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# The Swiss Observer

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## FEDERAL.

### FREE ZONES DISPUTE.

The French Government, in informing the Swiss Federal Council of its intention to give effect to the decision of The Hague Court about the free zones of Haute Savoie and the district of Gex, has requested the Federal Council to intimate its intentions with regard to the new régime, in order that the two Governments may act in common.

The acceptance of the Court's decision implies that France is prepared to withdraw the Customs barrier (which had been advanced to Geneva) back to the line laid down in the treaties of 1815 to 1816, the terms of the judgment having stipulated that this must be done before January 1, 1934. The decision to accept the ruling virtually brings to an end the long litigation that arose from Article 435 of the Treaty of Versailles, which stated that the stipulations of the 1815 treaty were no longer consistent with present conditions, and that it was for France and Switzerland to arrive at a suitable settlement of the status of these territories.

Although French fiscal sovereignty is not otherwise affected by the obligation to remove the Customs frontier back to the former limits, the settlement is regarded as being very detrimental to French interests. One strong objection is that the Customs frontier will now cut across the main railway line from Evian to Paris and Evian to Bellegarde in four places, and unless some satisfactory arrangement with Switzerland is reached great inconvenience is likely to be caused to tourist traffic. At the meeting of the Council-General of Haute Savoie yesterday the President, M. Fernand David, who also represents the Department in the Senate, declared that the negotiations Switzerland were not likely to be easy, and urged the French Government to take steps to maintain the solidarity of interests between the inhabitants of the free zones and the rest of France.

### SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAY LOAN.

The Swiss Federal Railways proposes to issue a new loan of Frs.125,000,000 (£5,000,000 at par) in the near future. Like the recent loans of the Swiss Confederation, this issue will be of the Three and a-Half per Cent. type, and it is expected that the price of issue will be 97 per cent., that is to say, 1 per cent. higher than the issue price of the Three and a-Half per Cent. State loan of May last.

The new issue is not required for purposes of converting maturing loans, but the proceeds will go one-half towards funding Government advances to the railways, and the balance to finance the construction programme and to cover the deficit which is expected for the current year.

The Swiss Federal Railways has not escaped the difficulties that have affected railways in all parts of the world, and the traffic receipts for the first seven months of the present year show that, before making any appropriation for meeting fixed charges, the net revenue has fallen to Frs.40,467,744 as compared with Frs.61,763,083 in the previous year.

Arrangements for the issue of the loan are understood to be practically complete.

### NEW FEDERAL LOAN BANK.

The directors of the New Federal Loan Bank (Darlehenskasse der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft) have elected M. Max Pfyffer from Lucerne as Manager.

M. Pfyffer was educated at the Commercial school at Neuchâtel, and spent seven years in London at the Swiss Bank Corporation. From

1920-1926 he was Manager of the Branch Office in Geneva, of Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank Ltd. In 1927 he was appointed Manager of the Banque de Montreux.

### SWISS TRADE INDUSTRY.

A report on "Economic Conditions in Switzerland" by Major H. F. Heywood, Commercial Secretary to H.M. Legation, Berne, is published for the Department of Overseas Trade by the Stationery Office, price 1s. 7d. post free.

The Commercial Secretary states that Switzerland is highly industrialised, 46 per cent. of her working population being employed in industry as against 25 per cent. in agriculture. The goods produced being almost exclusively of high quality and finish, Great Britain is found to have been her best customer in 1931. On the other hand, Great Britain has not enjoyed an adequate share of the trade in metals and semi-manufactured materials which are required to be imported by Swiss industry, though it is hoped that the exchange fall in the value of the pound may improve the position. The standard of living is high and the purchasing capacity remarkably large for the size of the country.

For a long period Swiss economic conditions remained unaffected by world conditions, but the effect was marked from the middle of 1931, the number of unemployed being approximately doubled between August and November. A flood of cheap German goods and other factors resulted in the introduction of a system of restricted imports, and it is evident that the country will not buy goods for which she cannot afford to pay. Payments in the past have been made punctually and in a sound currency.

Considerable attention is devoted in the report to the position of each of the main Swiss industries, and a careful account is given of the various legislative measures connected with trade which were introduced. The usual chapters relating to financial conditions and transport, natural resources and social questions, complete the survey of economic conditions ruling in the country.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

A burglar entered the offices of a firm at the Thalstrasse and took from a cup-board the sum of 6000 frs. A lady typist surprised the intruder on leaving the premises, but was threatened to be shot if she followed him.

