

Swiss news summary

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **6 (1940-1941)**

Heft 8

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

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with scenes from Swiss history. Since these tablets show paintings on both sides, there are 154 scenes in all which have been carefully renovated on several occasions.

The other wooden bridge, the Spreuer or Mühlen Bridge, dates back to 1408. It was in the year 1611 that the Council of Lucerne decided to decorate this bridge with paintings in a similar manner as had been adopted with the Kapell Bridge.

The individual paintings were ordered and paid for by the patrician families of Lucerne and permission for their respective display was granted by the Council of Lucerne. While the coat of arms of the head of the house usually appeared at the bottom to the left, those of his wife were reproduced to the right and occasionally the two amorial designs were combined.

During the earlier renovations it sometimes happened that the verses underneath the pictures were changed and that the persons at whose expense the restoration was made, added their coat-of-arms to those of the founders. The most recent renovations on both bridges have been executed strictly on the basis of historical data.

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In their meeting of January 3rd., the Federal Council adopted a Decree authorising a special Defence Levy on all Swiss subjects who have emigrated since August 1939, in cases where a sum exceeding Frs. 20,000 was taken or is being taken abroad.

After discussion of the economic situation, the Federal Council has adopted the following resolutions:

- 1) To do everything in its power to foster the inland production, in view of increasing import difficulties.
- 2) To introduce compulsory labour organisation.

The first big job to be tackled is that of the extension of arable land and the meeting of labour problems arising out of it. The decision to introduce compulsory labour will chiefly affect unemployed persons who after passing a medical examination can be used for draining and cultivating the soil.

The Confederation is prepared to contribute between 30 and 50% of the cost of such works. Additional expenses will have to be met by land owners and the boroughs.

Towards the end of September 1940 the number of Wireless licence holders in Switzerland was assessed at 634,248. During December 5000 new licences were taken out: and the total increase during 1940 amounted to 40,888.

Since 1941 a fresh increase has been registered bringing the total number of licensees to 643,698.

A report of the Department for Public Economy, concerning old age pensions and social services recently came up for discussion by the Federal Council. The Government have a sum of Frs. 18,000,000 at their disposal for such purposes, covering the period up to December 31st. 1941. From then on up to 1945, the funds at their disposal will not exceed Frs. 12,000,000. This sum represents in part the income under the Old Age Insurance scheme and Frs. 4,500,000 are expected from the administration of the alcohol monopoly. The Federal Council have invited the Department for Public Economy to submit proposals as to how best use could be made of the available funds.

Customs Revenue: Customs Revenue in January 1941 show with 13,6 Million Francs a reduction of 6,8 Million Francs as against January of the previous year. In the same way the loss in December 1940 compared to the previous year amounted to 12,3 Million Francs. The comparison between the yearly income of 1939 and 1940 shows a reduction from 305,3 Million to 230,6 Million respectively.

On the 11th March the Department for Public Economy ruled that no new shops must be opened.

The Federal War Transport Department will soon be able to place another ship at the disposal of Swiss Overseas Trade. The ship in question is the "Villa Franca", which will sail towards the end of March/beginning of April, and will carry cargo via Lisbon.

The price of liquid fuel is to go up again. As from March 17th Petrol will cost 82 centimes per litre as against 75 centimes. The higher price will be enforced in the case of Petrol heating oils, etc. The maximum retail price has still to be fixed.

On March 3rd. the Swiss Wireless announced from Beromünster that Dr. Wetter, President of the Federal Council, would speak from the Ruetli on August 2nd. The speech is to be broadcast on all Swiss wavelengths.

National Councillor Robert Grimm has recently retired from the Presidency of the Socialist-Democratic Party of the Canton Berne, a position which he has held for the last 30 years. His successor is Ernst Reinhart. Mr. Grimm holds an important position in the Federal Committee charged with the supply of fuel.

At the beginning of February, Swiss papers published a Swiss Red Cross appeal for woollen underwear to be placed at the disposal of the medical services of the Swiss Army.

The Central Committee of the Association of Women's Rights met in Berne on March 16th. The Committee decided to address itself to the Federal Authorities on the grounds that during the mobilisation for the defence of the Country only men had been called upon, whereas women had been completely overlooked.

