

Address of the Swiss Consul in New Zealand, Dr. Walter Schmid, at the celebration of the 651st anniversary of the Swiss Confederation, by the Local Swiss Group of Auckland, on the 1st of August, 1942

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CENSUS OF SWISS INDUSTRIES: (Berne).

The Federal Statistics Bureau has just published a first book on the results of the census taken of Swiss firms on August 24th 1939. A certain number of changes have taken place since the last census taken in 1929. The textile industry only employed 81,477 workers in 1939 as compared with 115,200 ten years previously. The watch industries also show a decrease, falling from 64,629 to 51,180. On the other hand, the foodstuff industry registers an increase (84,216 in 1939 as compared with 73,691 in 1929), as do also the chemical industry, (22,428 against 18,644), the graphic arts (32,048 against 25,562), the clothing and equipment trades (81,637 against 71,487) and the machine industry (109,128 against 97,173). In the "Transport and Communications" group, railway staffs have decreased (31,220 in 1939 as compared with 36,610 in 1929), while the number of persons employed in transport has increased (cartage, garages, etc. 15,584 against 13,934). The decrease in the number of employed in the wholesale trade (47,601 in 1929 against 44,006 in 1939) is compensated by an increase in the retail trade (138,380 against 124,275). The number of persons employed in banking, insurance and the stock exchange has risen from 24,969 to 28,072. Auxiliary trade services, agencies and representations register a heavy increase (19,541 against 9,512). The number of hotel employees has risen from 126,234 to 134,318.

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NEW RAILWAY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS IN SWITZERLAND. (Berne).

The Board of the Swiss Federal Railways has been obliged to restrict passenger train traffic still further. Owing to increasing shortage of fuel and material necessary to the exploitation and upkeep of rolling stock, the winter timetable which came into force in October 1941 showed a reduction of passenger traffic of a little over 10%, involving a daily average mileage of 10,000 kilometers (approximately 6,250 miles). The new reduction involves a daily mileage of 2,500 kilometers (about 1,625 miles). Further, week-end tickets have been suppressed. These measures have been taken especially to reserve lubricating materials and electric power for industrial uses. However, in order to spare the hotel and tourist trades as far as possible, which benefited greatly from the issue of week-end tickets, holiday season tickets will again be issued as from April 1st. As compared with pre-war conditions, Swiss railway traffic has now been reduced by about 20%. Further, owing to the tyre shortage, it is announced that automobile traffic will also be still more restricted.

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ADDRESS OF THE SWISS CONSUL IN NEW ZEALAND, DR. WALTER SCHMID, AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE 651ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION, BY THE LOCAL SWISS GROUP OF AUCKLAND, ON THE 1ST OF AUGUST, 1942:

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends!

I assure you it is a great pleasure for my wife and myself to celebrate with you to-night at Auckland the 651st Anniversary of the Swiss Confederation. The pleasure is even greater as it is the first time since our arrival in New Zealand to have this privilege, and I wish to express for both of us, our sincere thanks for your invitation. I should also like to take this opportunity of expressing my renewed appreciation to all those compatriots in Auckland, who, since the foundation of the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand, have performed so much good and faithful work, and who are continuing the good work locally, after the Central Committee recently has been transferred to Wellington. Thanks to these efforts, too, we have the pleasure of being together here to-night, on this third celebration of the Swiss Independence Day during the present war.

The first celebration of the Anniversary of our Homeland during this war was on the 1st August 1940. I shall never forget the dreadful months of anxiety immediately preceding that 1st of August. It was then that the almost unbelievable miracle happened and Switzerland remained untouched by the ravages of war, which had closed in at her boundaries. We had no news from Switzerland at that time for a period beginning with the month of June and

lasting until October, with the exception of the monthly Sunday broadcasts which, however, were not always received satisfactorily. But while on this side of the world we were trembling for the fate of Switzerland, the tone of the voice from over there on the air remained comfortingly cheerful. The best show in this direction was made on the first Sunday in the month of July when the Swiss radio announcer opened the programme with the dry-witted and grimly humorous, brief statement: "This is Switzerland speaking. Dear compatriots in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. We are still standing". There was a grim reference to the shocking danger that had been imminent and at that time still was imminent, but at the same time it was the expression of the fearless acceptance of anything the future might hold in store for our country.

A year later the Swiss people were allowed to celebrate another Independence Day of their Homeland, that most conspicuous event of the 650th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Swiss Confederation. A wave of spontaneous, deep-felt patriotism had gripped the nation for the most part of 1941. And when the day of the celebration came we were able to listen on the radio, even in far-away New Zealand, to a patriotic demonstration, coming from the depths of the heart of the whole nation. We heard on the air the tolling of the bells of St. Martin in Schwyz when the people proceeded to the Mass, we heard the sounds of a military parade, and even the roaring of the fire on the Ruetli, and following the momentous speech of the President of the Confederation on the Ruetli, probably the most stirring episode occurred, when the people in all walks of life gathered there, renewed the oath of 1291.

