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FEDERAL.

STATE AID FOR EXPORT.

A draft decree has been submitted to the Federal Parliament providing for financial aid to industrial concerns in order to prevent or relieve unemployment. For this purpose 2,500,000 francs will be placed at the disposal of the Federal Government and will be employed as subsidies to such manufacturers as can prove that they are not in a position to undertake foreign orders without such assistance and as are menaced by the necessity of discharging part of their staff or closing down.

A manufacturer must first, however, be able to prove that his concern can pay its way under normal conditions, that he has done his utmost to reduce cost of production, that he will not reap any profit on the particular order for which he receives financial aid (which will only apply to commodities manufactured in Switzerland and whenever possible made from raw or semi-manufactured materials of domestic origin), and that the particular order will provide work for a considerable number of operatives, or, alternatively for a smaller number over a lengthy period. State aid will only be granted in respect of orders for exportation.

It is stated that this scheme is of a provisional nature and may have to be modified later. Its chief advantage lies in the possibility it affords of keeping prospective unemployed in their particular trades and does away with the necessity for the State to place orders for the sole purpose of keeping certain industries occupied or else to initiate new schemes for work with which the unemployed are unfamiliar. These proposals are to be discussed by the Federal Assembly very shortly, as the matter is urgent.

M. MOTTA WITH THE SWISS COLONY AT MILAN.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, paid an informal visit to the Swiss Colony at Milan, on the occasion of his return from a holiday which he had spent in Sicily. M. Motta received a hearty reception when addressing the numerous gathering; he made a fervent appeal to his countrymen to support the League of Nations movement.

OFFICIAL RECEPTION AT THE BASEL FAIR.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, Dr. Abt, and Dr. Perrier, President and Vice-President respectively of the National Council, State Councillors Sigrist and Laely, Federal Judges Dr. Müri and Thélin, and many official delegations from various cantonal governments paid an official visit to the Basel Fair. A Banquet with 300 covers was offered to the guests, amongst the latter were included the Consular Corps as well as the President, Vice-President and General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements. Dr. Im Hof, President of the Basel Government, welcomed the participants, and made a detailed exposé of the aims of this well-known fair. M. Motta also spoke.

INTERNATIONAL BANK CAPITAL INCREASE.

A decision to issue a further 26,400 shares (of 2,500 Swiss gold francs each), and so increase its available capital, will, if a forecast in the local Press be correct, be taken at a meeting of the board of the Bank of International Settlements. When the bank was founded provision was made for an authorised capital of 500,000,000 Swiss francs (200,000 shares of 2,500 gold francs). However, only 173,600 shares were subscribed, and only 25 per cent. was paid up at the time, so that the paid-up capital amounts to 108,500,000 francs.

At the time of the founding of the bank, however, the board undertook to demand the full subscription of the share capital before the end of May, 1932. Thus an additional 26,400 shares

will have to be taken up by the seven founder banks. The directors will also discuss the favourable March accounts, and give attention to the preparation of the annual accounts for the approaching annual meeting and the question of the election of the board.

BRITISH "SWISS" CHOCOLATES.

Control of the English activities of the Swiss chocolate firm of Suchard has been taken over by Peck Frean and Co., Ltd. In the Meltis factory at Bedford an increased staff of British workpeople is producing, under the supervision of Swiss experts, all the Suchard specialities.

DONATIONS FOR AERONAUTICAL DISPLAYS.

The Federal Council has granted two donations of 5,000f. each for the International Air Display Meeting at Zurich, and the Gordon Bennett Competition; both meetings are taking place this year.

NEW CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL VETERINARY OFFICE.

Dr. Gottlieb Flückiger from Auswil (Berne) has been appointed chief of the Federal Veterinary office, in succession to the late Prof. Dr. Bürgi. Dr. Flückiger has a distinguished career behind him.

THIS YEAR'S INTERNATIONAL SHOW AT LUCERNE.

The Racing Club of Lucerne's programme for the nineteenth International Horse Show and Jumping Competition (Concours Hippique), to be held from July 2nd to July 10th, comprises 11 international competitions to be ridden on five days. Regulations, as last year, limit the number of foreign officers to a maximum of six per nation, and only allow three horses to be ridden by each competitor.

Federal Councillor Minger, head of the Military Department of the Swiss Confederation, is again President of the Committee of Honour and Divisional Colonel Favre the chairman of the jury. The competitions will be held in the magnificent park of the Halde, situated on the shores of the Lake of Lucerne, where the numerous existing natural jumps will be completed by artificial ones cleverly arranged.

SWISS COMMERCIAL ENVOYS IN BUDAPEST.

