

Sundry news from Switzerland

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of hostilities, and must, theoretically at least, be kept under constant military guard.

The Swiss Government, however, has so far desisted from placing the internees in camps and much latitude is accorded them, for which the internees are duly grateful.

The evades are free to leave this neutral country as soon as the frontier opens.

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THE SWISS SPOTLIGHT
(by Pierre Beguin).

One could hardly deny the fact that under the pressure of circumstances the individual rights guaranteed to Swiss citizens by the Constitution have been somewhat encroached upon.

Freedom of the press has been limited by the exercise of a control. Not a control over home policy but on journalistic activity that might compromise our neutrality. It is also forbidden to start publishing new papers or reviews without the permission of the government; this in order to forestall any attempt by foreign propaganda to mingle with the Swiss press.

Moving picture films must pass censorship, so that foreign propaganda shall not be able to falsify public opinion which must be formed from purely objective sources of information.

Furthermore, certain extremist parties which were a danger to the security of the State were placed under a ban, while public meetings of a political character were to be watched by police forces especially prepared for their work. And though this has been the case, we must admit that the freedom of the press, the freedom of association and assembly must be somewhat restricted, while in normal times these freedoms are without any limitations whatsoever in Switzerland.

For some time now numerous voices have been lifted in different parts of the country asking that these fundamental constitutional liberties be restored again without delay. This movement of opinion has grown to such dimensions that the Federal Council discussed it in one of its recent meetings. The Federal Council decided in fact that the matter shall be referred to the Parliament's Full Power Commission, who is to meet soon, and that the government will make a statement before the Federal Chambers on the subject at the time of the next session opening on Monday, June 5th. It seems, however, that the government does not intend to modify its present policy, as the circumstances which made present restrictions necessary, still exist. We still live in a beleaguered fortress in which public order must be kept at all cost as long as all danger from outside has not subsided. It must be admitted that these restrictive measures have given a great deal of trouble lately. The parties placed under ban have reformed under other names. As for the censorship it is much more indulgent than formerly.

In short, the limitations placed upon certain aspects of public life are not nearly so obnoxious as heretofore. But despite all this, it is a happy sign that public opinion should demand from time to time the full restoration of the citizen's rights as set forth in the Constitution. This proves that we do not become accustomed to their even temporary suppression, and that we remain firmly attached to those bindings which are the foundation of our public institutions. It provides a chance that these rights will be restored to their full order without delay, just as soon as circumstances permit.

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SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

The Papal Nuncio in Berne, Archbishop Bernardini, led the Diplomatic Corps at the funeral of 37 people who were killed in the accidental bombing of Schaffhausen, during the recent raid. More than 20,000 people witnessed the Requiem Mass at St. John's Church and the subsequent burial.

The first of May was celebrated throughout Switzerland in a quiet and dignified fashion. In Berne an address was given by Dr. Max Weber while at Zurich and Schaffhausen several orators spoke to the workers. In the latter place the mayor emphasised the people's will to defend our independence and expressed their sympathy with the workers of all countries in their fight for liberty and social justice, especially those who had declined to capitulate to tyranny and dictatorship.

The War Food Office has decreed a third meatless day as from the 2nd May for all hotels and restaurants; vegetarianism is therefore the order of the day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday fish and sausages excepted if available. Butcher shops are open only on Tuesday, Friday afternoon and Saturdays.

SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS AND RAW MATERIALS IN SWITZERLAND.

In a public appeal on the 16th June, the President of the Swiss Confederation said:

"The seriousness of the supply position and the lessening possibilities of importing foodstuffs, make still more intensive tilling of the soil an essential duty. Faced with a shortage of agricultural man-power, our farmers - both men and women - must, in the months to come receive more active help than ever before. Last year about 127,000 auxiliary helpers had to be man-powered and directed to agricultural work, and served, on an average, 45 days. In addition to that, several thousand auxiliary workers were man-powered for agricultural improvements, clearings and other constructional work of national importance."

