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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

On the 10th of this month, the 1st of August Committee met in Berne to discuss the arrangements for this year's collection. It was decided that the funds collected in 1947 should be earmarked for the education of infirm people and for cancer research work.

The net result of last year's collection amounted to 1,100,000 frs., of which amount  $\frac{3}{4}$  were allocated to Swiss abroad, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  to Swiss who, owing to the war, had to return to Switzerland.

\* \* \*

Mr. William Napier, has been appointed British General Consul in Zurich, in succession to the retiring General Consul E. G. Cable.

The new General Consul was for many years in the Near East, and during the last war, attached to the War Office. He was educated in Switzerland.

\* \* \*

A commercial treaty between Switzerland and Czechoslovakia has just been concluded.

Czechoslovakia has agreed to deliver to Switzerland : sugar, glass and china ware, coke, Iron and metal goods, machinery, textiles, boots and shoes and chemical products, whilst Switzerland will supply Czechoslovakia with machinery, scientific instruments, dyes, medical products, textiles, watches and agricultural products.

\* \* \*

Negotiations which have been under way during the last few days between Swiss financial experts and officials of the Belgian Ministry of Finance concerning a 50 million franc loan to Belgium have been concluded. The loan has been granted by Swiss banks. The Swiss credit will be used for the modernisation of the Belgian telephone and telegraph system. The 70,000 telephones with automatic equipment are to be imported from Switzerland.

\* \* \*

According to the "New York Herald" the National Bank of Switzerland has banned the export of gold bars.

Bankers said the object of the ban was to prevent the dumping of finance dollars into the free dollar market in Switzerland.

The official rate on the American dollar is 4.31 Swiss francs. Under complex currency regulations, the finance dollar rate has varied during the last year from 3.15 to 3.95 Swiss francs, and at present is around 3.74.

The official rate of 4.31 is used in the purchase of commodities.

Bankers said that there had developed a lucrative business of buying Swiss gold bars, shipping them to the Far Eastern countries, notably India, for sale for dollars.

The dollars thus acquired were used in the purchase of Swiss francs on the free dollar market.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Federal Government in a report on its policy towards the Press in the war gives an account of the struggle with the Nazi Government and its Press organs, which continued throughout the war. It makes plain Nazi intentions to prepare for the invasion of

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Switzerland by undermining the determination of the Swiss to maintain their neutrality under arms.

During the war the German Legation in Berne made representations on Press matters to the Federal Government on 169 occasions. The report says that the British Legation in Berne conducted a Press service but this differed from that of the Germans, in that it was mainly informative and designed to take the place of English newspapers when Switzerland was cut off.

The authorities refrained from intervening against it, partly for reasons of equality of treatment, and partly because it acted as a counter-weight to German and Italian propaganda. "The Legation bulletins in fact were equivalent to the war-time publication of an English newspaper, a case without precedent in Press relationships."

\* \* \*

According to informed quarters Switzerland recently declined to grant additional credits to Spain and insisted that future sales to Spain be made on a cash and carry basis.

They said the outstanding Spanish debt to Switzerland was 50,000,000 Swiss francs. Switzerland, they added, had adopted the position that no further credits will be granted until this debt is liquidated.

\* \* \*

The Swiss Government has lodged a strong protest with the Bulgarian Government concerning recent happenings in connection with the exchange of Bulgarian banknotes.

Contrary to diplomatic *etiquette*, Bulgarian officials demanded the right to inspect the accounts of the Swiss Legation in Sofia; when this was refused, the Legation was put under police supervision, and in-and-out-going visitors had to undergo police inspection.

The Swiss Minister in Sofia, Monsieur Charles de Jenner, who is well-known in the London Colony, at once protested vigorously against such unseemly proceedings to the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, with the result that the control was lifted.

The Swiss Foreign Minister has informed the Bulgarian Minister in Berne, that his government takes a serious view about the way in which their officials were treated.

\* \* \*

Monsieur Jan Modzelewski, formerly Polish Minister in Berne, has died at Fribourg, at the age of 72.

For the last few years the deceased has lived in Fribourg.

\* \* \*

From the 15th of this month, the frontier between Switzerland and Campione (Italy) will be closed, during certain hours.

Thus the nightly pilgrimage of visitors, both Swiss and other nationals, who wish to get rid of their money at the Casino of Campione, will cease for the time being.

