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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

The Federal Political Department has received a reply note from the French Government announcing its willingness to re-open negotiations in the *Savoy Zones* question. M. La Roche, from the Foreign Ministry in Paris, will be the appointed envoy of the French Government for the resumption of conversations in Berne, the appointed representatives of the Swiss Government being Prof. Dr. Laur (Brugg) and National Councillor Maunoir (Geneva). Genevese public opinion is now more hopeful that a mutually acceptable basis for the solution of this much perturbing problem will eventually be found.

\*\*\*

Negotiations which have been pending for some time between Switzerland and France have resulted in the French authorities declaring their agreement to transfer the Passport and Customs Offices from St. Louis to the Alsace Station in Bâle, where the French officials will exercise their duties from the 1st of June next.

\*\*\*

The Federal Council intends addressing an appeal to the Italian Government to issue an order to close the notorious gambling den in the Casino at Campione.

\*\*\*

From the Federal Revenue and Expenditure accounts for 1920 we extract the following interesting details:

Total receipts from import duty frs. 93,804,000. Higher duty on tobacco produced increased revenue of frs. 7,200,000, dutyable imports which previous to July 1920 were free of duty frs. 855,000, and other imported goods for which the import tariff has been raised since July 1920 frs. 2,400,000.

Stamp duties realised net revenue of frs. 17,144,000.

The accounts of the Federal Post show a deficit of frs. 28,276,783, towards which the telegraph service contributed to the tune of frs. 1,092,000, whereas the telephone service produced a profit of frs. 5,091,000.

The War Mobilisation debt, which in 1919 amounted to frs. 1,220,679,000, is now reduced to frs. 532,200,000, a large portion of the War Profits Tax going towards its reduction.

The cost to the State for cheapening such staple foods as milk, flour and bread, rice, sugar, etc., amounted to 55 million francs.

Expenditure in connection with repatriation of Swiss from Russia reached the figure of frs. 530,173, and the cost

of repatriating Russians from Switzerland were frs. 206,535, while the accompaniment of food and "Liebesgaben" trains to the Central States cost the Swiss nation frs. 43,939.

Mobilisation of parts of the Swiss Army in consequence of the general strike in 1918 involved the country in expenditure of nearly 34 million francs. Another item, which is causing extreme heartburn and which will in the course of the next few days be the subject of a public enquiry, is the loss of the 30 million francs invested by the Government in the ill-fated Seetransport Union.

The profits accruing to the State from the cheese monopoly amount to frs. 11,207,000, and have been allocated to the cattle-disease fund, which provides compensation to farmers whose cattle stocks have been decimated or extinguished through foot-and-mouth disease.

\*\*\*

The Federal Finance Department records that the War Profits Tax, due per end of March, 1921, amounts to frs. 740,525,000, of which 643.5 millions have been paid into the treasury by April 1st last. The cantons of Zurich and Bâle figure as the highest contributors with 126 and 87 millions respectively. From these receipts about 50 million francs have been distributed among the cantonal treasuries, and 99 million francs were allocated to the federal fund for unemployment benefits.

\*\*\*

Owing to the severe trade depression in Switzerland the number of unemployed and partially employed on May 9th reached the disquieting total of 150,481.

The official figures of the Federal Labour Bureau up to April 25th were: unemployed 47,949, partially employed 95,374, an increase since January 31st of 33 and 40% respectively.

The following industries are particularly hard hit: Textiles with 11,902 unemployed and 38,400 partially employed, Watchmaking 9,533 and 18,983, Metal and Machinery 5,579 and 16,387.

The cantons most adversely affected through total unemployment are: St. Gall and Appenzell 10,386, Berne 7,485, Neuchâtel 4,853, while the figures of the partially employed are very high in the cantons Zurich 22,642, Solothurn 13,967, Berne 8,395, Neuchâtel 7,487, St. Gall and Appenzell a.-Rh. 7,229, Basle 6,901.

\*\*\*

The severe crisis in the boot industry is still continuing. The recent Federal decree limiting imports is not likely to bring immediate relief owing to large stocks previously imported flooding the market.

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In 1920 Swiss emigrants numbered 9,276, the highest figure since 1884; 7,073 have left for the United States, the majority being farmers and workmen.

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The commission, composed of one American, one Belgian and one Swiss jurist, which has studied the Aaland