

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

Early on August 1st the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Stampfli, broadcast an official address to our people of which the following is a summary in English:

"In solemn gratitude we remember to-day the foundation of the Swiss Confederation. We are filled with reverence and gratitude to the kind fate which permits us to spend this day in our valleys, villages and cities in the peaceful way to which we are accustomed, and to know them unharmed after nearly five years of war. We also feel respect and gratitude for the men of the Rütli who laid the foundations of our State, made them firm and strong enough to defy all storms throughout six and a half centuries, and permitted us to remain a haven of peace, and freedom, to this day.

Finally we bow in deep respect and emotion before the powers that be, when so many peoples—who, like us, wished to continue to enjoy the blessings of peace—have been swept into the horrors of war.

The foundation of the Swiss Confederation was laid at a time which had much in common with the present day. It was full of uncertainties and dangers. The Federal Covenant of 1291 recalls the evils of that time, which brought together the people of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, and made them swear to assist one another with advice, with their lives and property, within and without the valleys, against anybody who might inflict violence, vexation or injustice on them, or on one of them; should there be differences between the covenanters themselves, then no foreign judges, or such who are themselves murderers or have received orders from foreign rulers should judge them, but the wisest among the covenanters must settle the differences in such a way as they deem constructive.

There is no doubt that the first Federal Covenant represents an interesting political document, whose significance in terms of time and space reaches far beyond the conditions for which it was actually intended. The refutation of any foreign rule and the mutual obligation for assistance against any threat were its main purposes. Its advantages were so manifest that one after the other, further cantons and townships joined

the union. Thus a community of states was formed which, despite its occasional lack of unison, was always able to master differences in such a way that it was able to conserve its independence and freedom against the outside world. Even though the Confederation, in contradiction to the principle of freedom on which it is based, proceeded to enlarge its domain by creating new relations between ruler and ruled, and even by annexing territories with a different language, the political forces entwined in the old Federal Covenant of 1291 were strong enough to prevent the disintegration of a state structure arranged in such multifarious ways.

In this way the Confederacy developed in the course of the centuries into the multi-lingual state which is often considered a model abroad, because it has succeeded in uniting peoples of different languages in mutual respect and recognition of equal rights, in peaceful collaboration for the welfare of their common Fatherland. With this example alone, Switzerland has achieved a place of honour among the nations.

The liberation from alien rule, and protection against any threat from without, had not yet been safeguarded by the Federal Covenant. Because these claims were directed against powerful masters, they had to be fought for and defended in a number of fierce and dangerous battles. That was the heroic age of the old confederates. Made wanton by their military successes, they were tempted into using their strength not only in defence of their own freedom and independence, but to lend it to alien princes for their power politics. This deviation from the basic idea of the first Federal Covenant led to the defeat of Marignano, which caused the state to adopt that neutrality which, for four centuries, has been the decisive factor in our foreign policy. Thus the neutrality of Switzerland is not an accident, but an obligation imposed on her by history, and nobody has the right to doubt its inviolability. That is why we may expect that in this war, too, our neutrality, carefully observed by us, will be respected to the end.

But neutrality does not mean the abandonment of integrity and soldierly spirit. These two qualities bequeathed to us by our ancestors, are the indispensable prerequisite of our national defence. They must be maintained unweakened until the cessation of hostilities if we wish to be prepared against surprises. The obligation to mutual assistance, which was so emphatically formulated in the Federal Covenant of 1291, has acquired a wider meaning through the centuries, expressed in the motto: "One for all; all for one". This appeal to solidarity has become our motto in all efforts for the common good and in social policy. Hardly an important social scheme has been put into practice without reference to the social obligation arising from the Rütli spirit.

In the present time, too, when as a result of shortages and the high cost of living, many of our fellow-citizens have to contend with growing anxieties, the motto of the men of Rütli shall more than ever be our principle. By mutual consideration, and by holding back our own demands, by solidarity and a spirit of sacrifice towards our fellow-citizens, we can contribute much to the conquest of internal difficulties and to the maintenance of social peace.

