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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

U.S. CUSTOMS INSPECTION IN SWITZERLAND.

At a recent sitting of the United States Customs Commission a petition for an increase in the duty of 20 per cent. *ad valorem* on imported boots and shoes was submitted by American footwear manufacturers and trade unions, and favourably considered. The Commission decided to institute an inquiry into working conditions and cost of production in the Czechoslovak footwear industry, against whose products the proposed measure is chiefly aimed, and also, for purposes of comparison, in Switzerland and in France. The American authorities have therefore asked permission to make an official investigation of the cost of production in this country, and Messrs. Bally have expressed their willingness to receive the Commissioners at their Schoenenwerd factory. It appears that no objections have been raised in the United States regarding the import of Swiss footwear.

PROFESSOR PICCARD GUEST OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

Professor Piccard, who recently made the record breaking balloon ascent will be the guest of the Federal Council, who have invited him to a dinner given in his honour at the Hotel Bellevue Palace in Berne.

FEDERAL MUSIC FESTIVAL.

The 19th Federal Music Festival will be held at Berne on July 25th-27th. 152 sections numbering 5631 players will take place in the competition.

FETE OF SWISS COSTUMES.

All Switzerland in its gayest garb has gathered at the international city of Geneva. The Fête des Costumes Suisses has drawn in over four thousand persons from all parts of the Confederation dressed in their various regional costumes, some of which with their elaborate embroideries are attractive and costly.

Some of the participants wore the Swiss costumes of past ages. They also brought with them their numerous folk songs and regional dances. The whole town has been given over to singing and dancing and the yodelling of Swiss mountaineers. The streets have been decorated to represent the different cantons, and exhibitions of the various cantonal industries have been held in processions, in the park, and also in chalet booths erected in the streets.

SWISS HOTEL PRICES.

The poor spring season experienced on the Italian lakes foreshadows a travelling season this summer which will be none too bright, though the weather conditions are very favourable at present. During the hot weeks of May and early June the melting of the immense masses of snow made rapid progress. All the Alpine passes are now free for traffic, and mountaineering is in full swing.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS RETURNS FOR 1930.

During the winter there was some discussion about further lowering of hotel prices, which are somewhat higher than those in the Bavarian and Austrian Alps. But it was pointed out that there is greater comfort and richer food in Swiss hotels so that further reductions cannot be considerable.

Whereas an increase was to be observed in the returns for 1930 in respect of passenger traffic, there was, unfortunately, a decline in goods traffic. Although Switzerland was fortunate enough to be less affected by the prevailing world crisis than a number of other countries, still the returns of the Federal Railways showed a general decrease in the year under review. Thus, the net profit amounted to only £64,000, as compared with £840,000 in the previous year; this decrease is to be attributed to the decline in goods traffic, which dropped by 730,000 tons, of 3.8 per cent., to 18.5 million tons. At the same time, it may be observed that these figures are still consider-

ably in advance of those for the last year before the war, the increase amounting to 23.5 per cent., or 3.5 million tons. The most marked decline was in respect of export and transit traffic; as regards the latter, a decrease of 14.5 per cent. may be mainly attributed to a diminution in transports of coal.

As regards passenger traffic, this increased by 1.4 millions, and attained the unprecedented figure of 127.9 million persons carried on the railways during 1930. As compared with the last ante bellum figures, this shows an increase of 35.3 per cent., or 33.4 million persons. The increase is due, however, principally to cheaper travelling facilities, and is to be observed mainly in respect of workmen's tickets and excursions. This favourable development in passenger traffic may also be attributed to the advantages resulting from electric traction, and its effect on the comfort and convenience of passengers.

The net profit will be used for the amortisation of the war deficit, which, on January 1, 1931, still amounted to £5,524,000. The Board of Administration declare that the financial problem of the Federal Railways is closely connected with the regularisation of automobile traffic by legislative measures.

A grant of £272,000 has been allocated for the reconstruction of the main station at Berne.

The Co-ordination of Road and Rail in Freight Traffic.

