

## BADGES FOR VOLUNTEERS THREAT VIA SWITZERLAND

A SPECIAL badge consisting of a "V" and a fernleaf, surmounted by a crown, is to be issued to all men who have been (1) honourably discharged from the Naval or Air Force or the 2nd N.Z.E.F., (2) volunteered for service with the Naval or Air Force, or 2nd N.Z.E.F. but whose services have not begun or have been temporarily suspended, (3) rejected because they were not up to the standard of medical fitness required in the 2nd N.Z.E.F.

The Minister of Defence, the Hon. F. Jones, stated that a special certificate will be issued with each badge, and that any constable or naval, military, or air force officer may require a man wearing a badge to produce that certificate at any time. Both badge and certificate will carry identical numbers. There will be severe penalties for the illegal wearing, manufacture, sale, or possession of badges, and a register of issue is to be kept.



Requests for badges by Army applicants should be made to the local Army Area Officer by whom their original application for service was considered. Applicants for training with the Royal New Zealand Air Force are particularly requested to note that with the exception of those candidates who have been medically rejected, no application is required to be made for badges as the Air Department will be communicating with candidates during the next few weeks giving them full information, together with advice as to their provisional training dates. Badges will not be issued to those medically rejected for either the flying or non-flying sections of the Air Force who are eligible for service with the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Candidates in doubt should communicate with the Air Secretary.

Applicants who have been rejected for service with both the Army and the Air Force are requested to apply to the former department for their badges. Badges will not be issued to Royal New Zealand Air Force applicants who have not yet been selected and medically examined.

WILL the history of Holland and Norway, Poland and Belgium, be repeated in Switzerland? Will the Swiss put up any great resistance if they are attacked?

If Germany strikes through Switzerland it will be an attempt to attack the Maginot Line from the rear and to enter France through the mountain passes into the south of Alsace Lorraine, or via the centre of Switzerland by way of Geneva, thus threatening Lyons and the southern districts along the Mediterranean. If the German army is held in France, despite possession of the Channel ports, a new threat may come through Switzerland, but as the situation changes so rapidly much will have happened before this is printed.

Although Switzerland has a standing army of 300,000 men, it is essentially a citizen army intended for the defence of neutrality. Recent observers state that Switzerland will put up a good defence if attacked. The weakest point is the great railway junction of Basle, at the immediate northern corner where the frontiers of France, Germany and Switzerland join at the outlet of the River Rhine. From this point the principal railway lines run into Germany and France.

Along this part of the frontier and above the Rhine to Lake Constance all possible precautions have been taken. Roads and mountain passes have been mined and guns placed on the hillsides to cover the most vulnerable approaches. Because of the mountainous country, mechanical transport would be hampered, but it would not be stopped without great opposition. All roads and gorges leading into Germany have been reinforced by barbed wire and barricades, but the Swiss do not possess great numbers of artillery pieces or airplanes. Their surest defence is the use of machine-guns and light field guns, which could be transported in the mountains with some speed.

### The Real Danger

The greatest danger to Switzerland is the "Fifth Column" — the spies and traitors who have played such a devastating part in the German advance into all the countries so far over-run. Of the total population of a little over four millions, nearly three millions of the Swiss are Germans or of German origin, still speaking their own language. It is clear, then, that the "Fifth Column" would be more effective than an advancing army.

Switzerland, so famous as a tourist paradise, consists of a central plateau, flanked by ranges of mountains, through which four great rivers flow to the surrounding countries of France, Germany and Italy. Entry into France, if it were forced from the country round Basle, would be via the gorges of the River Doubs, which in turn leads to the important fortress city of Belfort, in France. No doubt the French defences here have been strengthened in the light of recent happenings. The St. Gothard

Pass and the gorge of the Rhone Valley are both guarded by heavy fortresses, usually manned by about 21,000 men.

During the last war, Switzerland was in a most difficult position, principally because of the various factions and their divided sympathies. Neutrality was preserved, but the country was forced into an economic alliance with Germany for the duration of the war.

### Clearing House For Red Cross

The most important part played by Switzerland from 1914 until long after hostilities ceased was that of a clearing house by the Swiss Red Cross and the International Red Cross at Geneva. Prisoners were exchanged between the belligerent countries via Switzerland, which also performed a great deal of charitable work.

To-day Switzerland is prosperous, thanks to the abundance of cheap hydro-electric power and the huge hotel industry which has been fostered by tourist traffic.

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