At a time when so many nations have suffered great calamity as a result of war, our will to help must not be limited within our national frontiers; because a gracious fate has kept the horrors of war from us, we have a duty to render active assistance to its unhappy victims outside our country in accordance with a noble tradition, symbolised in the founder of the International Red Cross, Henri Dunant. In conformity with this tradition, we try not only to relieve pains and heal wounds, but also to work for the avoidance of unnecessarily cruel forms of warfare. With the terrible weapons of war provided by modern technical development, it is horrible enough in itself. All the less must it be accepted silently that war, as an instrument of unbridled passions should be misused for operations which could never be justified by military aims. What is to remain after these violations of the eternal laws of humanity, but an unquenchable hatred which will for a long time poison international relations?"

Federal Councillor Celio, in a message addressed to the people of the canton Ticino, said that if the belligerents had respected our neutrality so far it was

because our own Government for its own part had in all circumstances honoured neutrality. "Our neutrality, moreover, is not merely negative; Switzerland has made herself the impartial protector of the interests of all states, supported Red Cross efforts and extended hospitality to the most threatened of war victims."

* * *

Of all the Swiss colonies in Europe, Dublin, Stockholm and Berlin seem to have been the only important centres where the first of August was officially celebrated. This is what the "Irish Times, August 2nd," says about our National Day at Dublin:

"The 653rd anniversary of the Swiss Confederation's foundation was marked in Dublin by a reception of the Swiss colony by the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, M. Benziger, and Madame Benziger at the Legation in Clyde Road. About forty persons of Swiss nationality gathered and heard an address by M. Benziger, in which he mentioned the imminent canonisation of the Swiss national patron, Brother Nicolas de Flüe, who after having been the head of Government and military commander of his native canton, became a hermit, and in his later years was called upon to be the counsellor of the governing body of the whole Confederation during the very critical period of 1481. Switzerland is thus probably the only country to have a political leader as her patron saint."

In Berlin, at the invitation of the Swiss Minister, over four hundred compatriots attended a patriotic manifestation when a telegram expressing loyalty and admiration was sent to the Federal Council. In his speech our Minister emphasized the courage and determination displayed by our compatriots, in face of apparent dangers, in remaining faithful to their vocations and meeting together to re-affirm devotion and neutrality on this our National Day. At Stockholm, the Swiss Minister dwelt on the remarkable similarity of efforts and outlook which characterised the destiny of Sweden and Switzerland.

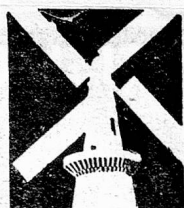
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The Federal President, Dr. Stampfli, attended the anniversary celebration of the battle of Dornach. In his official speech he referred to some of the mistakes our forefathers had made. He felt sure that jealousy and discord were now a matter of the past and the authorities could rely on everybody's co-operation in their endeavours to distribute the burdens of war (neutrality!) evenly. The Government was entitled to complete confidence and trust as in the interests of the country it was not always desirable to give a public explanation of decrees and limitations imposed. "Let us be careful to guard against foreign suggestions and whispering campaigns; in most cases they were expressions of a propaganda which does not serve the interests of Switzerland but has completely different purposes."

* * *

According to a Reuter message from Berne the lengthy negotiations between the special Swiss Trade Delegation and the Board of Trade have resulted in a new economic agreement with the British and U.S.A. governments. To judge from the official communication issued in this country matters are very much the same as before; this is what the Ministry of Economic Warfare stated on August 15th:

"In view of the measures already taken by the Swiss Government to reduce Swiss exports to Axis Europe, particularly of war material, His Majesty's



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Government and the United States Government have informed the Swiss Government that the current facilities through the blockade shall continue."

Slight changes in the existing economic agreement with Germany have been ratified by the Federal Council; it has been prolonged to December 31st. Switzerland will supply the Reich with fruit and cattle; on the other side the previously arranged coal deliveries will be continued(!).

Cantonal

One of the most imposing funerals of recent years was enacted on August 10th, at Berne, when the late Colonel Rud. von Erlach was laid to rest. General Guisan and all the corps commandants and divisional colonels attended in person apart from members of the Federal Council.

