

Sundry news

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Napoleon's Army. The Confederation broke up in 1798, but the idea of federation survived the victory of foreign arms. Hardly five years later, Napoleon himself, by the "Act of Mediation" replaced the moribund "Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible" by a new union. After his fall, the independence of the Confederation was formally confirmed and its independence recognised by the Great Powers of Europe.

After the treaty of Vienna in 1815, the inner development continued, and the adaptation to changed conditions was made by the adoption of the Federal Constitution in 1848. The old federation of states was replaced by the Federal state which offered all the advantages of a uniform currency and customs duties, a common postal service, a centralized army and a progressive unification of law, civil and criminal. Above all, a common organ was created for forming the public will and putting it into action.....
(To be continued)

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SWISS ALPINE EXPEDITION.

The members of the "Swiss Fund for Alpine Exploration" have once more organized a Himalyan Expedition. The target of explorations is the frontier territory to the east of Nepal. Those taking part in the Expedition are:-

- Alfred Sutter (head-man) Münchwilen ... Mrs. Annelie Lohner, Grindelwald,
- Dr. Ed. Wyss-Dunant, Geneva ... René Dittert, Geneva.

as well as two alpine guides from Grindelwald, Adolf Rubi and Jakob Pargätzi.

COMMUNISTS IN SWITZERLAND ARE LOSING GROUND.

Communism in Western Europe is losing ground fast. At every election in Switzerland they are losing a large number, if not all, of their seats. This has been the case in the cantons of Aargau and Vaud. In the cantonal elections of the Grand Council of Aargau there were notable changes. The socialists, who hitherto claimed 67 out of 193 seats, lost 5. The communists, formerly represented by two, have lost both seats. The radical Democrats are moving up from 37 to 40 and the Catholic Conservatives moved up from 42 to 44. On the other hand the party of the Farmers and Citizens receded from 34 to 32. The Christian Social Democrats have now two representatives instead of one, and the Independent Party of the Landesring will be represented by 7 members instead of 4. The only other change is the appearance of a representative of the Liberal Socialist (free economist) Party.

The re-election of the Grand Council of the Canton of Vaud has been followed with the greatest interest, not only by the people of that Canton, but by the people of Switzerland as a whole. The question was - "Will the Communists be able to obtain their strong position or will they lose ground?" The answer was given in no uncertain terms. The Communists lost ground, in fact plenty of ground. The 211 out of 217 seats are distributed as follows (the figures in parenthesis indicate seats occupied in the former Grand Council):-

- 108 (101) Radical Democrats ... 38 (35) Liberals ... 31 (27) Socialists
- 19 (41) Communists ... 7 (8) Agrarians ... 4 (5) Independents
- 3 (0) Christian Socialists (Catholic Conservatives).
- 1 (0) Middle Classes.

The rapid decline of Communism in Switzerland follows the declaration by the French Communist leader, Thorez, to the effect that the French Communists would welcome the Russian troops in a conflict between East and West, which declaration was fully approved by the Swiss Communist leader, Nicole of Geneva.

THE NEW MAYOR OF BURGDORF.

Burgdorf elected a new Mayor. In place of the retired Radical Democrat the Socialist candidate, Councillor Franz Patzen, has been successful.

PURCHASE OF 100 PLANES OF THE "VAMPIRE" TYPE.

The purchase of these aeroplanes has caused a great deal of discussion in

Switzerland, because a credit of Sfr.108,000,000 had to be voted; it is to be spread over the span of four or five years. These hundred aeroplanes will be partly constructed in Switzerland under license; the project was finally approved by 90 votes against 6.

DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE IN GENEVA.

Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre, the head of the Federal Political Department, has called a diplomatic conference to be held in Geneva on the 21st of April. The Governments of 69 countries that belong to the Geneva Conventions have been invited. The diplomatic conference will be called upon to revise three existing conventions, namely:

1. The Geneva Convention of the 29th of July for the improvement of the fate of the wounded and sick of the armies in the field.
2. The Geneva Convention of the 29th of July, concerning the treatment of prisoners-of-war.
3. The 10th Convention of the Hague of 1907 in connection with the application of the principles of the Geneva Convention of 1906 relating to warfare on the high seas.

The Conference will propose a new Convention for the protection of civilians in war time.

Up to the middle of March, forty countries have accepted the invitation. Only three refusals have been received, namely, Iceland, Irak and Ceylon.

ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS WITH THE STERLING AREA.

The Federal Council has given its approval to the new economic agreement with Great Britain. It is the outcome of a compromise regulating for a further year the movement of merchandise, and the monetary relations with the whole sterling area, including South Africa. Great Britain was endeavouring not to make any further gold payments on account of the discrepancy between the two balances of payment, whereas the Swiss concentrated their endeavours particularly in the field of the tourist trade and the export industries.

Somewhat more than half of the goods to be shipped to the sterling area of the so-called essential class, whereas the remainder will be so-called traditional export goods such as watches and embroideries which are considered less or non-essential.

Switzerland is not putting any shackles on British exports and British products can be shipped to Switzerland without any hindrance. For the period between the 1st of May 1949, until the end of April 1950, a quota of Sfr.78,000,000 has been earmarked for the tourist trade to Switzerland. The quota per head has been raised from £stg.35 to £stg.50.

COST OF LIVING.

The index of the cost of living stood at 162.5 as of February 1949, compared with 100 in August 1939. This is a reduction of .4% as compared with the previous month, probably due to the price reduction in eggs and meat.

FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE ELECTRICITY SITUATION.

The lack of rainfall has compelled the Federal Office for Electricity to take more severe measures in order to bring about a reduction in the consumption of electricity. Householders are allowed to make use of the boilers only once a week. All advertising and illumination of shop windows by electricity is prohibited. Industrial enterprises have to reduce the consumption of electricity by 60 to 70% as compared to the previous year. These measures have not been without the expected repercussions and ten thousand workers became unemployed as a consequence thereof.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY IN LONDON.

An Anglo-Swiss Society has been founded in London. Mr. Philipp Noel-Baker, the British Minister for Commonwealth Relations, has been elected president. This is the English counterpart of the several Anglo-Swiss societies in Switzerland.

VISIT BY THE LORD MAYOR OF MANCHESTER.

Miss Kingsmill-Jones, the Lord Mayor of Manchester, has visited, with an

official delegation, the City of Zurich. This is in return to the visit to Manchester by the President of the City of Zurich which took place toward the end of last year.

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We remind readers that the "AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAGE OF THE N.H.G. 1949" will be held from June 30th to July 3rd in Interlaken. Any compatriot from New Zealand who will be in Switzerland at that time is entitled to attend the meetings. Swiss societies who are desirous of proposing subjects for discussion are invited to present their requests to the "Auslandschweizerwerk der N.H.G." in Bern; the closing date for such applications is April 30th, 1949.

NOTICE TO FARMERS.

The Consulate sometimes receives requests from intending emigrants from Switzerland to supply addresses of farmers who are desirous of engaging farm hands, and at the same time, providing accommodation. The Consulate would like to know who is desirous of engaging new labour and interested farmers are asked to give their names to the Consulate of Switzerland, P.O. Box 386, WELLINGTON. C.I.

PESTALOZZI CALENDARS.

As in previous years, the popular Pestalozzi Calendars can again be ordered. The cost is as follows:-

German for Boys ...	4/3d	German for Girls ...	4/3d
French for Boys ...	4/-	French for Girls ...	4/-
		Italian ...	4/-

These Calendars can be highly recommended and when ordering, please add Subscription fee and state type of Calendar required.

O B I T U A R Y.

Friends and acquaintances of Mrs. G. M. Cattin have been deeply shocked by the news of her tragic death in the air-disaster of March the 18th last. Although Mrs. Cattin was not a Swiss by birth, reference to her in this paper is most fitting since she was one of the most active and generous members of the Swiss Community in Wellington.

When her husband was still alive, the Cattin's Jewellery Shop in Willis Street used to be the popular meeting place for every Swiss where a warm welcome was always awaiting us. After Emile's death, some five years ago, Mrs. Cattin continued the friendship and hospitality of her husband towards us and we could "come and go" as we pleased at the place of business and the home.

We have indeed lost a sincere friend in Mrs. Cattin and it was a tribute to her popularity and high esteem that her funeral was attended by a very large number of friends and business acquaintances. The New Zealand Government was represented by the Minister of Finance (the Hon. Mr. Walter Nash). Miss. F. Schmid and Mr. E. Fretz of the Swiss Consulate also were present.

We shall always remember her.

H. S. Wellington.

All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary:

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