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650th ANNIVERSARY.

MESSAGE BY THE KING.

The following is the text of a telegram from the King to the President and the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation:-

"I desire to convey my warm congratulations on the auspicious occasion of the 650th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation and my best wishes for the continued peace and prosperity of the Swiss people in the future. The Swiss Confederation was founded by the free choice of its members, whose independence has been so valiantly defended by the Swiss people throughout the centuries and has long been a vital part of European civilisation. The acts of freedom and harmony between the different races so successfully embodied in the Swiss Confederation are fully shared by the peoples of the British Commonwealth, and I am confident that this community of ideals has contributed powerfully to the ties of sympathy which have so long existed between the Swiss peoples."

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APPEAL TO THE SWISS ABROAD.

The defence measures taken to protect the independence of Switzerland and to save the country from the scourge of war have caused considerable expenses. The debts of the Confederation have increased in such a degree that it has become necessary to pay them off without delay. For this purpose the Federal Council has decided to raise a single contribution, a sacrifice for the national defence. Every person domiciled in Switzerland has to make a contribution, amounting for corporate bodies up to 1,5% and for natural persons from 1,5 to 4,5% on the net assets.

The decree regarding the national defence sacrifice provides also for voluntary contributions to be made. The Federal Council wants to afford those who desire to give more than they have to, or those who, though not subject to this sacrifice, nevertheless want to prove their attachment to the homeland, the opportunity to have this wish fulfilled. They were also thinking in this regard of Swiss citizens living abroad.

The Federal Council knows that many of our compatriots abroad have been severely hit by the repercussions of the war and that a sacrifice could not be expected from all of them. But those of