Mr. Otto Walther, founder and president of the well-known publishing firm Walther A.G., in Olten, died at the age of 55; he represented the local Catholic party in the Solothurn Grosse Rat as well as in the National Council.

A short time ago an exhibition was opened in Basle to commemorate the fact that a hundred years ago the first railway track on Swiss territory was handed over to traffic. It was the tail end of the line Strasbourg-Basle. The novelty created a great deal of distrust in Basle, which then only had 25,000 inhabitants. Fortifications were extended and a special railway gate was erected which was carefully closed and locked at night. Although the length on Swiss soil was only 1,900 metres it could boast of the fact of being the first railway track of the world to connect one country with another.

As may be remembered, a few days after the unfortunate bombing of Schaffhausen by American aviators, the American Minister Harrison handed to the Federal Council a cheque of one million dollars. It has now been arranged between the two governments that the total sum of compensation, which yet has to be calculated by a special commissioner, Prof. Dr. A. Bohner, shall be paid in Swiss francs in order to prevent the National Bank having to take over some more frozen assets. According to private estimations the total damage may amount to forty million francs. The actual fixing, however, is considerably complicated by the fact that Schaffhausen's economy has suffered great loss of raw materials which at present are irreplaceable, particularly in the textile industry. The question as to how far the government of the U.S.A. are prepared to replace the destroyed stocks of raw materials not by money, but in kind will eventually play a most important part in future discussions. This question is for the Swiss department of supply of raw materials of the utmost importance.

Political disagreements amongst the socialists have led the small section in Appenzell A.Rh. to forsake the Swiss Socialist Party and to become identified with an independent group styled "workers and peasants" party.

An assistance committee has been formed in the canton Vaud in order to provide all possible help and reconstitution to the French part of the village St. Gingolph. A subscription list has been opened. The

place was looted and burnt out by a German military detachment as a reprisal against a raid by Savoy maquisards during which members of the garrison were killed. We make no excuse for reproducing in full the dismal description published in the "Daily Express, July 26th," from a local correspondent:

"The Germans have finished with St. Gingolph now, or nearly. They have sacked it, burned it, pillaged it, looted it, killed its citizens and left it for dead.

On Saturday some Germans were killed there by Maquisards from the hills. On Sunday the S.S. came to take revenge.

Over the town to-day thick smoke-clouds rise, and near the church, in which French and Swiss peasants prayed side by side, flames are roaring from buildings not yet burned out.

Swiss firemen have received German authorisation to enter France and protect the church, but formal orders have been given that they must not try to put out fires.

The Germans intend that this village shall be utterly destroyed. It was only to humour Mayor Chaperon, who risked his life amid flying bullets to cross the frontier from the Swiss side to discuss the matter with the Germans, that the church has been saved.

A woman told me that after the Partisan attack on the Germans she knew there would be reprisals.

She dressed her three children in their best clothes, packed some food, locked the door and made for neutral territory just across the bridge.

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Before they reached it bullets started to fly and they had to jump into the Morge River, which separates France from Switzerland.

Holding her three children above the water she managed to reach Switzerland, though the bullets splashed in the water close by.

Another old woman, aged 78, told me that she stayed in her little home till the Germans came and threw her out. She said they smashed the chairs and tables, windows, pictures on the wall, everything she had in the world. Then they poured paraffin over the house, and threw a torch through the window.

Another woman, who was keeping a little homestead going by digging in the fields, said: "I have nothing left in the world. My husband died in a German prison, my son is a prisoner.

"The Germans have taken everything, including the jam I had just made, and the eggs I put away for the winter. Then they set the house alight, with me still in it.

"I tried to put out the fire and they started to shoot through the windows. So I escaped through the back door and waded through the river to safety."

Mayor Chaperon, the only man allowed to cross the frontier and negotiate with the Germans, told me today that when he first crossed into France the Germans were firing on everybody, and he was afraid he would be killed before reaching the German officers.

He tried to get them to agree that Swiss property would go untouched, but nevertheless ten houses belonging to Swiss people have been destroyed.

"I spoke with the S.S. officer in charge of the destruction," said the mayor. "He told me that he was going to dynamite all the houses so that not one building would be left to mark what was once St. Gingolph.

