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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

TRADE OF SWITZERLAND.

The economic situation in Switzerland has not undergone any considerable changes during the last few months. Its main characteristic continues to be a stability which extends itself to nearly all branches of production and exchanges. During the first three months of 1934, imports attained 352.8 millions, and exports 199.5 million Swiss francs. An improvement of the trade balance is thus noted, the surplus of imports over exports being 153.3 millions, against 170.3 millions for the corresponding period last year.

The Swiss index of the cost of living continues to remain firm, amounting to 131 (1914 = 100); whereas the wholesale price index has now reached 91.4 (1914 = 100), marking a slight rise compared with 1933. Building still constitutes an important economic factor, although activity in this field is somewhat less intense than during the preceding years. In 1933, 5,000 buildings were constructed in Swiss localities of over 2,000 inhabitants, including over 13,000 apartments.

A further improvement on the labour market is generally reported, unemployment having decreased in several branches, partly owing to seasonal influences. To the end of March, the number of unemployed amounted to 70,000. A factor highly in favour of the country's national economy was the success of the winter sports season, which, owing to favourable conditions, exceeded expectations.

During the first three months of 1934, the demand for capital noted during the past few months has maintained itself. Issues attained a very high total (406,000,000,000 francs). Of this sum, the portion of demands for new capital amounted to 150,000,000, viz., three times more than during the corresponding period of 1933. It should be underlined, however, that the contributions of private economy to this demand are unimportant. Public loans played the most active part in this connection.

The situation of the Swiss National Bank continues to be a strong one, in spite of the gold exports it was forced to make during the last few months. The issuing establishment was able to face these mass withdrawals without difficulty. It is remarkable that from the beginning of this movement on, that is, from the end of February, the cover of notes and other bills at sight by gold and gold currencies underwent only a slight reduction, and remained higher than the figure reported at the end of last year.

The cover in percentage of notes in circulation and other bills at sight by gold and gold currencies amounted to: End of December, 1933, 91.60 per cent.; end of February, 1934, 94.77 per cent., and on April 23rd, 1934, 92.21 per cent. These figures prove that the National Bank was not called upon to operate the repayment of foreign capital. The market paid the demand for currencies with its own means.

THE PERSONNEL OF THE CONFEDERATION.

The number of people employed by the Swiss Confederation on March 31st amounted to 63,448 (1933, 64,156), amongst them 31,166 being employed by the Swiss Federal Railways.

NO GOLD EXPORTS.

The Swiss National Bank return shows that there were no exports of gold from Switzerland in the week ended May 7th.

SWISS TEXTILE EXPORTS.

Textile exports from Switzerland during March, 1934, were not only higher than February, 1934, but were also in advance of those for March, 1933, the respective figures being 19,500,000, 16,300,000, and 17,200,000 francs. With

the exception of woollen fabrics, exports increased under all headings, viz., cotton yarns and fabrics, silk fabrics, rayon, embroidery, knit goods, and worsted yarn.

70TH BIRTHDAY OF COLONEL BRIDLER.

Army Corps Commander Colonel Bridler has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

Colonel Bridler retired from the command of the 2nd Army Corps in October, 1931, but he still takes a great interest in the military affairs of our country.

SWISS TIMBER TRADE.

Up to the middle of the last century, Switzerland was among the countries with an excess of timber. Two-thirds of the country's woodlands, which cover 985,000 hectares, are municipal forests, the balance being privately and State owned. In 1930 the home timber production was about 27,000,000 cubic metres, in face of a consumption of approximately 4,000,000. Timber imports were 597,000 tons, valued at 545,000,000 francs, and 602,000 tons, estimated at 454,000,000 for 1932 and 1933 respectively.

Last year Austria supplied 52 per cent. and Germany 39 per cent. of the soft round wood import. Arrivals of sawn soft wood are steadily decreasing; in these supplies Austria's share in 1933 was 41 per cent., America's 20 per cent., Poland's 12 per cent., and Germany's only 7 per cent.

Following the adoption of various Government measures, there was a heavy decline of the sawn soft wood imports during last year. The Swiss saw mill industry recently applied to the Government for a further reduction of sawn soft wood imports, viz., to 50 per cent. of the import quantity during 1925/9.

SOLVING SURPLUS MILK PROBLEM.

The success of a series of new regulations designed to solve the surplus milk problem is reported from Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Government now has in operation three means of meeting this problem, which has assumed serious proportions since the depression. Subsidies of between 100—120 Swiss francs, it is stated, are being paid for every head of older milk cattle slaughtered and canned. The meat is then sold by arrangement with the local authorities at reduced prices to the poor. Sausages and beef extracts are also produced from the carcasses and distributed in a like manner.