Though diplomatic relations do not exist between our country and Russia a trade agreement has been concluded after many weeks of protracted negotiations. The exchange of goods is to amount to over six millions £ sterling in the first year on each side, but it requires a good deal of imagination to visualise regular traffic under existing conditions. We shall export tools, instruments and machinery against cereals, oil products and cotton.

A proposal to restore the free and unrestricted distillation of wines and spirits has been rejected by a national plebiscite which took place on Sunday, the 9th inst. The voting was not as convincing as expected, there being 452,076 against and 301,658 in favour of the change. The monopoly enjoyed by the State will therefore continue.

A slight reduction in the existing rations will come into operation on April 1st. and will effect among other foodstuffs, rice, flour and oil. At the same time restaurant ration cards will be introduced, i.e., a holder of an ordinary ration card can have the whole part of it exchanged against 160 restaurant coupons; two of these coupons will have to be surrendered for a lunch or supper consumed at a hotel or restaurant.

The mail and goods service between the Ticino and Italy seems to be somewhat capricious, a delay of ten to fifteen days being the rule if any. Telephone communications are evidently under German control; when the Italian Customs at Como are rung up the reply is "Hier Zollamt Como." Consignments of fruit and other Italian produce usually arriving through the Simplon have been held up.

A case probably unique in Swiss marine affairs came before the English Court of Appeal. It concerned a charter party in connection with one of the many Greek steamers in the service of the Schweiz. Rederei A.G. For a neophyte it is difficult to follow the intricate arguments which deal with a disputed point of jurisdiction. The Swiss concern was the loser to the tune of nearly £38,000; a full report appeared in 'Lloyd's Gazette' March 5th.

The municipality of Zurich has decided to use tramcars for food transport in the early mornings so as to economise petrol.

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SWISS DANCE:

A fine patriotic effort in support of the Kaponga queen candidate was made by Swiss residents when well over £100 was raised at a dance. An orchestra was engaged and dance music was also played by a Swiss orchestra comprising Miss T. Engelberger (piano), Mr. A. Engelberger (accordion) and Mr. F. Imhoff (saxophone and clarinet). Extras were played by Mrs. M. Sattler and Misses Doreen and Tillie Engelberger. Piano duets were played by the two blind musicians, Messrs. Stuart Gordon and Bobby Martin. Swiss yodelling songs were sung by the Misses D., F. and F. Engelberger and Miss Margaret Zimmerman. Messrs. J. Kaiser and L. Schicker were masters of ceremonies. A waltzing competition, judged by Mr. Jack Hooker, was won by Miss Florrie Bailey and Mr. Purvis, with Miss P. Gardner and Mr. L. Schicker second. Four Monte Carlo dances were won by Miss Tipler and Mr. Dernel (red and black), Miss H. Schicker and Mr. W. Hermann (travelling), Mrs. Luond and Mr. Fluhler and Mrs. Nicholson and Mr. Thorne. A competition for a framed picture valued at £2 was won by Mr. D. Rooke, with Miss E. Mulligan second. Miss June Thurston, the queen candidate, appeared in Swiss national costume and sang "Please Give Me a Penny." Mr. J. L. Chamberlain thanked all who had helped to make the dance a success.

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NEW MEMBERS:

The following compatriots joined our Society as members recently:

- Mr. Charles Schicker, Lichfield
- Mr. W. Froelich, c/o Ch. Schicker, Lichfield.
- Mr. J. Fischbacher, c/o Alb. Bernhard, Tokoroa.

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A D V E R T I S E M E N T S :

MR. P. CATTIN, Te Kauwhata, "Scintilla" Wine, Fruit & Honey.
 MR. G. KERLER, 477 Karangahape Rd., Auckland, Prams, Wickerwork, Toys, &c.
 MR. E. CATTIN, 19 Willis St., Wellington, Jeweller and Watchmaker.
 JOHN STEINER, Junr., Tahuna Rd., Morrinsville, for 1st. Class Clover Honey.
 JOHN BUTLER, Butcher, Tariki, Taranaki, for varieties of Swiss Sausages.
 When in New Plymouth, visit L. LEUTHARD'S Hygienic Dining Rooms.
 OTTO G. FISCHER, of 4 Silver Rd., Epsom, Auckland, S.E. 3, has been for over 30 years a Specialist in Continental Sausages, etc. Deliveries throughout New Zealand.

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