"The Swiss Consul at Lyons has made an urgent appeal that all Swiss properties should be marked with the Swiss Cross, and we hope this will save twenty houses from destruction. But I have grave doubts."

The mayor was stunned by what he had seen. He would not speak about the number of bodies he had seen, but he admitted that the Wehrmacht were shocked at the way in which the S.S. had acted.

The last refugee from the destroyed town has just arrived here on the arm of a Swiss who crossed the frontier to lead her in.

She was an 80-year-old woman, who was seen wandering among the ruins, ignoring the S.S. troops, who have now restarted plundering the last remaining dwellings.

She was all in black, and over her shoulders she carried a scythe, the only article left to her by the fire.

At the Hotel de France, where Germans were killed by the Maquis on Saturday, the S.S. are killing stolen pigs in the dining room.

More lorries have arrived from Thonon and the plunderers are piling them with furniture, crockery and linen.

The priest, Father Rousillon, who was arrested in the presbytery, which was afterwards set on fire, has, according to a German officer, "not yet been shot."

But one refugee saw him "brutally dragged in his cassock to the street and forced along at the point of a bayonet. Blood covered his face."

Four Swiss were yesterday allowed to cross the frontier to bring back the body of Francois Bonnaz,

aged 70, a Swiss citizen who was killed in his kitchen in the presence of his family.

Today the wrecked streets are empty, except for German troops hunting in the smouldering ruins.

Yesterday several bodies were still lying on the pavements. This morning these have disappeared.

Lorryloads of S.S. arrived early this morning, and after Mayor Chaperon had spoken with the officers, the population on the Swiss side were asked to close all shutters as the Germans intended blowing up what little remained of the town.

This is now being done.

The number killed in this mass pillage and murder orgy is still unknown. Of a population of more than 700 only 500 have managed to reach safety.

Swiss people were screaming from their windows at the Germans to stop shooting at women and children. But the S.S. continued to fire on everybody who was not in German uniform.

Practically nothing is left of what was once a flourishing township."

Sympathy throughout Switzerland is widespread. The Federal Postal authorities have granted temporary free postal service to and from the whole of the village and even hard-hit Schaffhausen has sent Frs. 3000 to the Mayor of St. Gingolph for helping the homeless.

* * *

The world renowned health resort for tuberculous sufferers, Leysin, commemorates these days the seventieth birthday and fortieth anniversary of the professional career of its real founder, Professor Auguste Rollier. Rollier is the actual discoverer of the curative power of the altitude sun for tuberculous people. As one of the first he recognised that tuberculosis affects the whole body and that to cure it the whole body has to be exposed in carefully applied doses to the altitude sun. The "method Rollier" which for healing not only uses the sun, but also utilises the spiritual and bodily strength of the invalid in play and work, quickly conquered the world. His "school in the sun" for tuberculous children and his clinical workshops in which patients are appropriately occupied and, last but not least, his international academical sanatorium where students and professors can continue their studies, have cured innumerable people and given them new hope.

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The large canvas known as "Le Joueur d'Echecs," painted by Louis de Meuron has been presented to the town of Schaffhausen by the Conseil Communal of Neuchâtel.

The harvest of apricots in the canton Valais has exceeded all expectations, over four million Kg. having so far (middle of August) been marketed in our country.

On the Calanda and in the forest of the Aletsch in the commune of Ried-Mörel in the Valais, extensive forest fires have raged recently. They could only be extinguished with the assistance of hundreds of civilian and military fire fighters. Particularly devastating was the fire in the Aletsch district, where the Aletsch forest, which eleven years ago was declared a national preserve for the protection of nature, was for some time threatened. This is the highest cembra-pine (Alva) forest in the Alps. By cutting broad paths and with the assistance of nine motor pumps (of which four were from Berne) which only by strenuous efforts were brought up to this over 6000 feet altitude, was it possible to prevent damage being done to this preserve. As it was, about 90 ha with some trees thousands of years old were destroyed and it will take over a hundred years until these scars are healed.

