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FEDERAL.

SWISS PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

Both Chambers of the Swiss Parliament have started their session on March 27th, they will sit for about three weeks.

NEW ARMY COMMANDS.

Colonel E. Döbi has been appointed commander of the 2nd Artillery Brigade; Colonel E. Burgunder from Berne will take over the command of the 3rd Artillery Brigade.

POLITICAL REFUGEES IN SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Police Dept. has issued instructions to the cantonal authorities regarding the immigration of political refugees and especially Jews. Owing to the seriousness of their situation, they will be allowed to enter Switzerland for the time being, but they will not be allowed to take up a position. Any foreigner, who is using his stay for political propaganda for and against a foreign country, or endangers the security of the State, will be expelled forthwith.

BASLE FAIR.

M. Schulthess, President of the Swiss Confederation, was prevented, owing to illness, attending the *official* day at the Basle Fair; his place was taken by Federal Councillor Pilet, Vice-President of the Confederation. Amongst the official guests were Dr. Wagnière and Dr. Dunant, Swiss Ministers at Bruxelles and Paris respectively, as well as the Swiss Consuls in Besançon, Lyon, Mannheim, Mühlhausen, Strassburg and Stuttgart.

The Swiss Parliament was represented by M. Huber, Vice-President of the National Council, and M. H. Schupbach, National Councillor; M. A. Riva, Vice-President States Council, and M. Edwin Hauser, States Councillor; the Federal tribunal delegated Dr. Engeler and Dr. Léon Robert. Most of the cantonal governments were also represented by delegations. During the Banquet which was offered to the official guests, various speeches were made.

Federal Councillor Pilet in his speech pointed out, that the situation in which Switzerland finds itself at the present moment, was serious but not desperate. "Switzerland has," he said, "weathered the storm during the world war, and has emerged from this struggle stronger than before; in spite of great competition from abroad, our country has been able during the last years, to get a fair share in the export market, and without the backing of a great Army has been able to assert its place in the sun. Although times are bad, and small hope can be held out for an immediate improvement, we must not lose courage, as this would be the surest sign of defeat; we have the will to live, and to fight, this will is tenacious and inexorable, and combined with the will to fair competition and a strict honesty in all our dealings, we will be able to affirm our position, which we have honourably held hitherto in the world market."

CENTENARY JUBILEE OF THE "VATERLAND."

Our contemporary the "Vaterland," which circulates in Lueerne, has celebrated its 100th birthday anniversary, on which occasion a very interesting Jubilee number has been published.

Many prominent politicians, amongst them Federal Councillors Motta and Musy have sent their congratulations; high dignitaries of the Catholic church, diplomats and a score of men famous in Art and Literature have sent greetings.

The Swiss Observer sends across the sea its fraternal greetings and congratulations to this conspicuous event, coupling it with the best wishes for future fruitful work in the interest of our country.

INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

The Swiss Federal Government has examined the British Disarmament Plan and has decided to instruct the Swiss delegation at the Disarmament Conference to support it. The Federal Council, however, makes some reservations in regard to the number of aeroplanes that would be allowed to Switzerland, being of opinion that the number is insufficient to ensure the defence of the country.

SWISS GERMAN TRADE AGREEMENT.

The trade agreement between Switzerland and Germany, which normally would have ended on the 31st of March, has been extended until 31st July.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A large fire, which lasted for over 12 hours, has completely destroyed the builder's yard of the firm Locher & Co., at the Allmendstrasse, the damage caused is estimated to reach nearly 1 million francs.

* * *

The case of the Banking firm Wolfensberger-Widmer, which was opened last week before the Zurich Criminal Court, is likely to suffer some delay, owing to the fact that the prosecution has not yet been able to put the necessary material before the Court. Considering that this action is pending since 1928, the entire Press condemns the slow practice of the Zurich judicial authorities.

* * *

Dr. E. Buomberger has been elected member of the town council of Zurich with 26,782 votes, M. E. Muntwyler (Socialist) has received 25,130 votes.

BASLE.

Dr. August Huber, keeper of the archives, of the canton of Basle has retired from his post which he occupied for fifteen years.

ST. GALLEN.

As a result of the recent elections to the Grand Council the strength of the parties is as follows: 79 conservatives (76); 56 radicals (62); 34 socialists (33); 1 democrat (1); 1 evangelical party (1); 2 peasants party (0); 1 communist (0); a total of 174 members (173).

VAUD.

