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The Swiss Observer

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HOME NEWS



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FEDERAL.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK RETURN.

The weekly statement of the Swiss National Bank at the end of April reveals a continuance of the highly liquid monetary conditions which have characterised the Swiss financial situation for so long. The gold holdings were practically unaltered at Frs. 2,438,621,229 (£96,700,000 approximately at par), while holdings of gold exchanges, which consist mainly of dollars, amount to Frs. 110,956,890 (about £4,400,000).

The only substantial alteration in the figures on the assets side appears under the item of Treasury bills, which increased during the week by Frs. 22,200,000 to Frs. 46,400,000, while on the liabilities side the note circulation increased by Frs. 67,803,405 to Frs. 1,529,074,655 (about £61,000,000), while other sight liabilities have decreased by Frs. 42,548,683 to Frs. 1,131,640,995. The proportion of gold to notes in circulation is 159 per cent.

B.I.S. PROFIT.

A net profit for the financial year ended March 31 of £15,100,000 Swiss francs (about £604,000 at par) is shown in the balance-sheet of the bank for International Settlements, which was approved at the second annual general meeting of the Bank.

A dividend of six per cent. on the paid-up capital, amounting to 6,400,000 Swiss francs, will be paid.

The Bank says that the year under review has been one of dramatic occurrence in the whole field of international finance. The Bank passed through three distinct phases of policy and of corresponding activity.

The first phase terminated about the time of the proposal of the Hoover Moratorium. The second phase terminated almost contemporaneously with the depreciation of sterling. The third phase prevailed for the remainder of the period, and its characteristics are still the controlling feature of present developments.

VISIT OF THE SWISS PRESIDENT TO THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

M. Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, and M. Schulthess, Vice-President, have paid a visit of condolence to the French Ambassador accredited to the Swiss Confederation, on the occasion of the death of M. Doumer, President of the French Republic. Messages have also been sent to Mme. Doumer, and M. Tardieu. The Swiss Minister in Paris has called at the Elysée.

SWISS-POLISH TRADE AGREEMENT.

After lengthy negotiations, a commercial treaty between Switzerland and Poland has been signed by Director Stucki, chief of the Federal political economy Dept. and Monsieur de Modzelewsky, the Polish Ambassador, in Berne.

SWISS IMPORT DECISION.

Drastic import restrictions have been decided on by the Swiss Federal Council. All categories of cereals, maize, meat, coffee, sugar, coal, petrol, benzol and the products of distillation of petrol, and oils of other kinds are included in the restrictions. The import of tobacco, whether leaf or waste, will also be restricted.

END OF DROUGHT IN SWITZERLAND.

In consequence of heavy rainfall in Switzerland, which was lately suffering from drought, there is no longer any need to restrict the use of electric power. The level of the lakes has risen so that navigation has been resumed on all of them.

LORD READING'S DOCTOR.

One of the most interesting doctors in London now is Herr Wetter, the man who saved the

lives of both Lady Leigh and Lord Reading in Egypt a few months ago.

Both of them have been entertaining him and his wife this week. Herr Wetter is a Swiss, and one of the greatest biologists alive. Money means so little to him that he says it bores him to death to send in his bill to his patients.

There's a doctor for you!

Sunday Referee.

TOURING IN SWITZERLAND.

For the benefit of those motorists who may contemplate a tour in Switzerland, the Swiss National Tourist Office has published in English, French, German and Italian, pamphlets defining the traffic regulations and speed limits in the various cantons. Copies of these useful pamphlets may be obtained upon application to the Traffic Department at Zurich.

CENTENARY FESTIVAL OF THE FEDERAL GYMNASTIC SOCIETY.

The Town of Aarau is getting ready to receive the numerous sections of Gymnastic Societies which will take part in the Centenary Festival on July 9th-18th. So far 920 sections, counting 20,166 members, have sent in their applications for participation.

DAVIS-CUP BELGIUM-SWITZERLAND.