This drastic order was issued by the Swiss government, in order to prevent visitors to the neighbouring Swiss holiday resorts enriching what is called the "Spielhölle von Campione;" it is learned that the Italian Government will lodge a protest against these measures.

### Cantonal

Lieut-Colonel Anton Gwerder, Manager of the "Kantonal Bank" Schwyz, has been elected a member of the Federal Parliament (National Council) in succession to the late Dr. A. Seiler. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

States-Councillor Joller, who represents the canton of Nidwalden in the States Council, has resigned his seat. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Gottfried Odermatt, since 1934 a member of the Government of Nidwalden, has died at Stans at the age of 67. He was from 1936-1943 a member of the Federal Parliament (National Council).

\* \* \*

Dr. Dietrich Barth, Editor-in-Chief of the "Luzerner Neuesten Nachrichten," has resigned his post to join the editorial staff of the "Schaffhauser Nachrichten."

\* \* \*

The cantonal government of Lucerne has made an appeal to all young people over 16 years of age, and of both sexes, to volunteer for work on the land, so as to help the farmers who are suffering from shortage of labour. The canton, as well as the communities and the farmers will share the costs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The late Alfred Stadelmann, teacher at the Secondary school in Pfäffikon has left an amount of

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26,000frs. to various cantonal institutions, amongst the beneficiaries are the "Sekundarschule" (10,000 frs.) and the "Krankenasyll" (10,000 frs.) Pfäffikon.

\* \* \*

Heavy snow falls during the last two months have seriously taxed the Municipal budget of Zurich. An amount of 550,000 frs. has been spent, since the beginning of this year for clearance work.

\* \* \*

A motion tabled by the Socialist members of the "Kantonsrat" in Zurich, to nationalise the clinics of Wald and Clavadel (for patients suffering from tuberculosis) was defeated with 91 against 60 votes.

It was stated by the opposition that nothing would be gained by such an action, as both these institutions were well managed by private enterprise. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Professor Dr. E. Abderhalden, ordinarius for physiological chemistry and director of the physiological institute of the University of Zurich, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary; Professor Abderhalden is an honorary member of the Swiss Academy for medical science. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A well-known personality has died at Glarus in the person of Dr. Eugen Hafter, from 1896-1933 school-inspector, at the age of 84.

\* \* \*

For having called "Landrat" Seb. Jenny in Ennenda a "Sklavenhändler" and "Arbeiterfresser", Daniel Hösli, secretary of the Textile Workers Union, was fined 100 frs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Ernest Vuille, a former National-Councillor, and President of the cantonal Socialist party has died at Tramelan at the age of 68.

\* \* \*

The town of Berne has been left a legacy of altogether 400,000 frs. by the late Dr. Richard La Nicca, a well-known medical practitioner in Berne. The legacy is to be used for the erection of a home for aged middle-class people who are in straitened circumstances.

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The death is reported from Berne of Arnold Schweitzer, the founder and Chairman of the Caran d'Ache concern in Geneva. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The late Miss Elise Hurni, from Kerzers, has left an amount of 149,000 frs. to various institutions, amongst them the "Schoolfund, Kerzers" (100,000 frs.); the hospital in Morlach (17,000 frs.) and the home for old people Jeuss (10,000 frs.).

\* \* \*

Traffic accidents in the canton of Berne are on the increase, during the month of February, 191 accidents occurred, and 94 persons were injured, six of them fatally, or 10% more than in the previous month. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The government of the canton of Berne has recently received the Italian Minister, Monsieur Reale, at the town hall. At a banquet which followed the reception, the President of the Bernese government, Seematter, expressed the hope that the relations between the two republics might become closer for their mutual benefit. The Italian Minister replied expressing the same wishes. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The University of Fribourg has conferred the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on Mgr. Charrière, Bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg. [A.T.S.]

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A fire which broke out at the ware-house of the "Scintilla A.G." in Zuchwill, caused considerable damage. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Dr. Max Studer, a former member of the cantonal government of Solothurn, and subsequently Chairman of the Board of the "Papierfabrik-Biberist," has died in Solothurn at the age of 82.