The population of the town of Lausanne per 31st of March amounts to 81,387 inhabitants.

TICINO.

The accounts of the Canton of Ticino for 1932 show a deficit of 420,974f.

* * *

M. Polar, the successor of National Councillor Tarchini, who recently resigned his seat, has taken the oath, on the occasion of the opening of the present Parliamentary session.

FOOTBALL.

2nd April, 1933.

INTERNATIONALS.

In Geneva :
Switzerland 0 Italy 3

In Novara :
Italy B 5 Switzerland B 0

FIRST LEAGUE.

Montreux 5 Grenchen 0
Etoile 0 Bern 0

And so the bubble has burst before 24,000 disappointed spectators in Geneva. We have lost, and how! A year ago we broke a long sequence of defeats by drawing with France in Bern, followed by victories over Czechoslovakia and Hungary, an honourable 3:1 defeat in Vienna, then again wins over Sweden and in Holland. Three weeks ago we could only hold Belgium to a draw, and now this clear and decisive 0:3 defeat. And our second string fared even worse. Here are the teams:

Switzerland: Sécheyre; Minelli, Weiler; Gilardoni, Baumgartner, Rauch; v. Känel, Passello, Poretti, Xam, Jaeck.
Italy: Combi; Rosetta, Caligaris; Pizzoli, Monti, Bertolini; Costantino, Meazza, Schiavio, Ferrari, Orsi.
Referee: L. Baert (Belgium).

During the first quarter of an hour, both teams were well matched but the superior speed of the Italians was coming more and more in

evidence. Jaeck misses an easy chance 10 yards out after 20 minutes even play. The Azzurri are thankful for this let-off and return the kindness by continued pressure and in the 34th minute the centre forward Schiavio scores. Italy dominate play till half-time.

Barely three minutes after resuming Costantino shoots, Sécheyre can only beat out the ball and Schiavio converts easily. Some twenty minutes later a surprise shot from 25 yards out by Meazza beats Sécheyre again, to make it 3:0. Italy were far quicker on the ball, had better ball control and superior tactics. Our team on the day was clearly outclassed (corners 10:2 against) and Italy deservedly won a clean game, the first in the new series for the Europa Cup.

And in May we are to meet Jugoslavia and England. How many goals start would we get against the latter, if there was such a thing as a handicap in football? As you know, England play Italy first in Rome and at home the Azzurri are just as dangerous as the Jugoslavs. It is a pity the England team did not fulfil all expectations in Glasgow, meaning further changes for the Continental games.

M.G.

SWITZERLAND'S ECONOMIC POSITION.

DR. RUEFENACHT'S N.S.H. LECTURE.

Owing to the generally sound condition of her economic and financial structure, Switzerland has felt the effects of the world crisis later than most of the other countries. Whilst in other nations the crisis began already two or even three years ago, it was really only last year, 1932, that she became aware, first of all, of the very disquieting shrinkage of her export trade, which forms a vital branch of Swiss economy. Being a country which has practically no raw materials, Switzerland has, for years, had an adverse balance of trade, with the exception of the year 1916 only. There was, however, nothing to worry about as long as our flourishing tourist industry and the incoming receipts from investments abroad compensated, in our balance of payments, for the loss. The end of 1932, however, showed, that our exports had dropped to 801 million francs as compared with 1,350 million francs in 1931, while our imports shrunk from 2,251 million francs to 1,763 million francs. I may mention in this connection that, according to the most recent estimates of the League of Nations, the volume of international trade has fallen by about a third since 1929 and prices by a half. At the end of last year, we were left with an adverse balance of trade of nearly one milliard francs, to be exact 962 million francs. In order to reduce, as much as possible, the adversity of the balances of trade, the Government have decreed a system of import quotas, according to which importers in Switzerland have to obtain licences to import certain goods at the old rates of duty. Under otherwise normal conditions even such a tremendous deficit in our external trade as mentioned above could perhaps be met, but unfortunately the crisis is not only felt in our export trade, but also in the home industry and in the field of what is often called our invisible exports.

As a consequence to world conditions in general and to restrictive measures taken by many countries with regard to travel, our tourist industry was very severely hit and the Swiss hotels which had just recovered from the effects of the war, stood empty again. I can myself remember an instance, when, in the summer of 1931, I was staying at a large hotel in the Bernese Oberland where there were 60 visitors and 65 employees. This was deemed bad enough at the time, but it would perhaps have been considered satisfactory during the winter season 1931/32 and the summer of 1932, which were probably the worst ever experienced by our hotel industry. I am glad to say, however, that since then a certain improvement can be observed and this winter season seems to be considerably better than could be expected.