Apart from the slaughter programme, it is added, efforts are being made to stimulate the export of cattle. These range from State aid in the payment of transport costs in export, and the making of contributions towards the purchase price obtained for cattle to be exported. Since the inception of the new plan, it is stated, 5,000 head of cattle have been slaughtered for canning and 8,000 head have been exported.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Tobler, clerk of the District Tribunal at Zurich, who is a militant member of the "National Front," has been given two months' notice, as the political views which Dr. Tobler holds are making it undesirable that he should continue to act as a public servant.

* * *

Dr. Karl Hafner has been elected President of the Cantonal Government for 1934/35.

Dr. U. Ritter, late professor at the "Töchter-schule," has died at the age of 75.

BERNE.

The elections for the cantonal government in Berne ended with a victory for the bourgeois parties. The following members were re-elected: Bösiger, 82,667 votes; Dürrer, 82,918; Gugisberg, 82,569; Joss, 81,754; Mouttet, 82,631; Rudolf, 82,204; Stähli, 82,714; Stauffer, 82,277. Seematter has been elected to replace Dr. Merz, who recently resigned.

The Socialist candidates were: Roth, 54,459 votes; Abrecht, 53,338; Périnat, 51,937. Seventy per cent. of the electorate went to the poll.

The elections for the Grand Council brought considerable gain to the Socialists. They increased their strength by ten seats. The state of the parties in the Grand Council is now as follows:

Peasant and Bourgeois	...	101, formerly 101
Liberals	...	33 "
Socialists	...	79 "
Cath. Conservatives	...	10 "
Heimatwehr	...	3 "
Freigeld	...	1 "

From Biel comes the news of the death of Dr. H. Ryser, a well-known medical practitioner, at the age of 67. Dr. Ryser was for many years lecturer on internal diseases at the University of Berne.

LUCERNE.

The population of the canton of Lucerne on the 1st of December, 1930 (last federal census), was, according to figures just published 189,391 (1900: 146,519; 1850: 132,843).

GLARUS.

The "Gemeindebeschreiber" in Oberurnen, Fridolin Zindel, has resigned from his post which he has held for 61 years; he is 79 years of age.

NEUCHATEL.

The deficit for 1933 of the town of Neuchâtel amounts to 906,836 francs.

* * *

M. Arnold Benz, director of posts in Neuchâtel, has resigned his position.

ST. GALLEN.

A large fire destroyed three houses at Oberuzwil; twenty-six persons are without a home. Owing to the ferocity of the fire barely any furniture could be saved.

VAUD.

Dr. M. Welti has been elected clerk of the Federal Tribunal at Lausanne, in succession to Dr. Hans Huber, who has been made a judge of the Supreme Court.

* * *

M. Jules Dufour, who was from 1920 to March, 1934, head of the Police and Justice Department, has died at the age of 59. M. Dufour reached the rank of Colonel of Infantry in the Army.

LES ELECTIONS BENOISES.

M. von Ernst, le chroniqueur bernois du "Vaterland," écrivait l'autre jour que le canton de Berne est à la Confédération ce que la Prusse est au Reich, et que les mouvements électoraux dans cet Etat majeur revêtent pour l'ensemble du pays suisse un caractère capital. Il n'y avait guère là d'exagération, et le fait est qu'on attendait, dans toute la Suisse, avec une curiosité extrême et beaucoup d'impatience, le résultat des élections bernoises.

C'était pourtant moins, apparemment, parce qu'il s'agissait du gros canton à la ville fédérale que, tout simplement, parce que la température politique n'arrête pas de s'élever dans le pays et que les partis ont hâte de recenser et de regrouper leurs forces sur tout le terrain national.

D'un canton à l'autre, il se fait ainsi une sorte de plébiscite — pour ou contre le socialisme — dont on pourrait sans doute retrouver l'origine, ou la cause, dans les élections d'il y a six mois, à Genève.

Le fait est que les électeurs bernois ont été appelés aux urnes au cri de "Comme à Genève ou comme à Neuchâtel?" et que des politiciens genevois sont allés mener campagne à ce propos chez nos Confédérés. On sait les incidents qui marquèrent le voyage de M. Nicole et, d'autre part, comment furent détaillées, analysées et commentées là-bas toutes les péripéties de la politique genevoise.