\* \* \*

Johann Enz, a former headmaster of the "Kantonsschule" in Solothurn has celebrated his 90th birthday anniversary. He retired in 1932 after 52 years of service. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The "Solothurner Handelsbank" has recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. This institution was formerly known under the name "Hülf- und Ersparniskasse Solothurn-Lebern." [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The smuggling of gold coins from Switzerland is still in full swing. A Belgian subject was arrested at the customs office Lysbüchel near Basle, for trying to smuggle into France gold coins to the value of 180,000 frs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Owing to differences discovered in the accounts of the Military Tax Administration in Herisau, E. Kopp, head of the Department, has been dismissed. Although the deficiency has been made good by Kopp, proceedings will be taken against him. [A.T.S.]



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Two burglars who broke into an inn on the Sissacherfluh were surprised by the police. One of the burglars fired 4 to 5 shots, whereupon the police returned the fire, killing the 24 year-old Alfred Opprecht from Kümmerzhausen, who had been previously convicted. His associate was arrested. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The death is reported from Riehen of the well-known Swiss Sculptor, Hans Frei, who enjoyed an international reputation. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Theodor Zürcher, who in the nineties was one of the best gymnasts in Switzerland has died at St. Gall, at the age of 86.

\* \* \*

Dr. Walter Haemmerle, "Kantonsschemiker" was arrested in Chur for irregularities. Shortly before his interrogation by the court, he was found dead in his cell, having hanged himself. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The elections for the re-newal of the government of the canton Thurgau have brought no changes. All former members have been re-elected. The various parties are represented as follows: 2 Liberals, 1 Peasant Party, 1 Catholic Conservative and 1 Socialist. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

An official of the community of Horn (Ct. Thurgau) has been arrested for embezzlement. So far the total amount of the defalcation reaches the sum of 102,500 frs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Professor Dr. Giuseppe Pometta, the well-known Swiss historian, and founder of the periodical "Briciole di storia bellinzonesi," has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary in Bellinzona. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

On the 5th of October, 1945, the Swiss customs frontier guard Maggi, was shot dead by a smuggler, and his colleague Pelli, was seriously wounded.

The Italian police has now been successful in arresting the murderer in the person of a certain Fiero Mascetti. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The objectionable habit of throwing objects out of a railway carriage window caused a serious accident at Ambri (Ct. Ticino).

A passenger threw an empty bottle out of the carriage, hitting an engine driver, who received serious head injuries and consequently has lost the sight of one eye. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Princess Juliana of Holland and her husband, Prince Bernhard, have arrived at Zermatt for a holiday stay.

\* \* \*

A regrettable accident happened during the 1st of March celebrations (1848 revolt), one of the guns firing a salute exploded, wounding two gunners, who were taken to hospital in a serious condition. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Leo Du Pasquier, a member of the cantonal government of Neuchâtel, has tendered his resignation to take effect from the 30th of June this year. [A.T.S.]

"Old Faithful," the Humber car which carried Field-Marshal Montgomery during his victorious campaigns, is on view at the International Motor Show in Geneva.

\* \* \*

Professor William Rappard, who is well-known in the London Swiss Colony, has received the degree of *doctor honoris causa* from the University of Princeton (U.S.A.) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the University.

\* \* \*

The 20 year old Gérard Caillat, who was under arrest for a number of burglaries committed in Geneva, has escaped whilst being taken to a dental clinic for treatment.

\* \* \*

The members of the cantonal government of Zurich have paid an official courtesy visit to the town of Geneva, in return for the visit paid by the Geneva government in November 1946. Questions concerning the interest of the two cantons were discussed, and the League of Nations Palace, the aerodrome of Cointrin and the electricity power station at Verbois were visited. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

Philippe Recordon, a former headmaster of the "Ecole des arts et métiers" in Vevey, has died at the age of 73.

\* \* \*

And yet another post-office, this time the one at Chêne-Bougeries (Geneva) was visited by a burglar. The postmaster was brutally attacked by the intruder,

a certain Eric Morel from Neuchâtel, and knocked down by an iron bar. Another employee, who fortunately arrived at the moment was threatened, but on trying to get to grips with the assailant, the man unfortunately escaped and so far no arrest has been made. The postmaster was taken to hospital in a serious condition. [A.T.S.]

**Army**

Lieutenant Carl Peter Braun, only son of the Manager of the Emmental-Burgdorf-Thun railway, who finished the "Rekrutenschule" in the canton of Valais, was killed by an avalanche whilst on a skiing expedition. He was twenty-two years old.