Another item of our invisible exports, the receipts from our investments abroad, presents a great difficulty owing to the fact that most of these credits are what is called "frozen." The Swiss Government have concluded clearing agreements with several countries but these have not proved very satisfactory so far. Therefore these receipts are lacking, just like those of the tourist industry, and cannot make up for the heavy loss in our balance of trade.

It is no wonder, therefore, that our budget is threatened with a deficit amounting to approximately 70 million francs. To meet this deficiency, it is proposed to increase receipts and reduce expenditure. The first point presents an especially difficult problem, the Swiss citizen being already very heavily taxed. As a matter of fact, he is said to be the most heavily taxed individual on the Continent. It is intended to impose levies on tobacco, alcoholic beverages and mineral waters, eventually also to increase the duties on tea and coffee. Furthermore, it is also question of increasing the Federal Stamp and Coupon Tax. Among the proposed reductions of expenditure, the foremost is the one in the salaries of all the Federal Civil Servants. This reduction is fixed at 7½% and will take place as from 1st July 1933. The law fixing this reduction being subject to the referendum, a popular vote will be taken in May next. Reductions are also to be effected with regard to the very numerous and, in part, large subsidies granted by the Confederation to the Cantons and a great number of organisations. This is, however, possible only in a limited way, many of the subsidies being fixed by law.

The Confederation faces a further and very heavy burden if, as proposed, it takes over the debt of the Swiss Federal Railways, amounting to nearly 900 million francs. The railroads in particular are suffering from the crisis which has heavily reduced passenger and goods traffic. There is furthermore another factor which is causing great concern to the Federal Authorities, namely the question of the competition between rail and road. A short while ago Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz, the head of the Department of Railways, spoke on this matter at Basle; he said that a solution could not be found in a one-sided decision either in favour of the road or the railways, but only in a practical compromise which would have to take into consideration the peculiarities of both means of transport. As you know the same question is very much in the foreground in England, and I suppose that you have heard or read about the Salter Report, which was published some time ago and which has aroused much comment, especially from the road users.

Our Government is facing other problems. I may mention in this connection the question of unemployment which, although not as grave as in England, is becoming more and more threatening. The unemployment figures have been rising steadily and we have now over 100,000 unemployed, whilst a year ago there were about 57,000. It is, therefore, proposed to place restrictions upon foreign labour.

In agriculture, the repercussion of the crisis is also strongly felt, and during the second half of 1932 the price of agricultural products dropped more rapidly than the cost of production which led to a corresponding reduction of the purchasing power of the peasants. The raw production of agriculture attained 1,281 millions, which is 122 million francs below the figure registered for the preceding year.

Fortunately there are also some lighter spots. Among the Swiss industries, in which business seems still to be satisfactory, is the beer industry, the profits of which reached the same level as in 1931. Furthermore, the Swiss Gas Works registered in 1932 an increased production; 19,000 new gas-meters were installed last year.

In conclusion I may be allowed to say a few words about the financial position. Switzerland has become a centre of large amounts of capital for investment or credit purposes. Small among powerful countries, and having but a few natural factors in her favour, she seemed in no way prepared to assume such a part. It is true that Switzerland did not go to war and was able to maintain her exchange untouched. During the war she became a welcome refuge for foreign capital, which enlarged the field of activity of the bankers and led to the organisation of Swiss finance on an international scale. Up to the present time the anxiety or criticisms which are at times expressed with regard to the advisability of such activity have not been justified, for in case of a sudden withdrawal of large capitals, a reserve of more than one milliard francs lies in the Swiss banks ready to return where it came from without causing inconvenience or difficulty. The latest figures published by the Swiss National Bank show that its gold reserve has reached 2 milliard 566 million francs. This corresponds to a gold cover of Swiss Bank Notes of 170%, whereas the legal limit is fixed at 40%. The issuing bank would thus be able to repay the totality of its notes and short term liabilities. It is no wonder therefore that the Swiss Authorities are firmly opposed to any abandonment of the gold standard.

In the foregoing I have given you a very sketchy and most incomplete survey of the state of Swiss economic and financial affairs. It is on the whole a rather gloomy picture, but I would not finish without saying that we place our sincere hope in the wisdom of the Swiss Authorities and in the courage of the Swiss people which, both combined, will certainly help to overcome the worst crisis which has been known for a long time.