Professor Bachmann, General Manager of the National Bank, and National Councillor Dr. Wetter have returned from Budapest where they were in consultation with the authorities regarding a modification of the Clearing Agreement.

BASEL AS PORT IS GAINING IN SEA COMMERCE.

Though a Swiss navy may never be constructed, Switzerland at least is not without direct water connection with ocean traffic, as is implied in the popular pun based on this imaginary marine unit.

Basel, perhaps better known as the home of the World Bank, has through development of the Rhine and its port facilities, become an inland port of some note, and already a substantial volume of ocean commerce has been built up between Boston and that city.

Shipments of cocoa shells and waste for cattle; cotton waste, wool flakes, and waste for making blankets and similar goods; shoe machinery, and confections are being made regularly by American manufacturers through Boston to Basel.

Trial trips on the Rhine, between 1904 and 1906, showed that this river could be made navigable for commercial purposes. Work on the building of the so-called St. Johann port was started by the city of Basel in 1906. A quay, 1,968 feet long, was constructed and equipped with all necessary modern machinery on the left river bank, adjoining the Alsatian frontier. In 1919, Basel proceeded to construct the spacious Klein-Hünigen port on the right bank, adjoining German territory. This harbour was completed in 1922. With its huge cranes, storage houses, and silos, it affords an impressive sight. Its special railroad station is also operated by the Swiss Federal Railways.

Big commercial transports on the Rhine between Strasbourg and Basel are more or less dependent on weather conditions. At present, when the river is low, commercial traffic has to be temporarily suspended. But since the French canal authorities made the section from Hünigen to Basel navigable in 1925, Basel is privileged to avail itself of the extensive French and Belgian system of canals when the Rhine is too low.

Thanks to this 545-mile river course, grain from the United States and Canada is loaded at Rotterdam directly on to Swiss barges, from large transatlantic ships bringing from overseas.

For the present, Basel is the terminus of regular Rhine navigation, for beyond it the river is not navigable for large boats, tugs or barges. The Swiss "Niagara" lies at Neuhausen-Schaffhausen, between Basel and Lake Constance. A plan to build locks around the falls may be considered, according to shipping experts. Water traffic on the Rhine shows steady gains in volume, the 1930 traffic being more than twice the volume of that of 1928.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The firm Jakob Jaeggli and Cie, Manufacturers of Textile Machinery has celebrated the 90th Jubilee, and at the same time the golden wedding of their chief, M. Jäggli-Punter.

* * *

The improvements effected in the main station at Zurich, Swiss Federal Railways, have gone a long way towards making this terminal thoroughly worthy of the city which it serves. The spacious open platforms, the effect of the severely simple design of the roofing, and, above all, the extraordinary cleanliness resulting from almost exclusively electric traction, all go a long way towards creating a very favourable impression in the mind of the newly arrived traveller. But apart from these obvious and external improvements, a number have been made which will remain unknown to the ordinary passenger, but which are really even more worthy of commendation. For the accommodation of railway employees, many noteworthy amenities have been provided during the latter half of last year, including the provision of spacious restaurant, bath and dressing rooms, and an excellent reading room. These comfortable resting quarters are located in the main block of the express freight dépôt adjoining the main station, and statistics show that, since their opening, they have become deservedly popular with the men.

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Quite a number of spurious 100s notes have been in circulation of late; the falsification has been done very cleverly, and it needs almost an expert to detect the difference.

* * *

The budget of the canton of Zurich closes with a credit balance of 2,553,499f.; a deficit of 1,037,478 was expected.

BERNE.

Colonel Oscar Grimm, who was in command of the 9th mountain brigade when the war broke out, and who later on became town commander of Thun, died in Thun at the age of 65.

URI.

The voters of the canton Uri accepted last week the project of building a road for goods traffic into the Meiental, by a majority of 13 votes. The cost is estimated at 800,000f., of which amount 500,000f. will be paid by the Confederation.

GLARUS.

The "Näfelser Fahrt" took place last Thursday in which over 5,000 people took part, many patriotic speeches were delivered, and a religious service was held.

ZUG.

The police have been successful in laying hands on three men, all of them less than 25 years old, who have committed a great many burglaries, using sometimes violence when caught in the act.

FRIBOURG.

The accounts for 1931 of the Canton of Fribourg show a loss of 430,808f.

GENEVA.

A tramcar which travelled from La Croix de Rozon towards Geneva attained a terrific speed going down a hill, owing to the brakes not functioning; reaching a corner the heavy car left the rails and fell on its side. Eight passengers were badly shaken, some of them had to be taken to hospital, fortunately they could all leave after having been attended to.

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The "Cercle ouvrier international," which is a communist institution, has been closed by order of the State Council, as the premises were principally used for gambling purposes.

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