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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

LARGE DEFICIT IN FEDERAL HOUSE-HOLD EXPECTED.

It is expected that the accounts for 1932 of the Swiss Confederation will close with a deficit of about 80 million francs.

REDUCTION OF PAY TO SWISS CIVIL SERVANTS.

A Bill reducing salaries by $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. from January next until the end of 1934 has been passed by the Swiss National Council. It is expected that it will save the Government 24,000,000f. (£960,000 at par), but it will be necessary to reduce expenditure by another 9,000,000f.

DIPLOMATIC CHANGES.

Monsieur de Stoutz, formerly Swiss Minister at Madrid, has taken up his post as chief of the division of foreign affairs in Berne. His predecessor, Dr. P. Dinichert, the new Minister at Berlin, will present his credentials to President Hindenburg on the 15th of this month.

FINANCIAL RESULT OF THE "HYSPA" EXHIBITION.

The final accounts of the "Hyspa" exhibition, which was held at Berne from July 24th to September 20th, 1931, have just been passed. After having refunded the capital raised for this purpose there remains a net profit of 162,000f.

INAUGURATION OF THE POWER STATION HANDEK.

The inauguration festivities of the new Handek Power Station took place last Sunday at the Grimsel Hospiz. A banquet with 300 covers was served; amongst the participants were Federal Councillor Minger, and representatives of the cantonal governments of Berne and Basle, and delegates of the Federal Technical University Zurich. Various speakers praised the new station as a masterpiece of technique.

Professor Ritter, on behalf of the Federal Technical University, informed the gathering that the University has bestowed the degree of *doctor honoris causa* on chief engineer Kaech, who was in charge of the work. Federal Councillor Minger pointed out, in his address that this important station was built without any subvention from the Federal Government, and that the financing was undertaken by various communities and the government of the canton of Berne.

EUROPA CONGRESS AT BASLE.

The Europa Congress was opened last Saturday in the great Hall of the Mustermesse Building. The audience numbered about 600 persons; the congress was opened by a speech of M. Ludwig, head of the cantonal government. M. Ameray, a former minister for the colonies spoke about the Ottawa conference, all the various speakers urged for a closer collaboration between the various European countries.

PROFESSOR PICCARD'S EXPERIMENT.

The height attained by Professor Piccard during his second trip into the stratosphere on August 18 is officially stated by the Swiss Aero Club to have been 16,201 metres (10 miles 117 yards), which is rather lower than the 16,500 metres claimed by Professor Piccard at the time, but is still higher than the altitude of just under ten miles which he attained on his first trip last year. The figures given by the Swiss Aero Club are subject to confirmation by the International Aero-nautical Federation.

THE SWISS BROADCAST NETWORK.

Practical experience seems to prove that radio transmission can only be utilised to its greatest advantage when wire connexions are used in part of the circuit. In the early days radio was a competitor with wire transmission, but now it co-operates with it, the co-operation being to their mutual advantage. The transmitting stations in a broadcasting system are situated outside the cities where the studios are situated, and are connected to them by wires. In *Electrical Communi-*

cation for July, A. Muri, chief engineer of the postal administration at Bern, gives an interesting account of the Swiss broadcast network. For broadcasting purposes, Switzerland is divided into three zones. For French-speaking Switzerland, the main transmitter is at Sotterns and is fed by the studios at Lausanne and Geneva. For German-speaking Switzerland, the main transmitter is at Beromünster and there are two relay transmitters at Bern and Basel. All three transmitters broadcast the same programme, and are fed from the studios at Zurich, Bern, and Basel as required. The main transmitter for Italian-speaking Switzerland is still under construction at Monte Ceneri. When completed it will be served by the studio at Lugano. In order to meet the requirements for music transmission, circuits having a cut-off frequency of 10,000 are provided. This enables a sound spectrum of 35-7500 cycles per second to be obtained without distortion. In addition, there exist lightly loaded circuits having a cut-off frequency of 6800 cycles, giving a range of 150-5000 cycles for broadcast speech transmission. At present 87 per cent of all the toll circuits are in underground cable.

A NEW WAY UP THE MATTERHORN.

A daring climbing feat was accomplished on September 18th, when the guides Carrel and Bich, of Breuil, and two Italians ascended the Matterhorn by the hitherto unclimbed eastern rock wall. That wall falls almost perpendicularly from the shoulder on to the Furgg glacier and between the Furgg and Hörnli ridges.

From the Hörnli hut the climbers traversed the rock wall near its bottom, and towards its middle began climbing in the direction of the shoulder, which was reached without meeting serious difficulties. From the level of the shoulder to the summit remained 900ft. of rock wall, the last 150ft. of which is almost vertical and forms a buttress for the overhanging precipice in some places.

The four men spent 11 hours in climbing that buttress. They crossed steep couloirs, ascended vertical chimneys, often having to descend again by means of a double rope, and at times had no more support than the iron hooks which they had fixed into the rock.