In renewing the oath of 1291, in the words and language of the famous dramatist of the Passion and Greatness of Liberty, Frederic Schiller, these famous verses were no mere recitation. It was a spontaneous, unanimous answer in the name of the whole nation to all the vital questions confronting them. The meaning of that answer was clear to everybody and could be grasped instinctively. When I listened to that episode, I felt my confidence refreshed, a confidence that, with whatever fate the Swiss people might be confronted yet, they would meet it in the uncompromising spirit of the supreme sacrifice. To have this confidence is, for all of us, a great comfort also today, on this third Anniversary of Switzerland to be held during this greatest war of all time.

On this occasion we do acknowledge, in the first place, with gratitude, the good fate which, so far, has been singled out for our country in this tragic period of world history. In the second place we must also acknowledge the obligations of the Swiss people, which are in the main twofold: our obligation towards the country we have inherited, free and independent, from our ancestors, and our obligation towards the world at large.

Considering these obligations we want to make it clear that we take them with a sense of proportion. We well realise the territorial smallness of our country, and that from that fact alone, the material weight of it in world politics naturally is modest. On the other hand, this lack of material weight is no reason for us to acquire an inferiority complex, because there is no truer statement than the saying of the great Swiss historian of the 18th century, Johannes von Muller - "Morally and spiritually the material size of a country is irrelevant".

Morally and spiritually the essence of Swiss history is the fight for preservation of individual liberty, synonymous with human dignity, and local self government including justice by judges of our own valleys and according to our own traditional code of laws.

The birth of Switzerland towards the end of the 13th century was, primarily the result of a fight for the preservation of individual liberty, which is the great common heritage of the descendants of all those people who migrated to the European continent in the early centuries after the birth of Christ. Unfortunately, after having settled down in Europe these settlers almost completely lost their original liberties and Switzerland remained for centuries, far and wide, with few exceptions, the last stronghold of free men.

Further, Switzerland was founded as a free man's land and for the preservation of local self-government, as a reaction to the decaying universality of the European Continent, and the adoption of foreign codes of law. From the beginning of her existence, her efforts were directed against the growing regional despotisms on the European Continent, and later against the adoption of the system of the Roman law. The Swiss people by endless sacrifice of blood and life were successful, in contrast to almost all other continental groups of people, in escaping the process of elimination as free, self-governing men. The free and democratic country of Switzerland in its present day diversity of races and languages remains, in the eyes of the world, a practical example for the re-establishment of European universality.

As regards the future of Switzerland there is only one deduction we can make, when again and again we peruse the pages of her history. The preservation of the democratic way of life was the guiding thought when Switzerland came into existence; the preservation of the democratic way of life is the reason for her existence today. The existence of a Switzerland on another political basis is unthinkable. And indeed no country can boast of a more direct form of democratic government, and at the same time of a more just and efficient political administration. Social justice, for instance, in the modern sense, had an early start in Switzerland and has slowly and surely been progressing. The apparent result today is the reigning of an enviable social peace within her boundaries.

It remains for me to add a few words regarding the obligations of the Swiss people towards the world at large. As a result of the century-old principle of neutrality observed by Switzerland in her foreign relations, Swiss foreign policy can best be defined with the words of America's famous Abraham Lincoln: "With malice towards none, with charity for all". It was a great privilege for Switzerland, that the greatest international humanitarian organisation - the International Red Cross - was founded on her soil by her own citizens. Carrying on the great work of the International Red Cross in this present world crisis, is the International Red Cross Committee at Geneva, which today still is exclusively composed of Swiss citizens, effectively assisted by the voluntary work of thousands of Swiss people and scores of Swiss towns, and last but not least, by millions of Swiss francs voluntarily contributed by the Swiss people. The Swiss government and people consider the financial needs of the International Red Cross as one of obligation in this war.

In addition the Swiss government itself, for the benefit of humanity, and thanks to the universally recognised neutrality of Switzerland, has become an important diplomatic link in this war, between 25 warring nations. The satisfactory fulfilment of this gigantic, difficult and delicate diplomatic task is only made possible for the Swiss Government by its adherence to strict impartiality, loyalty and honesty towards all nations alike.

All these combined efforts, indeed, are the crowning of the endeavours of present-day Switzerland in the fulfilment of her moral obligations towards the world at large."

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SWISS PEOPLE IN COUNTRIES AT WAR:

A report from the Swiss Foreign Office contains the following remarks regarding Swiss people in countries at war:

"The prolongation of this war and its spreading over a larger and larger sphere and the effects of economic and war measures put into force by the powers, are the causes for the increased strain with which the Swiss Diplomatic and Consular Corps are faced, but they are able to fulfil their task in the most difficult circumstances. The Swiss Colonies have fortunately had only a few death casualties to register up to now. In 1941 the Swiss Colony in Great Britain had to mourn five dead and three wounded through aerial bombardments, exactly the same number of casualties as in 1940. Only a very few casualties were reported from other countries.

The thriving Swiss Colonies in Yugoslavia, Greece, East Asia and many other countries have been hard hit economically. Measures have been taken to safe-