Army

Recent developments in the theatre of war seem to be responsible for a good deal of nervousness and tension in our military circles as is evident from the Order of the Day issued to our troops on August 1st by General Guisan. Here is an English version :

"Soldiers, we recently commemorated the anniversary of Dornach. Soon we shall celebrate that of St. Jakob. The 1st August reminds you of the founding of our country. Such retrospects are of value. We should know the deeds of our ancestors and honour their memory as examples of courageous and clear bearing in difficult times, when faced with an enemy superior in numbers and strength. You, however, are particularly worried about the present and near future. At present the soil of our ancestors has not been violated. You no doubt have difficulties in your daily life, but they can be surmounted and are really modest compared with the sufferings of other nations.

Five years of peace in the midst of a Europe engulfed in war are an invaluable possession. You know the burdens imposed on you—hundreds of days of service, according to age group and branch of service. Is this too high a price to pay for our continued freedom? As to the future, of what avail would past sacrifices be, if you do not hold out to the end of this testing time? In my last Order of the Day I stated that the necessary measures would always be adapted to the existing situation, and that consideration would be given to the work vital to you and to the country, in so far as national security permitted. This has therefore been done. Some of the troops raised in June have been released and sent back to their homes. The war has, however, not yet reached those areas or that phase which might entail the greatest danger for us. There may be even more urgent alarms ahead of us. We shall, perhaps—who can say?—have to take up arms soon in considerable numbers, or have a general call to arms as in September, 1939, and May, 1940. If, therefore, I order certain relaxations in our measures, these should never mean any slackening of effort on your part. The hour of alarm may sound tomorrow. A steady stream of new weapons is being supplied to you to meet this hour, for which we have to prepare untiringly up to the end of this tragedy. From year to year they are more numerous and more modern. You may be proud of their perfection. These weapons, however would be useless if your morale, zeal and faith did not remain unimpaired. You have to-day the advantage of knowing your duty and obeying an unequivocal command. If your life is demanded to-morrow, your family would know this sacrifice was not in vain. Can anyone in our world say the same? Therefore, Swiss soldiers, on this 1st August, to all those who surround you and whom you protect, to all those who are fighting and suffering, show you will fulfil your instructions faithfully to the end and remain worthy of your privileges."

There is, however, no confirmation of the news diffused by an irresponsible agency that all the Alpine passes have been closed and sealed.

Military courts have been busy during the last few weeks according to Reuter and other dispatches but there is no means of checking such trials as the Swiss Radio, usually omits any reference. A private, Hermann Vincenz, a Grisonnois, was sentenced to death for communicating to a foreign power technical information about our defences. At another court-martial held on August 10th no less than twenty-four spies and informers were sentenced to various penalties ranging from death to imprisonment. The "Times, August 15th" correspondent cabled the following report from Geneva :

"A Swiss court-martial has passed sentence of death for giving away military secrets and for spying on the national defence system on a Swiss soldier named Heller, of Basle, who was employed on the German railways. On the same charges one foreigner and one Swiss were sentenced to imprisonment for life, and one foreigner and two Swiss were given sentences of from three to fifteen years' imprisonment. In their absence a Basle man named Bader was sentenced to death, one foreigner was sentenced for life, two women received sentences of from 10 to 12 years, and one Swiss soldier received a sentence of three years. Most of the accused worked on the German railways or were connected with them."

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Slight damage and casualties, none fatal, were caused in the village of Morgins (Valais) on August 6th when bombs were dropped by German planes attacking French resistance forces in the adjoining Val d'Abondance near the Lake of Geneva.

* * *

The press censorship in which the Army Command has the final word has been severely criticised on several occasions. Accredited British and American reporters lodged a formal protest at Berne against their cables dealing with the events of July 20th having been "blocked". Most of the Swiss dailies comment that these grievances are justified. Another complaint deals with the ban on the showing of foreign films. As a consequence reels depicting the Normandy invasion cannot be exhibited whilst the German film illustrating the Dieppe Raid was distributed to all Swiss cinemas and only withdrawn when the public signified their disapproval in no uncertain way.