Messrs. Aeschlimann and Fisher, the Swiss representatives of the International Tennis Tournament have beaten Messrs. Lacroix and Iwems, the Belgium challengers at Brussels.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Mr. Fritz Beurer-Böckli, senior partner of the Shoe Works Beurer at Zurich, died in Pura (Ticino) at the age of 72.

A fatal motor accident took place at Wülflingen, where two married men, E. Schumacher and Kasper Bannert were run over by a car. Both were taken to the cantonal hospital, but later succumbed to their injuries. The driver of the car stated that he could not see the two pedestrians owing to heavy rain falling.

BASEL.

The voting about the erection of a new Art Museum took place last Sunday. The result was a narrow majority for the proposal (6,830 yes, against 6,190 no).

GENEVA.

M. E. Farquet, President of the board of the Banque Populaire de Genève, has died following a motor accident, which took place early last month.

AARGAU.

Dr. Rudolf Siegrist (Socialist), has been elected a member of the cantonal Government, this is the first time in the history of the canton, that a socialist takes a seat in the Government.

ST. GALLEN.

The 71 years farmer, J. Bruggmann, from Niederwil, was attacked by a bull and received such serious injuries that he died.

The delegates Meeting of the Société des Commerçants Suisse took place at St. Gall on the 7th and 8th inst., 250 delegates representing 87 sections, took part in the deliberations, the London Section was represented by M. Stähelin, a former President of the Society.

THURGAU.

The accounts for 1931 of the canton of Thurgau close with a surplus of 12,000f. A budget estimate anticipated a deficit of 317,000f.

GRISONS.

From Chur comes the news of the death of Dr. Georgius Schmid, Bishop of Chur. In 1925 Dr. Schmid celebrated his 50th Jubilee as a priest.

A credit of 70,000f. was voted at Chur, for the undertaking of various works to help unemployment.

VAUD.

The death is reported from Vevey of M. Eugène Monod, the doyen of the vaudois notaries. M. Monod was a well-known and much respected personality.

TICINO.

The accounts of the canton Ticino close with a deficit of 400,026f.; a budget estimate anticipated a deficit of 286,876f.

15 YEARS' WORK OF THE COMMISSION DES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER.

A lecture on this subject was recently to be given by Dr. A. Latt, the former Secretary of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. Mr. C. Campart was to have taken the chair. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be cancelled at the last minute owing to a bad cold of Dr. Latt's. The following is a short extract from the lecturer's own notes.

(Editor S.O.)

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear old friends of the N.S.H.,

Professors are proverbial for being absent minded and forgetful. I did not forget, however, dear friends and countrymen, that I have been owing you a lecture for exactly eleven years. When I left you in April 1921 you had invited me to come to Steinway Hall for some sort of official leavetaking. Unfortunately a railway strike broke out the same day and I had to leave early in the morning to catch the last Channel boat. Soon after at Zurich, I was presented by you with a most magnificent timepiece with dedication and a letter of thanks which are of my most highly treasured possessions and my dearest memories of a very interesting eventful time in your service. 15 years ago to the day, I think, I faced for the first time, an audience of London Swiss in the little lecture Hall of 28, Red Lion Square. The subject of my first address was: *La N.S.H., ce qu'elle est, ce qu'elle a fait, ce qu'elle veut*. It would indeed be interesting to compare notes after 15 years, to see how far we have been able to realise the programme fixed in those days of anguish and war, to see if we are still of the same mind on questions of national and international importance, if we were right or wrong then, if we have been true to ourselves and to one another.

What strikes you at first sight is the apparent loss of ground of the N.S.H. at home. The number of groups has gone down to a figure less than half of what it was in 1917, and so has the number of members. Some people have left the ranks because they found the attitude of the Society too radical, others because they found it too conservative.

