

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Band: - (1939)
Heft: 941

Rubrik: News at random

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by suction from a specially constructed and hermetically sealed tank which was deposited last June in the Thunersee near Därligen; the wheat after four and a-half months' immersion proved to be in excellent condition. This war measure was originally suggested by National Councillor G. Duttweiler.

* * *

Among the stewards of the mined Dutch liner "Simon Bolivar" were four Swiss: Oskar Hoffmann, Bernard Torgler, Otto Kilcher and E. Imhof; they all lost their papers and personal belongings. The first three were wounded and are being cared for in an English hospital.

* * *

Sentences ranging from two to twelve months imprisonment are announced by the Federal Penal Court on five members of the "Volksbund" for conspiring against the security of the state. Two only were present in court, the other three having taken French leave in good time. This is another scurrilous circle directed by the notorious Leonhardt from somewhere across the border.

THE SWISS ELECTIONS.

(The "Economist" 18.11.39.)

Switzerland is one of the best-governed countries in Europe. Its cantons and communes make up a democracy about which we in England know only too little. Switzerland is a Confederation. Its Federal Parliament consists of a Nation Council, elected by the whole male population, and a Council of States, to which each canton sends two representatives — with several half-cantons each sending one. These two bodies are elected every four years; and since they then join together as a National Assembly to choose the seven Federal Councillors who will govern the country for the next four years, the fact that the latest Swiss national elections took place on the 29th of last month is a matter of no mean interest when democracy and dictatorship are at war just over the Swiss borders.

From the beginning of the war Switzerland has been fully mobilised to defend her neutrality. This

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means, since Swiss women do not vote, that a very large proportion of the electors were on duty on the frontier when the polls were held. Some people in Switzerland were in favour of automatically returning the old Chambers, without any voting, for another four years. It was in fact agreed that this should be done in eight cantons, including Lucerne, Vaud and Ticino, and also in one of the Appenzell half-cantons. In the other Appenzell, in Uri and the Unterwaldens, formal but unopposed voting took place. Out of 187 members of the National Council, 57 of those elected in 1935 were automatically returned or replaced this autumn; they included 21 Radicals, or *Freisinnige* as they are actually called by the German Swiss, 17 Catholics and 11 Social Democrats.

These, Radicals, Catholics and Social Democrats, are the three main political parties. They had 48, 42 and 50 deputies, respectively, in the National Council elected in 1935, and Agrarian or Peasants' Party coming next with 21. The main executive body, the Federal Council of seven members, was then composed of four Radicals, two Catholics and one Agrarian, with the Social Democrats more or less occupying the rôle of official Opposition.

Each of the bigger parties had its young and progressive enthusiasts in 1935, Young Liberals, Young Catholics and Young Peasants, who were ready — especially, for instance, the Young Catholics of Lucerne — to co-operate with the parties of the Left. The Young Peasants, led by Dr. Hans Müller, were strong in the canton of Berne, and succeeded in 1935 in returning an independent group of seven deputies to the National Council. Two other unprecedented events took place in the 1935 voting, mainly in the Canton of Zürich. One was the election of a group of seven deputies representing the *Landesring der Unabhängigen*, the other the election of Dr. Richard Tobler. The seven deputies of the *Landesring* were the followers of a certain Herr Gottfried Duttweiler, a successful pioneer with American business methods who had established the so-called "Migros" big stores, and claimed not only to stand for the interests of consumers, but also for the amateur element in politics. Dr. Tobler, on the other hand, was the leader of the *Nationale Front* which, with many cries for Swiss regeneration, preached anti-Semitism and anti-Marxism and praised both the domestic and foreign policy of Herr Hitler; from the spring of 1934 the