

Letter from Switzerland

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Switzerland had been compelled by the war to dig for coal. 220,000 tons had been produced in 1942. The war didn't prevent a one per cent rise in foreign trade. Switzerland imported two billion francs worth of goods and exported 1.5 billion in 1942, it was reported. Unemployment had fallen from 52,590 to 8,814 from December 1938 to December 1942.

8,000 refugees were reported to have entered Switzerland since the summer of '42. 200 Swiss Jews arrived from Paris on a special train.

The Swiss House in Milan housing the Swiss Club, the Swiss School and the Swiss Mercantile Society was destroyed by an allied raid. A 7,000-book library was also destroyed.

The architect Remo Rossi, of Locarno, was the winner of a contest for a design in memory of the late Federal Councillor Guiseppe Motta, who had led Swiss diplomacy at the beginning of the war. 65 designs had been examined.

The Swiss demand for chocolate registered a sharp increase and it was planned to ration this consumer

commodity. The federal authorities considered producing potato bread and tested this food with volunteer students in Basle. The experiment proved the excellent nutritive value of potato bread.

Making use of its war-time emergency powers, the Federal Council signed a Decree allowing it to 'de-nationalise' those Swiss abroad conducting anti-Swiss activities or showing sympathy for the Axis powers. The Decree was expected to be applied to a few isolated and known cases. The 1942 Report of the Government stated that 16 Swiss lost their lives in air raids during the year. Four had been killed in Germany, three in Italy, four in France and five in North Africa. A further four were killed at sea. The Report added that Swiss legations were looking after the interest of 26 countries. This had meant employing an extra 110 persons in Berne and 800 across the world. For this service, Switzerland had received 56.5 million francs from the countries concerned.

Bonmont compelled the inhabitants of Pellens to emigrate and the village was destroyed.

During the Reformation, the Government of Berne took possession of Bonmont and its properties which were assigned to various purposes. In 1711, those properties were set up in bailiwicks with the adjunction of several neighbouring villages.

The Abbey possessed a fairly large and beautiful church which still exists today. This building is of an austere architecture and of harmonious proportions.

Its great square tower is remarkable and particularly its beautiful porch, which is ornamented with capitals rich in floral decoration.

Pierre Savoie

LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND

Autumn has come overnight this year. As if somebody had pulled a lever, the temperature has dropped, early morning mist is appearing, the leaves on the trees are turning red and brown and begin to fall, and the alpine pass roads have had their first heavy snow fall.

A very busy time has begun for the kingmakers all over the country. No fewer than three Federal Councillors have announced their decision to retire from office at the end of this year. They are Professor Hans Peter Tschudi (Interior), Mr. Roger Bonvin (PTT, Transport and Power) and Mr. Nello Celio (Finances and Customs Revenue).

Their successors will be elected on 5th December in the course of a meeting of the United Federal Assembly. This means that the two chambers of the Federal Parliament meet together as one under the chairmanship of the President of the National Council, Franzoni, to elect, by secret ballot, three new

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Swiss Abbeys

BONMONT ABBEY

The ancient Cistercian abbey of Bonmont (Canton Vaud), at Cheserex near Nyon, was found in 1123.

The territory on which the abbey was erected was called Pellens and extended to the foot of the Jura.

The ancient village of Pellens, which has disappeared today, was situated near the actual village of La Rippe. Pellens belonged in the 12th Century to Bonmont Abbey. At the end of the same century, the abbot of

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