

Housing shortage in Switzerland

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **11 (1945-1946)**

Heft 10

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942845>

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HOUSING SHORTAGE IN SWITZERLAND.

Although permits to build 13,333 dwellings were issued in Switzerland during 1945, only 8,412 were constructed, according to official statistics. Despite the shortage of housing, not more than 13,000 dwellings are expected to be erected during 1946 because of the deficiency of bricks and other building materials.

The housing shortage in Zurich is so acute that hundreds of families are temporarily accommodated in barracks, huts, and schools, and some have moved into semifinished houses. (Foreign Commerce Weekly.)

SUNDRY NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND.

Following the resumption of diplomatic relations with Russia the Federal Council has appointed Col. Hermann Flückiger to the post of Swiss Minister in Moscow. He is a lawyer by profession and for many years had an extensive practice in Biel as a notary. In the army, after having been in charge of a frontier brigade, Col. Flückiger was advanced in January 1941 to the command of the third division from which he retired at the end of December 1944. The colonel emerged into prominence by his successful chairmanship last September over the Russia-Swiss military commission in regard to our treatment of Russian refugees and internees, the felicitous outcome of which largely paved the way to the present friendly relations with the Soviet Union - relations which in 1924 had been broken off as the sequence of an unpleasant incident. Col. Flückiger was born in 1885 at Barmen (Berne) and has never been in the diplomatic service. The Russian Minister to Switzerland, Mr. Anatoly Kulaschenkow, is a young diplomat of 34 years who has already held important posts in Italy, Persia, Turkey and Greece.

At the delegates' meeting of the Swiss liberal party held at St. Gall, Federal President Kobelt praised the distinguished services of Federal Councillor Petitpierre, our foreign minister, to whom in the first instance we were indebted for the re-establishment of normal relations with Russia and which thereby removed the first obstacle in the way of a possible co-operation with UNO. Federal Councillor Petitpierre pointed out that Switzerland was the only state in the constitution of which neutrality was a fundamental article; he did not believe that we could be asked to change our constitution in order to become eligible for UNO.

The first of May manifestations organised in all Swiss towns passed off peacefully, large crowds attending everywhere. The banners and streamers displayed the usual slogans such as "Increase in Wages", "Old-age Insurance", "Equality of rights in Switzerland", "Participation in UNO" (Geneva), and "Break off with Franco regime" (Berne). Federal Councillor Nobs addressed the crowd at Berne and expressed the hope that Switzerland would be able to join the world security organisation without surrendering her neutrality and without taking part in future quarrels among nations. He also dwelt on the unsatisfactory state of the Federal finances. The last war had cost our country about five times as much as the previous one; in 1913 the assets of the Confederation amounted to about 100 milliard francs which in 1920 was converted into an indebtedness of 1,2 milliard rose in 1920 to 1,5 milliard and stood now at 8,5 milliard francs.

The bathing establishment, boathouse and restaurant Fürigen near Standsstad has been destroyed completely by a fire that broke out early on Tuesday morning, May 14th.

Four election rounds were necessary at the Landsgemeinde in Glaris until the requisite votes were obtained for the new Landammann Dr. Rudolf Stüssi; he takes the place of the former Ständerat Dr. Mercier. Several minor proposals were sanctioned without opposition.

Of all the Swiss towns Berne disposes of the smallest number of cinemas, namely eight. Zurich takes pride in 29, Geneva 20, Basle 15 and Lausanne eleven.