Doctor Gottfried Schaertlin, Manager of the Schweizerische Lebensversicherungs und Renten Anstalt has celebrated his 75th birthday anniversary; he has been at the head of this important institution for nearly 40 years, and on the occasion of his 70th birthday the University of Zurich had bestowed the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on him.

The mysterious shooting a year ago of the manager of the Waldhaus Dolder Hotel, near Zurich, had its sequel when two brothers, his assailants, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Mr. Gaspar Gyr, the manager, was found shot outside the hotel, and died in a short time. Hermann and Otto Kopfer were ultimately arrested in connection with the tragedy, and were sentenced to six years' and four years' imprisonment respectively. They were also ordered to be permanently excluded from Switzerland.

#### BERNE.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Bankers Association will take place in Berne on September 10th.

Gemeinde-Präsident Karl Reinmann at Interlaken has resigned from his post for reasons of health; he occupied this office since 1921 and has celebrated his 70th birthday on the 2nd of this month.

Professor Dr. H. Türl, the sympathetic keeper of the Federal Archives, has tendered his resignation to the Federal Council, to take effect at the end of this year. Professor Türl was born in 1861 and was the son of a watch manufacturer at Bielne. He studied classical philology, history and law at various Universities. In 1891 he was

appointed keeper of the archives of the canton of Berne and in 1904, Professor of the University in Berne. In 1914 he was made keeper of the Federal Archives. Professor Türl is a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Berne, and a freeman of the town of Berne.

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Dr. theol. h.c. Albert Haller-von Erlach, for many years preacher at the Heiliggeist Kirche in Berne, has died at the age of 86.

### LUCERNE.

National Councillor, Dr. H. Walther, President of the Board of the Swiss Federal Railways, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

### SCHWYZ.

From Küssnacht comes the news of the death of Dr. Franz Aufdermauer-Zemp, a very popular medical practitioner, and a great benefactor to the town of Küssnacht.

### GLARUS.

The Kilchenstock landslide, which had been at a standstill for a year, is again threatening. Last week it began to move at the rate of 30 millimetres a day. The 800 inhabitants of Linthal, in the threatened zone, have been asked to leave their homes.

### BASLE.

Owing to a severe illness, Lieutenant-Colonel A. Schmid will be unable to take part in the Gordon-Bennett International Balloon Race. The pilot of the balloon "Basel" will now be Lieutenant A. van Baerle.

### GENEVA.

Prof. Dr. Gottfried Bohnenblust, author of the well-known work "Göthe und die Schweiz," has received the "Reichs-Göthe Medaille" from Germany.

### ARGAU.

A costume festival, which was attended by 78,000 people, took place at Laufenburg, over 450 costume wearers took part in the procession.

### ST. GALLEN.

Dr. Frieder Rohrer, an eminent ear specialist, has died at Buchs at the age of 85. Dr. Rohrer was also a prolific writer and author of many ballads, which were set to music by his friend, the famous Swiss composer Hegar. He was, from 1894-1903 President of the Männerchor Zurich, and the Basler Liedertafel nominated him as an honorary member.

### THURGAU.

The death of the well-known painter and etcher, Carl Theodor Meyer, is reported from Hauptwil. M. Meyer was a native of Basle and spent a large part of his life at Munich. Many of the Swiss Picture Galleries are in possession of valuable pictures from the brush of this eminent artist.

### SCHAFFHAUSEN.

Doctor Eduard Haug, a former rector of the "Kantonsschule" has died at the age of 76. The deceased was for many years a member of the town council and the "Kantonsrat."

### VALAIS.

N. Zleitner, a well-known Basle climber, who was rope-climbing by himself, fell 400 ft. on the Jaegihorn, and was killed.

\* \* \*

A terrible crime has been revealed by the discovery of the mutilated body of an American girl, Miss Irene Ebershoff, in a lonely spot between the villages of St. Nicholas and St. Alden.

The body of the girl, who was 18 years old, was found by peasants. The face had been smashed in with a rock. Police believe that she was fighting for her honour before she was murdered. The body had been hastily covered with stones.

She had been travelling with her sister, Helen, but had left Zermatt alone on Thursday night. Her sister followed her on foot.

Police removed the body to the mortuary at Brigue.

No arrests have been made. An Austrian was questioned by the police, but was not detained.

### TICINO.

Alarming reports have been received about Monte Albino, the moving mountain. Minor landslides are occurring almost daily in the Val Taglio.