\* \* \*

The death is reported from Berne of Colonel Markus Feldmann at the age of 78.

Colonel Feldmann was appointed to the General Staff in 1897 with the rank of captain; he successively commanded the mountain battalion 34 as major, and the infantry regiment 14 as lieutenant-colonel. At one time he was chief of staff of the 4th division, and on his promotion to the rank of colonel he was put in command of the Infantry regiment 12. In 1918 he became "Fürsorgechef" of the Swiss army. The deceased was for many years lecturer of military science at the University of Berne, and a prolific writer on military subjects. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

A Morane military plane, piloted by Captain Walter Isler, a consulting engineer of Zurich, crashed



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when landing at the aerodrome at Meiringen, the pilot was killed.

\* \* \*

The military tribunal of the 4th division has condemned Lieutenant Dr. Ernst Jakob, a lawyer from Basle, to two years imprisonment and expulsion from the army for having joined, in 1942, the German army.

\* \* \*

Attempting to overtake a column of soldiers on the march, a lorry driver crashed into a group of eight soldiers, outside the barracks in Zurich. Four soldiers were more or less badly hurt.

\* \* \*

Sentences varying from six to eighteen months imprisonment were passed by the tribunal of the 3rd division, on eight Swiss, who, at the outbreak of the war joined the "Waffen S.S."

Some of them were deprived of their civil rights.  
[A.T.S.]

### Traffic

The "Swissair" has opened a regular service between Switzerland-Egypt and Palestine. A 44 seater Douglas machine (DC-4 HB—IIa) will be used for this service.

\* \* \*

The Rhine river traffic from the seaports to Basle is now again in operation.

\* \* \*

The Swiss s.s. *Eiger*, carrying about 8,137 tons deadweight, tonnage opening closed in 1942, built in 1929; s.s. *Chasserat*, of 3,129 tons gross, built in 1897; twin-screw m.v. *Saentis*, of 4,349 tons gross, built in 1915; and s.s. *St. Gotthard*, of 5,461 tons gross, built in 1911, and all owned by the Swiss War Transport Office, Berne (Messrs. Honegger and Ascott, London), have been sold for between \$1,500,000 and \$1,750,000 for the four, payable in Swiss francs. The purchasers of the *Eiger* were the Swiss Shipping Company, Ltd., Basle, while the other vessels were purchased by the S.A. Nautilus, Lugano.

### Economics

The following Swiss Banking institutions have declared their dividends for the year 1946: Schweiz. Kredit Anstalt: 5%; Crédit Foncier Vaudois: 4½%; A.G. Leu & Co: 4%; Solothurnische Leihkasse: 5%; Genossenschaftliche Zentral Bank, Basel: 4%; Schweiz. Bankgesellschaft 6%; Schweiz. Bankverein: 5%; Banque Cantonal Vaudois: 4½%; Gewerbebank Zurich: 5%.

\* \* \*

As the nationalisation of the railways in this country is at present a topical subject, it is of interest to know the result of the nationalisation of the Swiss Railways which took place in the last century.

In matters of traffic, party politics do not play any part. In 1898, for instance when the Swiss private railways were being nationalised, middle-class parties were all in favour of the nationalisation. The voting was under the slogan: "No more foreign capital influences; co-operation of consigners and public; uniform tariffs for the whole country based on the lowest existing tariffs; and peaceful working with the staff."

At the voting on the financial reconstruction in

1945, as had been the case in 1898, there was a strong majority in favour of the Swiss Federal Railways. Nobody spoke of turning them again into a private enterprise. The extent of the reforms and various simplifications were the only points under discussion. The chief object aimed at was the recognition of the charges unduly imposed upon the railways. Therefore, 900 million of the Swiss Federal Railways' debts were taken over by the State, which created also a fr. 400-million working capital with variable interest, which acts as a share capital.

Nothing was changed in the legal position of the Swiss Federal Railways: they still enjoy a wide autonomy; they are not incorporated into the central administration; they have their own administration, and a general management with three divisional managements, according to the Swiss federalistic principles. Parliament's control of the budget, of the annual report, of the working hours law, and of the staff statute were outside the discussion.