Il en était allé de même à Neuchâtel et le résultat en fut une massive levée de boucliers contre le socialisme. Cet impressionnant scrutin surveillait au plus fort de l'agitation électorale chez les voisins bernois, qui se trouvaient bien en face du dilemme précisément posé: Genève ou Neuchâtel?

Ils ont choisi Neuchâtel, mais sans passion assurément, et l'on ne saurait parler d'un coup de barre à droite, comme les électeurs neuchâtelois en donnaient un voici huit jours.

Ils ont choisi Neuchâtel dans ce sens qu'ils ont élu les neuf candidats de la coalition nationale, tandis que les trois candidats socialistes sont renouvelés, avec un écart de 30,000 voix.

La victoire des premiers est donc très nette, mais, aussi bien, elle était courue d'avance et, à aucun moment, contrairement à ce qu'on vit à Neuchâtel, les socialistes ne furent vraiment près du pouvoir.

Les agrariens pourtant leur avaient offert de participer au gouvernement, en leur cédant un siège, d'autrui d'ailleurs, celui d'un radical dé-

missionnaire. Ils y mettaient comme conditions la renonciation à la lutte des classes et l'adhésion à la défense nationale de la part des socialistes. Ceux-ci préfèrent ne rien répondre sur ces points délicats et courir eux-mêmes leurs chances devant l'électeur. Un moment, ils voulaient briguer la majorité exécutive, en présentant cinq candidats, puis ils se ravisèrent en ne réclamant plus que trois des neuf sièges du Conseil d'Etat.

C'était de sage politique, de tactique avisée, car une campagne pour la conquête absolue du pouvoir eût certainement, et comme à Neuchâtel, galvanisé les électeurs bourgeois et abouti pour les socialistes à une plus grosse défaite que celle d'aujourd'hui, laquelle est suffisamment nette pour prouver que l'extrême-gauche ne saurait même être représentée au gouvernement sans le concours ou, du moins, le consentement d'un des deux grands partis bourgeois.

Cependant, si les Bernois ont suivi l'exemple neuchâtelois pour l'élection du Conseil d'Etat, ils se sont prononcés tout autrement au législatif; même, là, ils ont voté à gauche, sans aller bien loin, il est vrai, car l'avance socialiste s'explique en partie du fait de l'apparition, côté bourgeois, de nouvelles formations politiques, lesquelles empêchent souvent l'apparition des listes nationales et provoquent l'éparpillement des voix.

Il n'en reste pas moins qu'aux dernières nouvelles — quelques résultats, au moment d'écrire ces lignes, manquent encore — les socialistes gagnent dix sièges. Sur le bord extrême, par contre, la Heimatwehr, qui, pour la première fois et dans quelques districts seulement, manifestait une activité électorale, obtient trois sièges au coup, et cet événement d'un parti fasciste au parlement doit être aussi souligné.

Contrairement encore à ce qu'on a vu à Neuchâtel, les radicaux d'abord font, à Berne, les frais de la journée, en perdant huit sièges.

On peut déduire pourtant du scrutin que les socialistes ont bénéficié de l'augmentation du nombre des députés, c'est-à-dire de l'accroissement de la population, tandis que les nationalistes ont réalisé leur succès au détriment surtout des partis bourgeois, dits historiques.

Au total, d'ailleurs, ces élections ne modifient guère la physionomie d'un Grand Conseil, hier de 224 membres, aujourd'hui de 228. Devant un pareil effectif de députés les modifications tracées par le scrutin de dimanche sont loin d'être décisives, et c'est plutôt la stabilité parlementaire qui ressort de cette consultation.

RODO MAHERT.

(“Tribune de Genève.”)

SWITZERLAND ASSERTS HERSELF AS WORLD'S PLAYGROUND.

Offers “New Deal” and Many Attractions.

“More value for less money”! This is Switzerland's slogan for the coming season, and it certainly sounds intriguing. To begin with, a special reduction of 30 per cent. will be granted by the Swiss Railways and the Postal Motor Coach Services on tickets issued at the agencies of the Swiss Federal Railways or Tourist offices abroad. This rebate will be in force from July 1 to September 30, also during the winter season from December 15, 1934, to March 15, 1935, provided that the visitor stays at least seven days in Switzerland. Since some of the tickets enjoy already other rebates, the above additional reduction represents, in some instances, a saving of as much as 55 per cent. on the regular fare.

