

Sundry news from Switzerland

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We shall always remember with emotions of appreciation and friendship, tinged with the sadness of parting, the last farewell which was given us by some of our compatriots who were able to be present when the "Ruahine" left the wharf. New Zealand offered a most beautiful sight when the ship gradually moved out to the open sea, and we hoped that it would not be the last time our eyes could behold the lovely Waitemata harbour and the Queen City of New Zealand.

We arrived in London on September 10th after a sunny and pleasant trip. After a few days we went to Switzerland by air. The flight was great and seeing the Homeland again a revelation. The whole country inspired us as a paradise. Everything is on a very high standard and in addition we had excellent weather for weeks on end. For two weeks I was very busy at the Palais Federal and then went to the Tessin for a rest, but after that I shall again be on the "war path".

Mrs. Schmid and I have not had an opportunity to write to anybody in New Zealand, so if you hear complaints regarding our silence, please explain to them that we had been so busy, making it quite impossible. We still think a lot of your lovely country and the nice and genuine friends.

Please convey our kindest regards to everybody who may inquire what has become of us.

WALTER SCHMID. "

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Prof. Dr. Paul Keller has been appointed general manager and president of the Swiss National Bank in succession to director Ernst Weber, who will retire at the end of March 1947 having reached the age limit; the vice-president, Dr. Paul Rossy, has declined the office. Prof. Keller, who comes from St. Gall, has never been a member of the Board, but is an expert on monetary questions; he has been the head of many Swiss delegations for negotiating commercial and financial agreements and is well known in London.

Since the beginning of the last parliamentary session the councillors of our two chambers are adorned with earphones which transmit simultaneously translations of speeches delivered in French or German.

The imposition of fresh taxes seems to develop into a perennial institution. The war profits tax justified by the abnormal conditions during the last few years will give up the ghost at the end of the year as far as the name is concerned. The substance, however, will not be lost and a "supplementary" Wehrsteuer will be levied for the next three years. Personal incomes exceeding 25,000 francs p.a. will have to forfeit an additional 10% to the State, if over 50,000 francs the subtraction reaches 20%; firms and limited companies are allowed a return of 8% on the invested capital before the liability for this additional tax becomes operative.

The canton Uri is burdened with a disbursement of Frs. 300,000 being its annual contribution to the Federal old-age insurance fund. The Regierungsrat found this levy unbearable but in order not to jeopardise this great social measure proposes to introduce a special law for an additional tax raised from death duties and donations.

An Anglo-Swiss society has been formed in Zurich for the purpose of maintaining, developing and strengthening relations with this country in every sphere of activity. Prof. Dr. Max Huber, president of the International Red Cross, presided at the inaugural meeting; Prof. Dr. H. Straumann was elected president by acclamation. In the beginning the seat of the society will be at Zurich, but will later on move to whatever location determined by the residence of future presidents. The aims are tentatively stated to be: the arranging of lectures and debates by prominent British exponents in the fields of literature, arts, science, economy, etc.; establishing contact between members of the society and British visitors to Switzerland; organising exhibitions, concerts and theatre "tours"; compiling a register of addresses for the exchange of visitors and students of both countries. Among the patrons are the names of Chs. R. Paravicini, former Swiss Minister in London, and Dr. William E. Rappard.

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

In his address at the official opening of the Fiera Svizzera in Lugano, Fed. Connc. Petitpierre stated that the aim of our generation would be the maintenance and development of social peace. A collective system which eliminated private enterprise and transferred the whole of responsibility for our economy to the State would have serious consequences and result in the gradual impoverishment of our nation.

After Winston Churchill spoke in the session chamber of the Bernese Grosse Rat and subsequently apologised for his indifferent French, one of the Councillors, on being asked whether he understood him, is reported to have replied, "Extremely well, as he spoke the pure Francais d'Emmental."

A further convoy of 300 Swiss repatriates from the Russian occupied zone of East Prussia has arrived at Basle; they are spending the first few weeks at home in a quarantine camp at Rheinfelden.

The Basle court had to deal with another fatal motor accident. A motorist travelling at an excessive speed on the road from Reinach to Basle endeavoured to overtake a furniture lorry and noticed too late a horse-drawn cart in charge of a farm labourer travelling in the same direction. The cart was knocked over and the farmhand died soon afterwards. Three years' imprisonment, the temporary loss of the driving licence and a fine of 200 francs was the sentence (!).

In the canton Vaud a government proposal to establish a chemical laboratory as a separate annexe to the University at Lausanne was negatived by the electorate by a small majority; the cost of the necessary ground would have entailed the expenditure of 1½ million francs.

The depredations of the unknown foreign squatters which a "Times" correspondent has now discovered to be a "panther trio" are continuing along the upper Rhone valley without hindrance; in the Turtmann valley a shepherd has lost in one night eight sheep.

In the meantime the cantonal police have appealed to hunters far and wide for assistance and parties from other parts of Switzerland are joining in the drive. Meets and hunts are being arranged similar to the fox hunts in this country.

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SWISS LEXICON.

A new Lexicon has been edited from a syndicate of scientists and publishing houses. This edition has been compiled with a view to eliminate all prejudiced ideas. This Lexicon consists of seven volumes and can be ordered from Encyclopedic-Verlag, Munstergasse 4, Zurich.

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