There is no reason to speak of Parliament's interference in railway construction or working. As it is, Parliament's influences are neutralised by public and press criticism. It is just as false to pretend that railway syndicates form a sort of rival Government. Sometimes they do not agree with the Government, but this is quite normal. Moreover, there are joint committees of the administration and the staff, which play a consultative part. Besides, the staff has a representative on the board of administration. This has had very good results, as the Swiss Federal Railways enjoyed



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The tariffs and the time-table present ample evidence of the benefits of nationalisation. Let us recall here that since 1944 the tariffs have been raised only by 7 per cent., though the cost of living is more than 50 per cent. higher. Increased traffic and accelerated electrification contributed to the much appreciated stability of the tariffs.

The nationalisation of the railways raises no problem in Switzerland, and nobody criticises it. The Swiss people are satisfied with their electrified and up-to-date railways, and the Centenary year 1947 will show how much they appreciate their national means of communication.

**Humanitarian**

Four-hundred-and-eighty children from Braunschweig and Hannover and 620 French children have left

Switzerland after a three months stay with Swiss families.

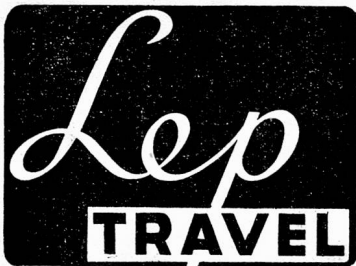
Another batch of 450 from Hungary have arrived and will be distributed amongst various families throughout the country.

Thirty badly maimed boys and girls from Austria arrived, these will be sent to hospitals in Zurich and Lausanne for medical treatment, and will be supplied with artificial limbs. [A.T.S.]

\* \* \*

The town of Pruntrut has adopted the village of Jgenville (Dept. Eure, France) which, during the battle of Normandy was totally destroyed.

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Monsieur Edigio Reale, the Italian Minister, accredited to the Swiss government, has been the guest of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva.

\* \* \*

The number of fugitives and emigrants who have entered Switzerland since the beginning of the last war and up to February 1947, number 295,881 of these 282,425 have since left or died, so that there are still at present 12,956 fugitives and emigrants of all kinds in Switzerland. [A.T.S.]

—oOo—

An attempt to reach an altitude of 19 miles, which would be a world record, is to be made next June by Professor August Piccard, the Swiss physicist, who will ascend in a gondola attached to a cluster of balloons. His object is to secure data about the stratosphere.

Professor Piccard proposes to take a naval airman with him. The balloons he intends to use will be 57 feet in diameter.

The balloon altitude record is at present held by Captain A. W. Stevens and Captain O. A. Anderson, United States Air Corps, who reached a height of over 14 miles on November 11th, 1946.

\* \* \*

The medical faculty of the Sorbonne has nominated Professor Dr. Paul Hauduroy, Professor of the University of Fribourg, as a "corresponding member."

\* \* \*

Proposals by Switzerland to the British Government for the mutual abolition of visas between the two countries are imminent.

The Swiss "Fremdenpolizei" who hitherto have opposed any relaxation of the regulations have finally agreed to the Swiss Foreign Office taking up the matter with Britain.

\* \* \*

Stamp collectors will be interested in the following statement, which appeared in the "New York Herald Tribune," of February 9th, 1947:—

Invited to participate at the Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition at Grand Central Palace in May to climax a nation-wide observation of the hundredth anniversary of the first United States stamps, Switzerland, which was unable to commemorate the centennial of its own first stamps in 1943 because of the war, has gone all out in co-operation with the American show.

For several months the Swiss government has been in close touch with the executive committee of the exhibition with a view to displaying an elaborate exhibit to trace the history of Swiss stamps and stamp manufacture. Last week it became known that a special stamp and the first flight of the Swiss-air trans-Atlantic service would be scheduled to coincide with the exhibition.

\* \* \*

According to the Federal Statistical Bureau, the population, at the end of 1941 (last census) of the cantons Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden and Obwalden, was as follows:—

	1941	1930
Uri	27,302	23,000
Schwyz	66,555	62,337
Obwalden	20,340	19,401
Nidwalden	17,348	15,055



## SWISS CONCERN TO ERECT FACTORY AT WEYMOUTH.

On Friday, March 8th, a ceremony took place at the Lynch Lane industrial site at Weymouth, when a building plot was officially handed over by the Vice-Chairman of the Industry Committee, Councillor J. Connor, to Mr. G. E. De Brunner, of Messrs. De Brunner & Lang Sims, in the presence of Weymouth's Mayor (Alderman C. H. J. Kaile) who is, no doubt, the first Mayor ever to arrive at an official function in a helicopter.

