

Swiss reject system change

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **7 (1941-1942)**

Heft 7

PDF erstellt am: **24.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942939>

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national importance just now, as by reason of the present intensification of agriculture about 122 kilos (approximately 240 lbs.) of vegetables are produced per capita in Switzerland as compared with 70 kilos (about 137 lbs.) before the war.

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SWISS REJECT SYSTEM CHANGE.

(Berne..) - By 519,000 votes to 250,000 the Swiss people rejected today a Socialist proposal for direct election of the Federal Council, which is the equivalent of a Cabinet in most other countries. The vote also rejected an increase of the Federal Council from seven to nine members.

That the Swiss people, the most democratic in Europe, should reject this proposal is regarded as of more than passing interest. On the face of it, direct election of the government would seem to be the very essence of democracy.

The main argument used against the Socialist proposition was that most European democracies have disappeared in recent years but the Swiss form of government has subsisted chiefly because it was unlike them. Thus the Swiss Government will continue to be elected by the National Council (Parliament).

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SWISS CUT ELECTRICITY.

(Berne, Jan. 25) - Beginning today further restrictions are to be applied in Switzerland on the use of electric power for lighting and heating. The measure is explained by the continued drought, which is reducing the output of hydro-electric plants.

The last restrictions were applied in November, 1941, since when the situation is described as having steadily grown worse.

Public lighting was then reduced 30 per cent; henceforth it will be reduced 50 per cent. The lighting of show windows may not continue after 7 P.M. The use of luminous signs is entirely prohibited.

In homes, schools, offices and cafes the electric light must be reduced by at least one-third compared with the corresponding period last year. No electric power may be used for heating.

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SWISS ACT FOR 20 NATIONS.

Special Division set up to care for Belligerents' Interests.

Berne, Jan. 22. - Since Switzerland has undertaken to represent the interests of some twenty belligerent nations, including the United States, it has been necessary to recruit a special personnel and set up special offices. It was announced recently that this organization was now complete.

The Division of Foreign Interests is divided into five sections, with fifty-five officials holding executive ranks. Its head is M. de Fury, formerly Swiss Minister to the Netherlands. The subordinate personnel is large and is likely to increase. Moreover, additions to permanent staffs have been made at the legations in London, Berlin and Rome.

The Swiss point with pride to the fact that all countries concerned have expressed satisfaction with the work of the division. In addition to its other duties, it negotiates the exchange of wounded prisoners.

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SWISS PATRIOTISM.

Helvetia's reports on the many happy gatherings of our compatriots on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the founding of the Swiss Confederation, I have read with great pleasure. As one who enjoyed the celebration in Auckland, in its humble and sober form, with the opportunity it gave to make new acquaintances among our compatriots, all singing those old patriotic songs, I too want to support the suggestion of some members of the Swiss Benevolent Society for more frequent gatherings in different localities.

To what has already been written, I should like to add this thought: Though we