Traffic

Here is a survey taken from the 'Railway Gazette, August 4th,' giving the latest traffic results of our railway

system:

"After the substantial decrease in transit traffic between Germany and Italy experienced by the Federal and Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Railways as a result of the change of conditions in Italy in July, 1943, an increase in traffic of this type through Switzerland in both directions has been noticeable since last February. The International Red Cross is responsible for a substantial proportion of the railway transit traffic through Switzerland, which consists, in the main, of full wagon loads of food parcels and other items for prisoners of war of all nationalities.

The report for 1943 of the Swiss Federal Railways shows that the profit and loss account closed with a favourable balance of fr. 391,407, which was entirely absorbed in respect of depreciation in arrears on the invested capital.

As far as the general traffic position was concerned it is stated that the "boom" experienced in previous years showed a substantial decline in 1943; working surpluses were obtained only in the first four months of the year and in July. It is further stated that the reduction in the favourable balance was due, not to a decrease in working receipts, but to the heavy increase in working expenditure mainly caused by the larger staff and higher cost of materials. Compared with 1942, passenger receipts increased by 9½ per cent., and goods receipts decreased by 2.6 per cent. Total working receipts rose by 2.3 per cent., but total working expenditure was greater by 9.4 per cent."

* * *

To prepare their own crew for the Rhine steam ship traffic, which, it is hoped, will experience a new impetus after the war, the Steamship Company in Basle (Reederei A.G. Basle) has again passed out from their training ship last year forty-eight young men as sailors. There was also a course for marine officers.

Economical

The war has revived the primitive custom of exchange of goods to an unexpected extent. Recently a great exchange was thus concluded between Switzerland and Turkey: Switzerland supplied Turkey with watches and other precision goods and these goods were paid

for by Turkey with hazelnuts. The outcome of this unusual transaction was that the very scanty oil ration could be increased for some months, at, however, an increased price.

* * *

Based on definite figures the results of last year's harvest were recently published. The year 1943 was a good farmers' year. The grain harvest resulted in 5¼ million quintals of which 3½ million were bread cereals; of these alone production had increased by half a million quintals over the previous year. Potatoes produced a crop of 18 million quintals or four million more than in 1942. The cultivation area of sugar beet which was 23 per cent. more than before gave an increase of 7 per cent. only owing to the drought and the ravages of the cockchafer grub. Poppy and rape seed, the native oil plants, were increased by a seed production of nearly half to 51,000 quintals and tobacco amounted to 20,000 quintals. Kernel fruit (apples and pears) with 9.7 million quintals almost reached the record result of 1922 and the stone fruit was also above the long standing annual average. The labour in the vineyards was rewarded with a good average result of 712,000 hectolitres.

The gross revenue to agriculture for last year has been estimated at 1928 million francs. This is 85 millions more than in 1942. Through doubling the cultivated area from 185,000 ha to 370,000 ha since the beginning of the war, Swiss agriculture is now providing the total home consumption of potatoes, meat, milk, cheese and butter. Also the provisioning with vegetables and fruit is almost covered, but there remains 50-60 per cent. of bread cereals and 80 per cent. of sugar still to be imported.

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Under existing conditions, which are, of course, governed by the complete stoppage of imports the home production of victuals attains a paramount importance. The question whether the shop prices can be maintained at the present comparatively low level is for the majority of families an issue of the greatest importance. The price of bread to-day at 56 cts. per kg. is lower by 20 cts. than at the same period in the first world war. This low price could only be fixed and maintained through the Confederation shouldering a part of the cost which amounted to roughly fifty million francs per annum, otherwise the retail price would be higher by 15 cts. per kg.

The Confederation is also stabilising the price of milk by a two-fold subsidy. Firstly, the price to be paid to the farmer is to be raised by one ct. per litre as from November 1st; this increase will be borne entirely by the State. In addition a premium of 5 cts. will be paid for any quantity which surpasses by 70 per cent. the deliveries during the last two winters. The cost of this double action constitutes a charge of 5.5 and eight million francs respectively. By this a rise in the cost of living will be prevented and at the same time agriculture will be encouraged to increase production.

