

Swiss news summary

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SWISS NEWS SUMMARY.

The Swiss Press on the Blockade-situation: Radio Schwarzenburg announced on the 3rd October that the "Neue Zuercher Zeitung" in discussing the British restrictions on goods for Switzerland says that these restrictions are evidently the result of circumstances, and that Britain wishes to prevent goods from reaching Germany. The "Waterland" a Catholic paper, says these restrictions may not be too stiff as Great Britain has said Switzerland's needs will be taken into consideration. The "Berner Tagvacht" a socialist paper, says that if the pressure is not too severe, Switzerland may well be thankful for her lot. Sacrifices will be required. The "Bund" of Berne says that the major powers have recognised Switzerland's neutrality and special situation. Switzerland has always insisted on free trade and now further restrictions have been placed on Swiss economy. It is reassuring to note that some import of raw materials will be allowed but it is disquieting to think of the effect on employment, if industry should come to a standstill through lack of raw materials. We trust there will be comprehension of this in London. The way for negotiations between the two friendly countries is open. The eyes of Switzerland are on London.

The problem of prices is at present receiving great attention from the authorities and the public. The Federal Commission for Economic Research finds that the rise in prices is mainly due to factors of foreign origin, and in particular to the increase in transport costs. Part of the rise is due to financial influence. It is only right that a rise in salaries should follow the rise in prices in the proportion that this is due to monetary factors. The rise in prices amounts to some 30% since the beginning of the war and would justify an increase in salaries from 10% to 15%.

Prices and wages were discussed at a meeting of the Federal Council on the 30th September and it was generally felt that the poorer classes and big families should receive either a bonus from their employer, or State support, in view of the increased cost of living. It was decided not to increase milk prices for another six months, and in order to maintain the present prices of butter and cheese, not to change the tax on the turnover until 1st February.

At a further meeting on October 3rd, the Swiss Federal Council discussed Government subsidies to needy persons. It was agreed that the prices of cereals grown in the mountains should be increased by Frs. 1. per 100 kg for cereals grown at altitudes between 801 and 899 m and by Frs. 2. for cereals grown above 900 m. The Council decided that up to 30th November working hours would remain as at present. Between then and Christmas work would also be done between 14.00 and 17.00. All offices would be shut between 25th and 28th December and on 1st, and 4th January, 1942. From the 5th January the lunch hour would be reduced to half an hour. Until further notice offices would be closed on Saturdays.

The Federal Council is to increase subsidies to the unemployed from Frs. 11,000,000 to 17,000,000 to Frs. 18,000,000 and to increase subsidies to small enterprises. Employers will be entitled to increase employees' salaries in proportion to the increased cost of living.

The Regierungsrat of Canton Zug has sent a suggestion to carry out emergency legislation for the benefit of the poor to the Kantonsrat. Three quarters of the cost are to be borne by the Canton and one quarter by the Bezirksbehörden.

On the 14th October the regulations of the Federal Bureau for Wartime Food supplies concerning food rations for November were published. During the summer the rations had been somewhat reduced. The rations for November comply with cold-weather demands. The ration of pulse is now 250 grammes for adults and 125 grammes for children; fat and oil coupons will now permit the purchase of an additional 100 grammes. The butter ration, however, will be cut by 50 grammes so that the consumer will obtain only an additional 50 grammes of fats. The cheese ration remains unchanged, except that for a 100 gramme cheese coupon 150 grammes of full-cream cheese can now be obtained as compared with 125 grammes previously. Newly-born infants and

young mothers will be in a better position. As from 1st November newly-born children will obtain a children's ration card.

Swiss Customs revenue totalled Frs. 14,425,000 in September 1941. This amount exceeds by Frs. 16,000 the figure for last September. However a decrease of about Frs. 65,000,000 during the first nine months of this year is shown as compared with the corresponding period of last year.

On the 4th October an appeal by the Swiss Federal Railways to unload and load goods at the earliest possible convenience, - weekends included - was broadcast. There is a shortage of trucks owing to increased autumn traffic and to the fact that vital goods imported to Switzerland are now being transported from the frontier in Swiss trucks.

It was announced on the 6th October, that the blackout in Switzerland will begin at 22.00 and last until 05.00 instead of at 23.00. This regulation comes into force on and after the night of Friday 10th to Saturday 11th, and will remain so until further notice.

Lighting in Zurich will be restricted to one-third during the winter months in order to save electricity.

The Society for Historical research in Berne recently celebrated its hundredth anniversary.

On September 28th, the congress of Swiss women's societies met in Romanshorn; 140 local organisations were represented.

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ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR GIFTS OF WOOLLEN WEAR FROM NEW ZEALAND FOR THE SWISS SOLDIERS' RELIEF FUND.

From Madame Charles Fleury, Bassecourt: 24th August 1941: "It is with very great pleasure that we have received your package. This will do a great service in these hard times through which we are passing. We thank you for it from the bottom of our hearts. With kind regards."

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From Mrs. Frederick Frey, Basel, Baerenfelderstrasse, 15. "Reverting to your letter which you have recently written to my husband and the nice useful woollen wear which you have sent him for our little Rutli, I wish to thank you very much. What joy when I opened the package! I cannot thank you enough. I am very glad to have this in these hard times, as I don't own much. I only regret that I have nothing for our little son Walterli, everything is getting too small for him. He is now getting one year old and I hope some day he will be a brave soldier. Again in the name of my husband and myself, many thanks and may your action be rewarded a thousand times. With kind regards."

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From Fhr. Heitz Max, Mitr. Kp. IV/98 Zuerich, Hammerstr. 101: "We have received for our 8 months old baby boy some woollies, among which was a woollen singlet which through you has found its way to Switzerland. For this gift we thank you most heartily as it has proved to us that although far away abroad there are fellow countrymen who feel close to the Homeland. Such loyalty affords us soldiers new strength and joy to carry on at our posts and if necessary, to fight - may, however, our destiny spare us war. In order to show you the recipient of your gift, I am mailing you enclosed a photograph of our tiny "Eidgenoss" and we hope that this little photograph will please you as much as your gift has pleased us. Please receive again our heartiest thanks and kind regards from the Homeland."

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SWISS RADIO BROADCASTS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY.

The monthly Sunday broadcast in December unfortunately could not again be well received, and the New Year Broadcast, as also the First-Sunday-of-the-Month Broadcast in January were not on the air at all in New Zealand.