This machine was flown from Portland to the industrial site by Lieut. W. Reed, who recently landed on the quarter deck of the battleship Vanguard in mid-Channel when the King and Queen started on their voyage to South Africa. The Mayor, wearing his chain of office, on stepping from the machine, was greeted by Mr. De Brunner, the Swiss owner of the first factory to be built on the new industries site.

Accepting the site, Mr. De Brunner expressed his thanks for the warmth of the reception and acknowledged what hard work must have been put into the scheme by the committee. He felt particularly pleased that his firm had been fortunate enough to be concerned in this pioneer work. Having thanked the Corporation for their splendid co-operation in the trying circumstances, he assured his listeners that Colonel Adamson, the architect and Mr. Frank Eve, the works contractor, would do all in their power to get the factory completed in quick time.

After the pronouncement of the Blessing by the Mayor's Chaplain (Rev. E. L. Langton) the company adjourned to the Gloucester Hotel where they were guests of Messrs. De Brunner & Lang Sims at a luncheon during which speeches were made by the Mayor, who acted as Chairman, and who called upon Councillor Wells to make a presentation of a silver cigarette box to Mr. De Brunner to mark the occasion. Acknowledging the gift the latter hoped the

cordiality of the welcome extended to him might be taken as a symbol of the good will extended to them as newcomers to the district.

During lunch orchestral music was provided by a small trio led by Mrs. Delphie Morgan.

## UP-TO-DATE EPISTLES.

We are indebted to a subscriber for the following amusing example of present-day correspondence:—

Dear Sir,

For the following reason I regret I cannot send you a cheque.

I have been held up, held down, sand-bagged — walked upon, sat upon, flattened out and squeezed by the Income Tax, the Super Tax, the Luxury Tax, the E.P.T. Tax, the Tobacco, Beer, Spirits, Motor Tax and by every society, organisation and Club that the inventive mind of man can think of to extract what I may or may not have in my possession for the Red Cross, the Black Cross, the Iron Cross, the Double Cross and every Hospital in town and country.

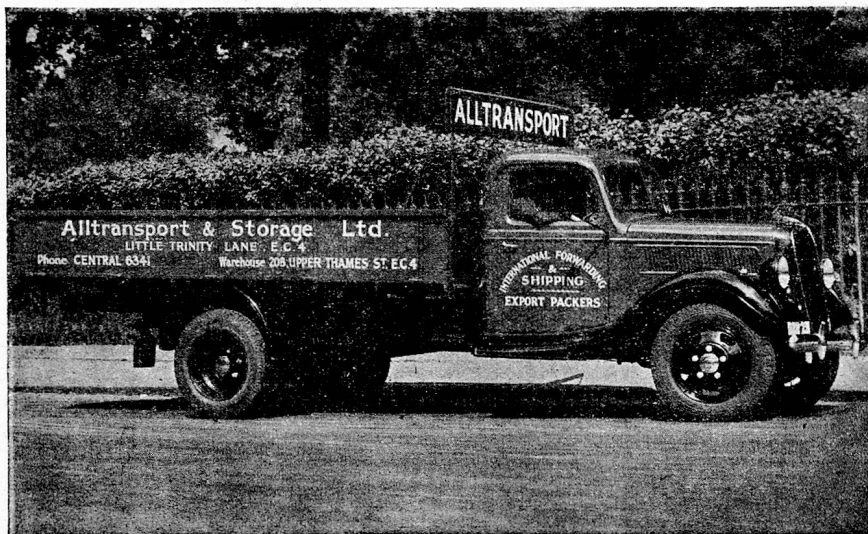
The Government has governed my business till I do not know who owns it. I am inspected, suspected, examined and re-examined, required and commanded, so that I do not know who I am, where I am or why the H!!! I am here still.

All I know is that I am supposed to be an inexhaustible supply of money for every new desire or hope of the human race, and because I will not go out and beg, borrow or steal money to give away, I am cursed, discussed, boycotted, talked to, talked at, lied to, lied about, held up, rung up, robbed and damn near ruined.

The only reason I cling to life is to see what the H!!! is going to happen next.

Yours, X.Y.Z.

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