But if you could attend some of our meetings of delegates, you would be surprised and delighted to find most of the old leaders still at the helm, meeting for discussion in the old spirit of friendship. Professors Bohnenblust, Tanner, Nabholz, Dr. Steck, Leop. Gautier, Alex. François former Presidents, Prof. Durr, Dr. Diem, Schürch, Dr. Oehri, Koch, Daeniker, Ammann, Utzinger, Weilenmann, Col. Wildbolz, William Martin, Alb. Piccot — less frequently Profs. Bovet, de Reynold, Schoop, Pierre Kohler, Prof. Max Huber, Dr. Bodat, Dr. de la Harpe, Rob de Traz. Brilliant young lions have come forward: Prof. Jean de la Harpe, of Neuchâtel, the actual President, Prof. Schindler, Zurich, Dr. Isler, Basle, Drs. Lauterburg and v. Greyerz, Berne, Drs. Zellweger and Carratsch, Zurich, Aug. Bouvier, Geneva. The discussions are no longer so passionate as during those tragic days of the "Colonels" and other affairs, when the N.S.H. groups were the great bridge builders and did really a great service to the country in closing up that ominous "fossée," which for a time divided German and French Swiss public opinion on many questions. This service will always stand to the Society's credit as its chief merit. The ditch having been filled up we must not forget that it will always be necessary to be watchful and never to let the breach be reopened again.

You may remember how we used to discuss even in our group the problems of the N.S.H. at home. The strong foreign immigration has been checked by police measures and an amendment of the Constitution, but it is far from being solved yet. Our concern for the country's economic independence, which we also often discussed, has now given way to a still weightier problem: how to preserve our economic life in the present chaotic state of the world. The discussions we recently had on this question at Soleure were worthy of the Society's best work during the war. Indeed I venture to say that the N.S.H. has gained a much more influential position in our national life. What is said at our meetings, what is done by our members, finds a far wider echo in the Press than formerly. What our discussions have lost in fire and pathos they have gained in weight and wisdom. We have become older and more practical men. We are no longer

carried away by our idealism, but we have learned some of the arts of the politicians, to choose the right moment, to proceed with caution, not to waste our energies on things of minor importance. Though you hear less of the N.S.H., it decidedly has not decreased its activities and its titles to your trust for the future. If you want to know what it is doing just now, I can refer you to the "Bulletin" and especially to our new annual "Das Jahrbuch, Die Schweiz" of which I happen to be the Editor. I am not going to advertise my wares to-night, but I want to assure you that this publication, which we thought would be welcomed also by many Swiss abroad, is destined to perform a very important service to the people, at a time when our last periodicals of a truly national character are disappearing (Neue Schweizer Rundschau, Wissen und Leben, La nouvelle Semaine, after La Semaine Littéraire, La Revue de Genève, after La Bibliothèque Universelle, die Annalen, Schweizerland, Die Schweiz, Neue Schweizer Zeitung, Hilt's Jahrbuch, etc.). Of the remaining ones the yellow "Monatshefte" the "Rote Revue," the catholic "Schweizer Rundschau" are reserved each for the purposes of one party. "La Patrie Suisse" has changed its former character too, and the "Republikanische Blätter," though very brave, are not always of a standard to suit our public.

One of the first works we undertook was to defend German Switzerland's intell. independence. One of the means of defence was the buying up and publication in Switzerland of the "Sonntagsblätter" or weekly supplements to many Swiss papers. Though this enterprise is now discontinued (big illustrated weeklies having ousted the "Sonntagsblätter"), the lesson was learned; our small press is to-day decidedly better than at the beginning of the war. Its own press service which calls itself "La presse moyenne suisse" is carrying on in a businesslike way and in a truly Swiss and independent manner, the work done 15 years ago by Dr. Schoop, now professor at Neuchâtel, P. Kohler, now professor at Berne, Dr. Ammann, now General-Secretary of that great organisation the "Pro Senectute," Dr. Weilenmann, now Secretary of the "Volkshochschule." It is indeed remarkable how all those who for a time stood in the service of the N.S.H. are now at the head of great new services many of which have developed out of small seeds thrown into the fertile ground of our meetings. Think of the "Schweizerwoche" which is now such a power in the land, the Swiss League of Nation's Union in which our friends the late Dr. Zurlinden, Prof. Bövet, Col. Dollfus and Prof. de la Harpe, Dr. Oeri, and Wm. Martin have played and are still playing such a fine part.