At the present moment it is not possible to get the overseas shipments of foodstuffs and raw materials, brought to Lisbon by Switzerland's own merchant navy, through to Switzerland. The present position is therefore also precarious as regards the supply of raw materials.

NEW DEFENCE MEASURES IN SWITZERLAND.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army, who recently had to mobilise additional troops for guarding the frontiers, in an order of the day of the 15th June, pointed out:

"War gradually approaches our frontiers and this situation compels me to mobilise more troops as a precautionary measure. The good will and courage of the best troops, the best armaments and the strongest fortifications are of no use if we are not ready in time. It is better to be at our posts too early than too late: it is wise to watch every post and not to neglect a single one."

AIR TRANSPORT IN SWITZERLAND.

The Pilatus airplane works near Stans, Switzerland, have constructed a prototype for the future Swiss air transport plane, which is especially suited for mountain regions. Tests have proved entirely satisfactory.

WOOL.

Sheep raising in Switzerland is very unimportant. However, as a result of the almost complete cessation of wool imports, and the shortage of meat, the number of sheep owners in Switzerland, in the last year, has increased by 1,000 and now totals 33,000. The present number of sheep is 293,700 which is 8,135 over last year's figure. The 1943 wool clip was 44,000 lbs. higher than 1942, and amounted to approximately 440,000 lbs. It has also

been possible to improve the quality of the clip. Wool imports during the war have almost stopped, and in 1943 covered only 2% of the pre-war needs of the country. Although wool reserves have been made to last by mixtures of substitute textile materials and strict rationing, they are now at an exceptionally low level, and if British navicerts are not available in the near future, unemployment in the wool industry cannot be avoided in the coming winter.

The annual domestic output of artificial wool is approximately 22,000,000 lbs., representing one quarter of the country's requirements of wool and cotton. It is not planned to substitute artificial wool completely for natural wool and cotton, but at this juncture the domestic production of artificial wool and silk are the only reliable sources which enable Switzerland to keep the wheels of the textile industry turning, and the nation properly clothed.

BUTTER.

The Annual Report of the Swiss Farmers' Union mentions a new process for the manufacture of butter. For 10 years research work has been going on in Switzerland for the construction of machinery capable of manufacturing butter more quickly by means of the use of carbonic acid, but experiments failed to bring the desired practical results. However, Mr. Senn, Professor of Agriculture at Geneva, has now invented a process of this kind which fulfills all the requirements for the mass production of butter. A machine which has been installed in the premises of the Laiteries Reunies, Geneva, has given very satisfactory results. Cream can be converted into the best quality butter, shaped and wrapped, in 4-5 minutes.

INTERNATIONAL FAIR AT BARCELONA, SPAIN.

Switzerland, Sweden, and the USA were this year the only foreign countries taking part in this exhibition which opened on the 10th June 1944. The Swiss exhibit covered just over 5,000 square yards. The main Swiss exhibits were watches, machines, textiles, chemical products and a special book show.

SWISS INDUSTRIES ANNUAL FAIR AT BASLE APRIL/MAY 1944.

The annual exhibition of Swiss manufacturers and producers, this year covered approximately 50,000 square yards. 333,000 visitors were registered. The date of next year's Fair has been fixed for April 14/24, 1945.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES REFERRING TO SWITZERLAND.

We should like to remind members herewith, that the Swiss Consulate in Wellington would be very pleased to receive any clippings of items referring to Switzerland appearing in the local press. We assume that our compatriots noticed, that quite a lot of space was given in different newspapers on the occasion of the celebration of Switzerland's 653rd Anniversary of its foundation. In normal times, some newspaper agency could be given the task of collecting clippings from the New Zealand newspapers, but during the war this service has been discontinued and the Swiss Consulate depends on the help of the Swiss community in New Zealand for the collection of articles on Switzerland.

The Swiss Consulate would be very pleased indeed, if our compatriots would watch their daily papers for such articles, however small, and forward them to Wellington.