

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1944)

Heft: 1021

Rubrik: Prepaid subscription rates

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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY P. F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

EDITED WITH THE CO-OPERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE LONDON COLONY.

Telephone: Clerkenwell 2321/2.

Published Monthly at 23, LEONARD STREET, E.C.2.

Telegrams: FREPRINCO, LONDON.

VOL. 26 — No. 1021.

LONDON, FEBRUARY 25th, 1944

PRICE 6d.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

In the course of a conference given on January 20th, at Zurich, Federal President Stampfli stated that there were no definite indications as to the nature of the economic and social problems that would have to be faced after the war. However, the authorities were not entirely unprepared and agriculture would continue to remain our principal concern. As regards economic prospects it would be some time before new commercial treaties could be negotiated and could become operative. The creation of opportunities for employment would be our immediate anxiety and over one milliard francs had been earmarked for this purpose. A revision of the factory law, over thirty years old, was under consideration and old age and dependants insurance would have to be established as a Federal measure.

* * *

The war has brought a very considerable increase in the number of civil servants employed by our government. The ordinary administrative personnel has risen from about 42,000 to 49,000 while an additional 10,000 have found work in the special departments necessitated by war conditions.

* * *

The notion and introduction of Summertime which has never been popular amongst our agricultural population has been definitely discarded by the Federal Council.

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The Swiss Postal service to the regions north of Rome has been resumed; it is being operated via Munich and Innsbruck.

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Rumours of an early resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia are still persisting though no tentative announcement from official circles in Berne has so far appeared. The generally well-informed correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" reports the following on January 26th: "Switzerland is the only neutral State in Europe that has never resumed diplomatic relations with Moscow since the

Russian Revolution, although many times during the past twenty years public opinion in favour of doing so has found expression in Parliamentary discussion. The Federal Council's refusal to take action was always supported, however, by a considerable majority in the Swiss Parliament, particularly during the long years of the late Dr. Motta's tenure of the Foreign Ministry. Motta may be said to have created an anti-Russian tradition in his country's foreign policy. The present demand for establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, though not universal, is certainly stronger than ever before. There is no doubt, however, that a decision by the Federal Council to reopen diplomatic relations with Russia would be endorsed by the greater part of the population.

Cantonal

The Federal statistical department has published some extremely interesting figures showing the extent and present distribution of wealth in Switzerland; these figures are based on data secured by the collection of the capital levy enacted to partly cover the cost of mobilisation (Wehropfer). The total net value of all the property so taxed is 21,645 million francs or 5,071 frs. per head of population. The individual cantons exhibit noticeable variations from the average. Baselstadt leads easily with Frs.9,573 while the canton Uri is at the bottom of the list with only Frs. 2,073 per head. Above the average are Geneva, Glarus, Zurich, Schaffhausen, Thurgau and the canton Vaud; somewhat remarkable is the fact that Glarus claims more riches than Zurich. The large canton Berne with its vast agriculture is slightly under the average while the "poor" Ticino beats the industrial Solothurn. Appenzell A.Rh. possesses more than twice the wealth of Appenzell I.Rh. Towns with over 100,000 inhabitants average over Frs.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que la prochaine

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu mardi, le 7 mars au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, le diner commencera à 6h. précises.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal. Démissions.
Admissions. Divers.

Monsieur André Duprat nous parlera de

"La Résistance française et la Reconstruction de la France."

Les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire pas plus tard que le 4 mars auprès de M. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Sec., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2.

LE COMITE.