

650 years Eidgenossenschaft

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possible to grow in the somewhat poor soil of the Swiss plateau a little more cereals and potatoes than in normal times (which proportionately reduces the production of dairy products), coal, petroleum and metals cannot be taken from the ground - for they are not there to be had.

Most of our benzine, for example, comes to us up the Rhine, the only navigable artery that links Switzerland with the Sea. Hostilities on the Franco-German front put a stop to navigation on the Rhine overnight. Italy has kindly placed her railways at the disposal of Switzerland. But our country does not possess the necessary trucks for the long distance transport (Genoa, Trieste ...) of fuel and other raw materials that the barges used to land in the port of Basle. There are technical difficulties that the Swiss authorities are striving to solve, but they involve time and money that is almost beyond the means of a small country.

Therefore, from the 18th September, 1939, Switzerland rationed petrol. The running of private cars has been considerably restricted. The rationing of fuel for heating was introduced almost immediately. The sale of lubricating oils, of petroleum, of the by-products of benzine for use in manufacturing and industry, is also restricted. Finally food rationing cards made their appearance on the 1st. November. As far back as the Spring the Swiss people had received the wise and urgent advice to build up stocks of sugar, flour and macaroni etc. in every household. Poor families alone were exempt from these costly precautionary measures. They received special cards for daily supplies during the first two months of the war. The rations granted by the cards distributed for November, are, indeed, generous enough.. The federal administration of war-time economy, that had taken prudent measures in advance, is optimistic about the future. For the present, the Swiss are not obliged to "tighten their belts." They can buy only one kind of bread now - brown bread - but it is of good quality and there is an unlimited quantity of it. Fresh butter and dripping are also sold without ration cards. The foodstuffs rationed today are - sugar, rice (250 grammes per person per month), rye and barley produces - farinacious products - wheat flour and wheat and maize meals, leguminous products (peas, lentils etc.).

These quantities will be increased for the month of December; but this temporary relaxation does not mean that Swiss supplies of food are definitely assured. A long war, with unpredictable complications, might in the end make the re: victualling of our country precarious. The Confederation can carry out this task only if its bordering states and those possessing the mastery of the seas continue to give passage to food stuffs and the raw materials indispensable to its existence.

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650 YEARS -- EIDGENOOSCHAFT.

It is indeed a great achievement to be a Confederacy of 650 years and to have for so long a period preserved freedom and independence.

To celebrate this anniversary on 1st. August 1941, the cantonal authorities of Schwyz have the arrangements in hand for a worthy celebration to be held in Schwyz. On the 31st July, a Bundesfeier play will be staged. On 1st August Divine Service in the Field will be held for Catholics as well as Protestants. The celebration proper will be held in the afternoon on the Ruetli.

With just pride we look back to the historic events of our country, and we are proud to represent the oldest democracy in the world.

Within two months we are again celebrating our day of independence and once again we would like to remind our members that the Swiss Consulate in Wellington as well as the Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society will be pleased to accept orders for badges for this occasion at 2/- each, as well as Bundesfeier Cards at 6d. each. Please do not delay with your orders. There are only a limited number to arrive.

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

SUGARBEET AND BARLEY:

During 1939 Eastern Switzerland has, for the first time, gone in for extensive cultivation of sugar beet and barley. The cantons of Zurich, Thurgau, Aargau, Schaffhausen and St. Gall with 862 growers delivered 120,000 cwt. to the sugar factory.

For the advancement of the cultivation of Brewers barley in Switzerland a "Swiss Brewers Barley Commission" has been established with Federal Councillor Oehninger in the chair, representing the Farmers Breweries and Malt Factories.

THE DANGER OF THE POTATO BEETLE:

It has been ascertained that during 1939 the potato beetle had invaded 1496 boroughs in Switzerland with a total of 29,300 cases, that is ten times the number of the previous year. Again, the first discoveries of this beetle were made amongst imported seed potatoes. Their first appearance occurred in May, followed by a heavy increase in June and July.

DEFENCE LOAN 1940:

The $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4% Defence Loan of 200 Million Swiss francs has been over-subscribed by 20 Million francs.

OUR KNITTING BEE.

It can hardly be expected to report progress yet of our knitting scheme, but we have already proof that the idea has struck root.

Knitting is an art very familiar to our Swiss women. Their handling of the needles is very different from the Colonial way, and denotes much more speed. Thanks to this fact, we have great hopes for good results. There may be a few, a very few indeed, who are not conversant with knitting; but even they can assist by buying the material and passing it on to a willing and experienced worker.

It is well understood that the knitted articles are intended not only for the Swiss soldiers, but also for the families of "Bergler" who are in need of winter clothing. So, besides socks, balaclavas and scarves, other apparel, especially for children, would also be very welcome.

Please help us to the best of your ability to make this scheme a success. The more you send to Mrs. W. Schmid, c/o. the Consulate of Switzerland, the better she will be pleased.