And greatest of all, and most important for you is the Organisation des Suisses à L'étranger de la N.S.H., which with its 200 groups is already ten times stronger than the mother society. — And here comes in your merit, dear friends and members of the London group. The example given by you, the work done here, the initiatives gone out from your meetings have rendered the whole work possible. The spirit of patriotism which animated our meetings has spread like a contagion to the remotest corners, where Swiss are found in foreign lands. The groups of Berlin and Munich, founded as early as 1912, were dissolved at the outbreak of the war. The one at Paris, founded in 1914, has never succeeded in giving the Paris Colony the lead towards unity which yours was destined to exercise for a long time in the London Colony. The Barcelona group, recognised at the time as yours, has slightly changed its character and purpose, since it made the maintenance of the Swiss school of that colony its chief concern. Your group, when I started work, numbered 260 members. In 1919, together with the closely linked Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bradford and Nottingham sections, we were nearly a 1,000 strong, and our accounts and budgets showed figures of nearly Lst. 2,000 on either side. There were Dr. Vuillemier and Thelin, and for a time, Dr. Lang working at my office besides Miss Ettlinger, Miss Emmenegger, Miss Vögeli, Miss Crawford, Miss Gordon, Mrs. Müller, and a score of voluntary workers, the good services of many of whom I remember with sincere gratitude.

Besides dealing with a formidable correspondence, we were particularly busy writing and translating articles for the press, English, American, and Swiss, preparing lectures for the Colony and for British audiences, distributing information about Switzerland, defending her against prejudices or unfair attacks, endeavouring to promote a better understanding and ever more cordial relations between the two countries dearest to us. Our headquarters were small, so we expanded over the rooms of the "Swiss Institute" with which society we were very closely related.

Chance plays a great game with people's lives. Even those who have managed theirs most wisely know that. I had myself become a member of the N.S.H. only in 1915, in consequence of the great Berne meeting during the "Two Colonels affair." On the way home I met Dr. Schoop, afterwards Secretary of the N.S.H., and Dr. Adr. von Arx, now a Judge at the Federal

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Court, and soon we founded the Olten group. Your group was founded after a lecture by Dr. Georges Bonnard of Lausanne University, whose services to the N.S.H. were all contained in this creation. Mr. Campart received me first of all in his little "Newgate office" from where we sent out the invitations for my 1st lecture. Then we went to see Mr. Baer at Nestlé's, where Mr. Joss soon joined us, followed later by Mr. Ritter and Mr. Gerber. I am particularly happy to see you in the Chair to-night, dear Mr. Campart, the one solid rock in a rapidly changing world, and I am happy to have an opportunity publicly to thank you for the help you gave me, for your example of unwearied devotion to the welfare of this Colony and its various institutions. They are all indebted to you, but none more than was the N.S.H. and its 1st Secretary. With all of you I regret the absence to-night of Mr. A. F. Suter, your excellent President. He was the man who as Treasurer of the Group made its astonishing development possible. He pleaded for us with the firms on whose support we had to rely; he succeeded in making Mr. Wüthrich and Mr. Walser go begging for us. And well they did it. You had to give £100 sterling, if you wanted to be a really great and self-respecting firm! Of Mr. Baer, I know you have all the dearest memory. It was indeed a great thing for us all to have him as our first President. His kindness his knowledge of men and things, his patriotism and enthusiasm, his never failing tact and helpfulness have stood us good in many a difficulty. And now I have the pleasure of again collaborating with Mr. Baer on the Executive Commission of the Commission des Suisses à L'étranger, which is responsible for the management of the vast Organisation des S.E. and its Secretariat. Whenever we meet, Mr. Baer and I, we think of our common work in London, of the friends we left behind here. Alas, many have gone home for good, Mr. Roehrich and Mr. Dimier of Mr. Baer's dearest friends, good old Mr. Geilinger (whose questions and remarks were a little trying for your patience, Mr. Campart), Mr. Goetz, the courier diplomatique, Signor Cusi that good and generous heart, Mr. Rappard, Mr. E. Ziegler, Mr. Stauffer, Mr. Honegger, Mr. E. Ziegler and many others.