After sunset they were overtaken by a thunderstorm, and spent the night in a small cave under the summit. There were two more thunderstorms during the night and snow fell; but the temperature did not fall too low, and early next morning they reached the top of the Matterhorn, whence they descended along the Hörnli ridge to Zermatt.

SWISS MACHINERY EXPORTS.

Among the Swiss industries to suffer most severely from the decreased purchasing power of foreign countries was that of heavy machinery, which includes steam turbines, engines and boilers, internal combustion engines, textile machinery, locomotives and commercial vehicles. Holland took first place among the purchasers of Swiss internal combustion engines, with a value of 2,791,055 fr., while China, France, Germany and Great Britain followed in that order, with respective totals of 1,979,950, 1,336,320, 1,014,899 and 933,877fr. France headed the list in the steam engine and turbine section, with 4,204,723 fr., Belgium, Soviet Russia, Holland and the Argentine coming next, with 2,220,243, 1,107,767 and 812,493 fr. respectively. The total Swiss export of machinery, of which these two items account for 14,711,081 and 15,904,777 fr. respectively, declined by 32.7 per cent. in comparison with the preceding year's figures. Swiss exports of all goods to Great Britain during the year under review amounted in value to 235.7 million francs, while her purchases of British goods were returned at only 96.4 millions. With the devaluation of sterling, however, there has been a drastic change in this position. The figures for December show a decline of 50 per cent. in the value of Swiss exports to this country, while, despite the fall in prices, purchases of British goods increased in value by 15 per cent.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25th
for the
ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL
May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

An incendiary bomb, thrown by young men believed to be Italians, caused an outbreak of fire in the Italian Consulate General in Zurich.

Passers-by observed three young men acting in a suspicious manner, and saw a fourth man hand to one of the others a parcel which was thrown through an open window on the ground floor of the Consulate.

The police were immediately summoned and gave chase, but the suspects escaped. Considerable damage was done to the building, and some of the consul's papers and records were destroyed.

This incident recalls that a few months ago a similar attempt was made to destroy by fire the Italian Consulate at Geneva and also that the anti-Fascist émigrés in this country have never ceased their subterranean activities against Rome. The authorities now suspect that there is an organised conspiracy directed against the Italian Government representatives in Switzerland.

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The Zurich section of the Swiss Alpine Club has given an amount of 20,000f. for helping the unemployed.

BERNE.

M. Dominik Flury, a well-known cigar merchant in Berne, was killed when chamois hunting in the Valtuna Valley.

* * *

The Federal Council has accepted the resignation of Dr. E. Koenig, for many years chief of the weights and measures office.

AARGAU.

Stadtammann Hans Hässig, has, at the end of last month, retired from his post, which he held for 25 years with great distinction. The town of Aarau loses thus one of her most faithful and excellent servants.

M. Hässig, who studied theology, has never officiated as a clergyman, but for many years he has taken an active part in various welfare institutions of his native canton. For a considerable time he was closely connected with the Kastell institution, he was also one of the promoters of the Aarganische Heilstätte für Tuberkulose. He entered the "Gemeinderat" in 1889 to which he belonged without interruption until the end of last month. From 1901-1907 he officiated as "Vizezemann," in 1907 he succeeded the then acting Stadtammann, Max Schmidt, who entered the cantonal government. During his long term of office, the town of Aarau has passed through many stages of transformation, and if to-day the capital of the canton Aargau is not only one of the best organised towns in Switzerland, but also one of the most prosperous one's, the late chief magistrate Hans Hässig can claim a big share. The town of Aarau will not soon forget the great services which its distinguished son has rendered to it.

BASLE.

The winners of the Gordon-Bennett Balloon Race, Lt-Colonel Settle and Bushnell arrived in Basle last Saturday, and received a great reception. High officials of the Organising Committee, together with representatives of the Swiss Aero-Club, as well as a great number of Press Reporters, were awaiting the arrival of the pilots at the Central Station.

At the dinner which was offered to the two pilots, Dr. Dietschi, President of the Organisation Committee welcomed the Americans, and extended to them heartiest congratulations on behalf of the Swiss Aero-Club and the Swiss people.

Lt.-Colonel Settle, in a short speech thanked the President for the hearty reception accorded to him and his colleague. He gave an account of his experiences during the flight, which were listened to with great interest.

* * *

Dr. E. Hoffmann-Stehlin, Director of the firm Hoffmann La Roche & Cie., A. G. in Basle, was killed last Sunday: he was passing the unguarded level crossing at Leimern on the road Lyss-Aarberg, when his Mercedes car was caught broadside by the Lausanne-Lyss train. The impact was terrific and the car was smashed to pieces. Dr. Hoffmann was extracted with difficulty from the débris and taken in a serious condition to the District Hospital at Aarberg, where he died on Monday morning. He was born in Basle in 1896, he studied Chemistry and law at various Universities and took the degree of doctor of law. In 1921 he was appointed Manager of the sister society at Brussels, and in 1930 he was transferred to the head office in Basle.

(Continued on back page).