In common with the majority of railways, the Swiss State railways are engaged in examining the best means of coming to a practical and economical co-ordination of rail and road. A first step was the creation of the "Sesa" in 1926; this is a private company, closely connected with the railways, which has organised agencies throughout the country for the collection and distribution of railway goods, thus providing all the advantages of a "direct door-to-door service." In order to better this system, which has already proved very successful, it is proposed to go still further in this direction and to transfer the entire local goods traffic to the road service. The new system, which will comprise distances up to 25 km., will have so many advantages in respect of rapid transport, simplicity of arrangements and fewer manipulations that it is confidently expected it will bring back a number of former customers to the railways. There is no intention to have a fleet of railway-owned motor vehicles; all the arrangements will be made with the already existing carriers. It is thought that by means of this measure, the growing competition in long-distance traffic can be stemmed, and much of the lost traffic regained. A similar effect is expected to be achieved by means of a special new law, requiring the licensing of long-distance goods conveyances. This special law is to be submitted to Parliament after the completion of the new Road Traffic Act, which is being examined by the Federal Chambers during the present sessions. The study of the new organisation of local goods traffic will probably be followed by trial services between certain traffic centres.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A daring midday robbery took place at the Bahnhofstrasse last Friday, when a waiter, named J. Zünd from Altstätten attacked a young lady who had cashed an amount of about 5000f. at the Post Office. He managed to get away with the money but was caught by three pedestrians.

N.Z.Z.

ZURICH.

Burglars entering the offices of the firm Berthele and Schindler, umbrella manufacturers, opened a safe with explosives and took an amount of 1,000f. in notes.

N.Z.Z.

LAUSANNE.

Ingenieur Favre, the wellknown Swiss aviator was killed near La Blecherette, his aeroplane crashing into a field. M. Favre was 28 years of age and was shortly to be married.

ST.T.

GRISONS.

The eighteenth annual meeting of the Swiss Society for Surgery will be held at St. Moritz on July 10th and 11th.

BERNE.

M. Adolf Cassani, General Manager of the "Banque Populaire, has resigned his post for reasons of health. His successor is M. Robert Steiger, formerly Manager of the Zurich Branch.

N.Z.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

*"Der Himmel ist blau, das Wetter ist schoen,
Herr Lehrer, wir moechten spazieren gehen!
Wir wollen lieber im Freien schwitzen,
Als hier auf der alten Stuhlbank sitzen."*

This is the sort of "poem" we used to scribble on the blackboard of our school-room on a summery morning like these we are having now and, very often, the result was that our teacher agreed with the noble sentiments so ably expressed and took us for a walk in the Forest in the afternoon. Those were called botanical open air exercises, not so common in those days, as they are in this more enlightened age, but, botanical studies apart, the main thing was to escape the gloomy atmosphere of the class room.

Now that we are our own masters—apart from all sorts of inquisitorial Government Inspectors, income tax people, etc.—we often long back to those years when a kindly teacher took pity on us and took us away out into the open.

We take a day off now and again, it's true. We play truant as it were and enjoy it, but, behind all those stolen sunny hours is the bogey of the necessity to earn our own living and, were it not that the sun inspires us with an extra dose of "joie de vivre" and enables us to forget for the time being our daily worries, life would be very hard nowadays. But

*Heavenly sunbeams tan our skin,
Gladsome they make us, gayly we grin,
Copses and hedges alive with June roses,
Make us live LIFE in beauteous doses.*

And so we catch the usual early train to Town, push on with our work, snatch a quick lunch and evening, the wonderful, glamorous English Summer Evening, finds us in our Garden among the roses, or on our beloved Golf links among the daisies!

Is there anything more wonderful than an English Summer Evening? When the jolly old Sun lingers, when a faint breeze kisses the fevered brow, when the view over the first fairway is a treat, when even the bunkers look like golden hills, set there, not to baffle the golfers, but to give additional colour to an already restful and lovely bit of parkland, when the birds sing their love song, when the cricket chirps, the bumble bee buzzes, the midgets perform their wedding dance in the golden ray that passes just in front of where you sit?

Is there anything like it? Is there anything like that first draught of cooling drink when you come in from a strenuously fought battle on the links, when you hold up the amber coloured nectar to your parched lips, when the cool liquid trickles down your grateful throat, sizzles a bit maybe, but makes you feel as if you were in heaven? Is there anything like it?

We have forgotten the nasty winter months. We do not think of the many spoilt days of the Spring, we WILL NOT realise that the Summer days are quickly over. We will enjoy them when they are with us.

In many respects we are, of course, just like those midgets. We dance while the sun lasts, oblivious of our quick departure from our earthly pilgrimage. We collect experiences as we go along, because without experiences life is no life worth having. We get sunshine and darkness, but, on the whole and looking back over our past life, we begin to realise, as we grow older, that the two blend into a nicely balanced cameo of light and shadow.

Therefore LET US ENJOY THE SUNSHINE WHILE WE MAY!

And when, we Swiss, read of the splendid playing of one of our countrywomen at Wimbledon, when we realise that Mlle. Pavot has reached the semi-final stage of that classic battle, well, it just helps us to enjoy the sunshine still more! Thank you, Mlle. Pavot! And may you have won the Championship by the time these notes are appearing and so brought lustre to Helvetia's brow.