At Zurich I sometimes used to meet Mr. Meyer-Matthes, who was our Vice President and very active for a time, but, like far too many Swiss abroad when they return, he has not found his way into public life at home. I cannot name all those whom I shall always be grateful too, but forgive me to name at least M. le Ministre Carlin, whose kindness and friendship was so valuable to me, Mr. Ritter, who though always overwhelmed with work, and shouldering the cares and sorrows of so many others, never refused his help and advice, Mr. Wüthrich, Mr. Roost, Mr. Schaerer, Mr. Forrer, Mr. Pfändler, Mr. A. Steiger, Mr. Häusermann and Mr. Walser, whose personal friendship is so dear to my wife and me — and last but not least — you, dear Pasteur Hoffmann, whose devotion and zeal, whose eloquence and energy in the service of God and our country we all admire.

(To be continued.)

MUSICAL NOTES.

Our readers will be interested to hear, that Miss Nellie Palliser will sing the principal part in the Student Prince together with Mr. Harry Welshman next week, at the Golders Green Hippodrome.

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

May 3rd, 1932.

At times I am inclined to wonder if Mr. Pagani should not be considered rather as a public benefactor than one of London's finest restaurants for the excellence of the dinners provided for the City Swiss Club would seem to preclude any possibility of profit. At any rate Mr. Pagani surpassed himself on the 3rd of May when some seventy members and guests assembled under the protecting wing of Mr. Schubach to enjoy a "soirée familiale."

Hors d'oeuvre, many and various (verily Pagani should be as noted for its hors d'oeuvre as was formerly the Brasserie Universelle in Paris) were followed by a "Tortue Claire" which was described on the menu as false and was so delicious that it might just as well have been called real. Salmon, lamb cutlets, Surrey chicken and a bombe glacée. What more could the heart of man desire or the most chronic rôtisseur (if such there be) of the City Swiss Club require.

After dinner, the President announced that no minutes would be read, no business transacted and no speeches inflicted, but that we should be given a short concert by Madame Wyss and Mr. Nickolds.

Madame Wyss then sang several songs with her usual charm and delicacy. It is indeed a pleasure to listen to her for she has the gift of clearness and precision with a complete absence of effort and the purity of her voice is only equalled by the charm of her technique. Mr. Nickolds entertained us with some amusing sketches in one of which he gave us a rendering of the March of the Men of Harlech as if it had been composed by Mendelssohn, Grieg and other famous musicians.

He then played a little sketch something as follows:—

Five little fingers along the key board tore
One got bent up, and then there were four.
Four little fingers danced for very glee
One was cut off, and then there were three.
Three little fingers played like the dence,
One got lost, and then there were two.
Two little fingers, this rhyme will soon be done
One met a threshing machine, and so there was one.

One little finger played just as well alone
But it had to go, and so there were none.

Mr. Nickolds then played with the hand which was left

Just to show what he could do, if he were so bereft.

We then descended to the marble floor and danced on the Mosaic which is so well known to the frequenters of former Cinderellas. The orchestra did its work nobly and we danced energetically to Congress Dances and other tunes until the fatal hour of midnight inexorably brought the evening to a close.

I noticed that many of the ladies wore black and I therefore surmise with my usual knowledge that black will be a predominating colour this season. The sister of the wife of one of our most prominent members was wearing a particularly delightful creation in which a black lace insertion with the modern puffed sleeves gave a distinctive touch to an ensemble which was as original as it was attractive.

The evening was the President's first function during his year of office, and both Mr. Schubach and the Committee are to be congratulated. We are sure that it is an augury of success for the rest of his tenure.

ck.