swiss House in Milan was the home of the Swiss Club, the Swiss School, the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Employment Department of the latter. The Library containing some 7,000 volumes, the school with all its furniture and the caretaker's rooms were completely destroyed. The employment department suffered least, all its records are safe and its work is carried on, thanks to the temporary hospitality offered by the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Milan.

The Federal Gymnastic Society has made good the loss of its members brought about by the war, and with a membership of 175,900 has surpassed the position of 1939 very considerably. To-day the Society numbers 40,000 active gymnasts, 16,300 members of the veterans (Männer Riegen), 24,300 lady gymnasts making a total of 80,600 practising members. To this is to be added 27,000 young gymnasts of both sexes. The E.T.V. hopes to attain a membership of 200,000 within the next few years, of which 100,000 are expected to be actively practising gymnasts.

No less than 65 designs have been examined by the prize committee set up in connection with the proposed Motta monument. Top honours have been awarded to Remo Rossi of Locarno whose project is recommended for execution.

Not long ago there was a large fire in one of the barns belonging to the Corporation of Stans. Hay, straw and cereals filled the barn and in the sheds were machines of all sorts. The fire could easily have been

mastered, as next door to it there was a Federal dépôt which was well equipped with fire fighting appliances and two motor pumps; eighty well-trained firemen were also on the premises. But these fire fighters were not allowed to meddle in a fire in Nidwalden without having been specially invited to do so. This great fire was, however, considered as "iiseri Brunscht" (our fire) and the building burnt completely down, without the firemen of the Federal dépôt being allowed to make themselves useful. Motto:—Diä Chaibe vo Bärn miend nid iberall d'Finger denne ha (The blighters from Berne must not have their fingers in everything).

Mr. Eugene Suter, a pioneer in permanent waving, who started his experiments in a Bond Street back room, and established the firm of Eugene, Limited, has died in America at the age of 54. He was a Swiss, later becoming a naturalized American. Before the present war he divided his time between his companies in London, Paris, New York, Sidney, and Wellington. When he started permanent waving during the 1914-18 war, his process was long and exhausting to hairdresser and client, so he engaged scientists, who helped him evolve the simple process used to-day.

(The Times, Feb. 25th, 1943.)

A film-cutter, Werner Haller, aged 28, from Zurich, one of the two brothers prominently identified with the Swiss film industry, was killed on January 16th in Berlin during an air raid. He had completed a technical mission and was on the point of returning home. His body was brought to Switzerland and cremated in Zurich.

In our December issue we recorded the death of Dr. Anton Suter at Lausanne; here is an obituary published on March 6th by the "Co-operative News":

Co-operators who had the privilege of meeting Dr. Anton Suter, who formerly attended co-operative Congresses in this country and on the Continent on behalf of the Swiss co-operative movement, will regret to hear of his death, at the age of 79.

Dr. Suter was a very fine type of man. At the British Congress at Carlisle in 1919 he translated into English a speech made by Mr. Maire, who spoke on behalf of the Swiss delegation.

At the gathering arranged to celebrate the jubilee of the Scottish Wholesale Society, which followed almost immediately after Carlisle Congress, Dr. Suter responded to the toast, "Our Co-operative Guests," in what was described as "a marvellous flow of English."

After many years' stay in Holland, Dr. Suter, then associated with the Swiss Diplomatic Corps, settled in Lausanne, and dedicated himself to the co-operative movement.

Dr. Suter played an important and active role in the Swiss and also the international co-operative movement. From 1909 to 1937 he was a very valued member of the supervisory council of the V.S.K. (the Union of Swiss Distributive Societies), and its vice-president. For many years Dr. Suter was an active member of the central committee of the I.C.A.

Dr. A. Suter also influenced the cultural life of the city of Lausanne. He formed a large orchestra in 1903, which was organised and financed by him for years.