

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 7 (1941-1942)
Heft: 5

Rubrik: Swiss news summary

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 23.11.2024

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

exchange goods to the value of £6,300,000, and in the second this sum was to be raised to £8,500,000. The war which has since broken out between Germany and the U.S.S.R. has of course brought these newly established trade relations to nought, and the political question of recognition or non-recognition will now be shelved until some more opportune time. All this, however, does not prevent the U.S.S.R. from sending newspaper or news agency representatives to Switzerland. Thus the Tass Agency has a correspondent in Geneva, who no doubt makes a close study of the Press of the countries surrounding Switzerland and sends home valuable material.

Much more could be said about Switzerland and her present position; these sketchy observations in no way claim to be all-embracing; they are but an outline of existing problems, which may help to create a better understanding of the position of my country.

.
SWISS NEWS SUMMARY.

On the 28th October Radio Schwarzenburg announced that the Swiss Federal Council had passed the ordinary preliminary state budget for 1942 to Parliament. The revenues amount to Sw.Frs. 391,000,000 and expenditure to Sw.Frs. 479,000,000 so that the budget shows a deficit of Sw.Frs.108,700,000. This is the usual budget for the ordinary administration. It does not include credits for measures resulting from the decree of 30th August,1939, which gives special powers to the Council. In this way it does not include credits for military defence and for the provision of labour according to the decision of April 6th,1939.

.
A new federal loan of 300-400 million francs will shortly be issued. As there is still a great demand for investments a good reception is already assured, although the rate of interest will hardly reach 4%.

.
The Finance Department announced in the sitting of the Federal Council of the 14th November that more than Frs. 300,000,000 had been subscribed to the $3\frac{1}{4}\%$ 35 year loan and about Frs. 280,000,000 to the $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ five-year loan.

.
At the Swiss Federal Council's meeting on the 3rd November President Wetter made a statement on the purchase tax. He said Switzerland was the only country which had no such tax up till now, but the income from other taxes was so low that this tax would be necessary for the welfare of the State. The war profits tax would be increased for the whole of 1941, in order to bring the revenue to Frs. 45,000,000 for 1941 and Frs. 100,000,000 for 1942.

.
The Federal Statistical Department has just published a compilation which shows that for the year 1938 the income of the Swiss population amounted to 8,202 million frs. or 1960 frs. per head of the inhabitants. The highest income year was 1929 with 9,470 millions, the lowest 1935 with 7,430 millions. Of the total income of 1938, just about half (4,157 millions) was nett income of dependent producers (employed), 2,227 millions derived from interest on capital and the remaining 1,818 millions from the mixed income from independent producers (employers).

.
Favoured by the beautiful autumn weather the crop of sugar beet is now being gathered in the Swiss plains. The cultivation covered roughly about 10,000 acres, compared with 9,275 of last year. According to estimates about 10,800 railway trucks of 10 tons each and about 9,000 cart loads of beet will reach the only sugar refinery at Aarburg. Although the crop did not come quite up to expectation, the beet, however, gives an increased sugar content which is on an average of between 16-17.5%. This gives the grower a welcome increase in price for his product.

.
At the end of October the Federal Council decided to subsidise the action for assistance to the necessitous population. According to that decision the Confederation bears one third of the costs born by the cantons and communes. The assistance is given in the nature of fuel, tickets to purchase goods at

reduced prices, contribution towards rent and even cash payments. Particular consideration is given to large families or needy families of soldiers, unemployed as well as families and individuals who are in difficulties caused through the war. The cost of this generous assistance to distressed will amount to many millions of francs.

.

For the last 23 years the "Foundation for the aged" has annually made a collection of voluntary contributions to assist old men and women who are unable to provide for themselves and yet do not wish to become a burden to the Public Assistance. The collection last year, in spite of war and dearth, amounted to the record figure of 915,000 frs. to which sum must be added an amount of 2.5 million frs. from cantons and communes. The "Foundation" assisted nearly 39,000 people. Since 1918 it has spent over 48.5 millions in individual assistance, derived from its own funds as well as from public contributions. In this amount, however, the considerably larger expenditure of the Confederation for the care for old people is not included.

.

The necessity of the times has obviously awakened the social conscience of a wide circle of the population. This does not only show itself clearly by the fact that all collections made for purposes of general public welfare meet with unexpected good results, but also in the interest shown towards social questions in general. The presentation of a request by the population of the canton of Zurich signed by many thousands of inhabitants demanding legal measures for the protection of the family is a sign of this new spirit. The Swiss Conservative People's Party, the political main organisation of the Catholics, is at the moment collecting signatures for a federal "Family protection initiative" which is as follows: - "The family as the foundation of the state and society enjoys in its establishment and its continuance the protection of the Confederation. Its rights and requirements are to be more particularly considered in financial, economical and social politics. For the social security of the family the Confederation is to promote family, - child - old age assistance to independent as well as dependent producers, on the basis of compensatory insurances or similar institutions and if necessary, the Confederation is to establish such institutions of its own. The Confederation is entitled to support and to promote the necessary measures in favour of the family in respect of matters of settlement and dwelling arrangements. The execution of the decisions of the Confederation is in the hands of the cantons, but professional organisations, public or private associations may be co-opted.