EASTER 1933.

By KARBURG.

In countless churches and other religious assembly places, all over the Christian world, countless, fervid voices will, on Easter Sunday, testify to the relief which, once again, fills our hearts when we remember the resurrection of our Lord.

Easter, the blessed festival of *Spring* is once again with us. Gone is the winter, gone are the cold blasts of winter's storms, gone are the long, dreary nights, gone the dark chilly mornings and before us opens up a period of bright, sunny, warm days, scented evenings and nights, in short, we are about to live again.

This resurrection, this miracle of Easter fills us every year with new wonder, fresh awe and, although we can explain the phenomena quite easily and even scientifically, deep down in our hearts we feel that there is indeed something miraculous involved in this Easter or resurrection, something which touches not only our physical well-being, but makes our pulse beat faster, just because of its mysteriousness.

Easter renews our faith. It is far easier to believe in the goodness of mankind when life is sunny, than it is during the dark, unhealthy days of winter. It is far easier to have faith in the ultimate destination of mankind when indulging in one's favourite philosophical thoughts while ambling leisurely beneath the luscious green of trees in the proud panoply of their first foliage, than when the same thoughts assail us while we are struggling hard, backs bent, eyes smarting with the driven rain, ears aching with the fury of unwonted wind-pressure, across the barren heath or under leafless storm-twisted trees. In other words, creature comfort or otherwise determines to some extent our outlook on life, our philosophy, unless, indeed, we are ascetics.

In these times of general depression it must make us think sometimes when we reflect that even now, after 1933 years since the time of the first Easter, Christian humanity has made but little advance towards fulfilling the commands of the founder of our religion. Take that root-exhortation "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

It is a command which might well be taken as the basis of Christian, and probably also of several other religions.

As far as I can discern, a small beginning towards its fulfilment has been made, inasmuch as we are being taught when young to act accordingly. We learn later in life, that it is a maxim "which pays" and, therefore, a good maxim to follow in business. We have learnt too to base our political institutions on the same command, but only as far as each country is concerned. We have not yet learnt to adopt this command in our dealings with our foreign brethren, whom, because we still consider them to be foreign, we will not admit into our charmed circle. We still think that in dealing with foreigners, we must adopt other methods. Why? Nobody seems to be able to explain satisfactorily, and the results achieved are hardly such as to denote wisdom on the part of those who persist in believing that foreigners must be dealt with otherwise than what is considered and proved by experience, right, fit and proper when dealing with our own folk.

And so, because the World at large still persists in its refusal to acknowledge the common brotherhood of mankind, the world at large has to pass through untold miseries, so that it may learn the lesson.

The "economic blizzard" of which we hear so much nowadays, is, of course, directly attributable to the stupid disunion which separates peoples economically and politically.

The consequent miseries suffered in all countries at the present time, cannot be explained away by anything else.

And yet, have we not learnt at school that Union Makes for Strength? United we stand divided we fall, etc.

We know what is wrong, but we cannot alter it, or then only very slowly, one tiny little step forward at the time, for fear that we stumble. Would it not be a thousand times better to stumble on the way to progress and sanity, than to stand erect and still in the damp, unwholesome, loathsome spot in which humanity has stood for thousands of years and in which the air has almost given out and where suffocation seems the natural outcome of all the horrible mess.

It is seemingly evident that humanity has not reached its *Easter* yet. We are still in deep winter. We begin to understand slowly and painfully that there is a *Solidarity* which chains the various members of the human family together in iron chains, chains which are unbreakable, the chains of hunger, want, despair, of acute suffering and misery.

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It may well be that poor humanity, so slow to learn from experience, must be made to feel, if it won't heed!

It may be too that after some time of misery, pain and trouble, Humanity will really begin to wonder why this Solidarity should not be made into a Solidarity of peaceful enjoyment?

If there is Solidarity — and who lives there to-day who could still be blind to the fact that if one member of the human family suffers, all the others suffer too? — Why then in Heaven's name, all this economical and political separation, why all this stupid Nationalism, why all these jealousies from one Nation to the other, from one country to the other?

Why endure Solidarity, instead of enjoying it?

That is my Easter-Query. Ask yourself the question and try to answer it, fearlessly and honestly, and in doing so, you will not only come nearer towards understanding the command of our Lord. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," but you may help, each in its place, a little bit towards preparing the way towards the desired goal.