* * *

Swiss sheep-shearing which in the last decade greatly receded, has received a fresh impetus through the lack of foreign wool. In the space of a few years the number of sheep has increased to over 200,000. By suitable natural selection and the care of animals, the quality of the wool has greatly improved, so that the keeping of sheep in the future will be a paying proposition.

From the latest official statistics it is learned that in the first quarter of 1944 the nominal hourly average earnings in all industries were 35.9 per cent. higher than they were in August, 1939. As the increase in the cost of living as shown by the official index amounted to 51 per cent. the difference was equalised by the higher wages as far as 70.4 per cent.; the loss of purchasing power compared with the pre-war position is stated to be only 10 per cent.

More than seven years ago an arrangement was arrived at between the Association of Employers and four Trade Unions in the engineering and metal industries, whereby the parties engaged themselves for two years to settle mutually important differences and possible disputes. Shortly before the outbreak of the war this contract was renewed for another five years. Quite recently the delegates of the most important workers' organisations almost unanimously recommended a further extension of the arrangement. In the circles of the employers a similar intention is to be found, so that the labour peace in one of the most important industries of the country appears to be secured for the future.

Humanitarian

A heavy influx of refugees is feared as a result of the turn of events on the battlefields.

Though no official statement has been issued it is reported in most of the English and American papers that our Government has revised the rules or principles guiding entry; on the other side it is affirmed that there is no need for new regulations since asylum cannot be demanded as a right.

In view of the possible introduction of small pox from abroad, the Federal Council has decreed the compulsory vaccination over the whole territory of the Confederation. Up to now eleven cantons had introduced this compulsion in their territory and during the epidemic of 1921 to 1926 when over 5000 persons fell victims to the illness imported from abroad, it was not experienced in these particular cantons. Now, first of all will be vaccinated babies between the age of four to twelve months and children between the ages of twelve and fifteen years. For years already all males as well as females, entering military formations had to submit to vaccination against small pox.

The International Red Cross Committee in Geneva is at present arranging a collection of artificial teeth from discarded plates for the benefit of civil internees and prisoners of war. Up to the present nearly 200,000 artificial teeth were handed over to camp dentists.

The show train of the International Red Cross Committee terminated its trip through Switzerland on August 3rd. It traveled 3400 km. and visited seventy-five localities, collecting an amount of Frs. 173,266. Stops of one to three days were made in convenient sidings.

The train was composed of three British-built dining cars lent by the Swiss management of the International Sleeping Car Company, one of which was fitted as a cinema van. The train was accompanied by a staff of eight officials.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to go to press again on September 29th.

LE PROBLEME DE LA DENATIONALISATION

L'an dernier au mois de mai, quand le Conseil fédéral a autorisé son Département de justice et police à retirer la nationalité helvétique aux Suisses qui ont fui à l'étranger et qui font état de leur droit de cité pour y poursuivre une activité contraire aux intérêts généraux du pays, cette mesure a été acceptée chez nous avec des sentiments mêlés. Des polémiques se sont engagées dans la presse. Les chambres en ont délibéré longuement. Si l'attitude du Conseil fédéral a été finalement approuvée à de fortes majorités, il est malgré tout subsisté un certain malaise à ce sujet.

Maintenant, comme il arrive souvent, il semble, à certaines manifestations, que l'opinion publique a été retournée. On ne reproche plus au gouvernement d'avoir fait usage de ses pleins pouvoirs pour s'arroger la compétence d'annuler un droit de nationalité qui est imprescriptible par définition. On se plaint dans certains milieux qu'il est trop timoré en l'espèce et qu'il n'a pas appliqué cette sanction assez souvent. Tout récemment, le Grand Conseil de Genève protestait officiellement auprès du Conseil fédéral, parce que celui-ci a refusé, jusqu'à plus ample informé en tout cas, de retirer la nationalité helvétique à Georges Oltramare qui, depuis plus de quatre ans à Paris, déploie une activité nettement anti-suisse. A la suite de ces polémiques, le Département fédéral de justice et police s'est expliqué longuement devant les commissions parlementaires des pleins pouvoirs. La presse a été renseignée amplement, de telle sorte que l'on peut se faire désormais une idée plus complète et plus précise de la jurisprudence en la matière.



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