.

Grievances about the rising cost of living are the subject of many meetings calling upon the Government to exercise a stricter control of prices and distribution; some speakers maintain that the rise in food prices is as much as 75% compared with the pre-war level.

.

The Economic Department has issued regulations regarding the use of liquid fuel, gas and electricity as from 15th November. The use of electricity will be subjected to further restrictions. The lighting of streets will be restricted to give an economy of 30% as compared with the corresponding period last year. Shop window lights and various electric advertisements will be switched off at 20.30 and must not be switched on again before the evening of the next day. The electric power stations have to restrict supplies for this latter purpose, so that a saving of at least 15% will be achieved. The electric power stations will carry out these measures under the supervision of the Department for War Industries and Labour Bureaux.

.

The Federal Alcohol Office announced on the 30th October that owing to the increased difficulty in obtaining alcohol, it has been found necessary to reduce its consumption. As from 1st November the sale of spirits, stone fruit spirits, diluted alcohol, industrial alcohol and spirit for lamps has been reduced to 80% of the average monthly quantity consumed during the period of 1st July, 1939, to June 30th, 1941. Chemists and hospitals will be supplied as hitherto with surgical spirits to the full amount of their requirements. Firms buying alcohol and spirits from the Alcohol Office for purposes of re-sale are to supply their customers within the limits of their present supplies.

.

Radio Schwarzenburg announced that as from the 6th November, 1941, fuel supplies for heating water will be fixed for the various consumers; consumers must adapt their needs to the quantities allotted to them. Supplementary allotments cannot be granted. Where an agreement exists to supply warm water obtained by means of solid or liquid fuel the consumer can only claim water one day in every fortnight.

.

The Department of War Industries and Labour is issuing the third clothing card, under the order of November 13th, 1941, which will be distributed with the food card. This covers the period to 31st December, 1942, and has 15 coupons for children born after 1st January, 1933, and 20 coupons for other persons. Whether more clothing cards will be distributed during 1942 depends on imports of raw material. The previous cards, which were to be valid until 31st December, 1941, will be valid until 30th June 1942, so that both types of cards will be valid during the first six months of 1942.

.

The annual report of the sugar factory Aarberg in the Canton of Berne, shows that this factory produces about half of Switzerland's present sugar requirements.

.

Some years ago the viscose factory at Emmenbrücke near Lucerne tested a process to manufacture wool from wood which gave good results. To-day this factory produces 7,000-8,000 kg. of cellular wool per day, or about as much as 7-8000 sheep will produce in a year. The works in Heersbrugg-Widnau belonging to the same company will shortly open with a daily production capacity of 15-20,000 kg., which amount will be increased by another factory to be erected by Feldmühle Ltd., near Rorschach. The cellular wool serves to supplement the stocks of sheep wool at present in the country. The daily requirements of wool and cotton by the Swiss Textile Industry in normal times is about 135,000 kg. so that even now we are still far from a textile autacy.

.

The shortage of fuel has given a great incentive to coal-mining in Switzerland and new openings or increase of production are planned for the near future. At present Anthracite is mined in the Valais, where 3,500 tons were produced in July. An endeavour is made to reduce the ash content of the Valais bituminous coal (stone coal) by a modern treatment in order to increase its use. Lignite (brown coal) is produced in four mines, whereof the pits of Kandergrund in the Bernese Oberland and Sonnenberg near Lucerne produce about 1,000 tons per month. Near Boltigen and Erlenbach in the Simmental, work of sinking pits which are promising excellent coal is now in progress. Lignite is mined in the neighbourhood of Gpsthalden on the lake of Zurich. Slate coal up to 9,000 tons a month is produced at Tagbau near Ruswil in the canton of Lucerne. Although the home mines produce only a very small percentage of the requirements, yet it is of the greatest importance to some industries, as it enables them to carry on.

.

Towards the middle of October the Swiss radio reported that in the Portuguese ship "Corte Real" which has been sunk a valuable cargo of Swiss goods for export has been lost. The Portuguese Government has declared its intention not to transport foreign goods in future and thus the Swiss Government showed foresight when it created a small Swiss merchant fleet for Swiss exports. Referring to the sinking of the "Corte Real" Swiss postal authorities now announce that no Swiss mail was lost with the ship.

.

Through the torpedoing of the Portuguese steamer "Corte Real" a considerable number of Swiss Watches went to the bottom of the sea. These were consigned to the U.S.A. as well as to other countries of the American Continent. The consignments had a value of several million francs.

.

EVACUATION OF SWISS WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM URBAN CENTRES TO SWISS FARMS, IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

The Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society suggests to Swiss farmers in New Zealand, especially in the vicinity of urban centres, to invite wives and children of fellow-countrymen in cities, to take refuge with them, in case the existence of an emergency is proclaimed by the Government, or even before. If such arrangements between Swiss farmers and fellow-countrymen in cities are