Visitors who are contemplating a longer sojourn in the land of the Alps will, if they are inclined to do considerable sightseeing, find an “abonnement” ticket a rare bargain, for during its validity of 8, 15 or 30 days, as the case may be, this wonder ticket entitles to an unlimited number of trips over all the principal lines and lakes in the country. Mountain railways grant substantial reductions to the holders of abonnement tickets, and the Federal Postal authorities allow them a rebate of 20 per cent. during July and August. For a fifteen-day validity, second class railroad and first class steamer the net cost of such a ticket is 127 Swiss francs.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

We very much regret to learn that Mr. Arthur L. Fraissard, of 6, Sudbrook Gardens, Ham, Surrey, was a passenger of the ill-fated French air liner from Le Bourget to Croydon, which crashed in the Channel on the 9th of May.

Mr. Fraissard was an active member of the City Swiss Club since 1920. On behalf of all the members of the Club, we beg to tender to Mrs. Fraissard and family our deep and sincere sympathy in their sad bereavement.

THE COMMITTEE.

The Swiss “New Deal” has also established itself firmly among the hotels and some of the “five-day pension rates” now offered by good establishments will make a visitor feel that he is actually saving money while enjoying the miraculous benefits and countless delights of a vacation in Switzerland. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that delicious cold luncheons are always cheerfully packed for those who want to make excursions from their respective headquarters, so that none of the advantages of the five-day pension rate need be relinquished.

While cut rates thus prevail in transportation and the cost of living, preparations on a most lavish scale have been made everywhere for the general entertainment of the visitors.

Celebrating festivals is a traditional weakness of the Swiss people. Ancient customs and traditions are sacred to them, and the fêtes which are being organised in these and other connections are consequently of a most varied and fascinating nature. Outdoor sports and pastimes also play a vital rôle, and throughout the year there is a steady offering of artistic and intellectual events of a very high order.

This year, May, the resplendent month of the transition from spring to summer, will see the formal opening of the millennial celebrations of the Benedictine Monastery at Einsiedeln. From May 6th until October 14th, this historic pilgrimage resort will be the scene of a series of jubilee festivities and a historical exhibition will, at the same time, be featured in the Fürstensaal of the abbey buildings.

Lucerne, a synonym for scenic splendour, will open its Lido on May 15th, with a large group of other bathing beaches following suit at that time or soon after. The establishment of these beaches has brought a new independence to Switzerland. Veritable fortunes have been spent throughout the land upon their development, with the result that in lake — or Alpine resorts with perfect mountain background one finds beaches of shining cleanliness with lavish equipment for aquatic pastimes, and velvety lawns for physical culture games.

May 31st, Corpus Christi Day, will fill lovers of the aesthetic with a keen sense of satisfaction, for in the Roman Catholic parts of Switzerland there are processions where the costumes of olden times are resuscitated for that day.

Important season events are bobbing up in the month of roses. On June 3rd, Montreux, on the Lake of Geneva, will hold a big automobile race, the “Grand Prix de Montreux,” and Geneva, on the other end of this beautiful expanse of water, promises its annual flower festival for June 23rd and 24th.

June 24th will usher in the “William Tell” season at Interlaken, and open-air performances of Schiller's immortal drama will from that day on be given in this gay tourist metropolis of the Bernese Oberland every Sunday afternoon until and including September 9th. For the greater convenience of the spectators, the auditorium has been covered. The stage, however, enjoys Nature's own inimitable settings, and remarkable true-to-life effects are thus produced. On June 29, 30, and July 1 there will be a smart Concours Hippique at medieval Thun, which also happens to be a military town with the Federal station for cavalry remounts.

Many interesting things are promised for the month of July. All the leading resorts will stage appropriate July Fourth celebrations in honour of their American guests. July 5th marks the opening day of the vacation courses for modern French at the University of Geneva, the same lasting in several series until October 13th. From July 16th to September 5th there is a similar course in two parts at the Neuchâtel University, and the University of Lausanne offers attractive opportunities for the study of modern French in a two series course from July 16th to October 10th. From July until August there is at Geneva a course of the Geneva School of International studies, and during the same month there are several other vacation courses offered by intellectual centres established in the League city. A delightful recreational programme, including sightseeing trips and evening entertainments, is also provided for the participants in the before-named University cities, thus obtaining a perfect combination of study and recreation.

July 7th and 8th will be melody days for Gossau, near St. Gall, when the St. Gall Cantonal Music Festival will be held. Since competition has been invited from other Swiss cantons, the event promises to be most entertaining. Horses and horse-lovers will come into their own from July 7th to 15th, when Lucerne will be the scene of the annual International Concours Hippique, which is a high-light among events of this kind in Europe. And just to offset race-stable talk for a day, the Swiss Mixed Choral Societies will gather for a Singing Meet at Lucerne on July 8th.

Again to the fore comes Switzerland's gallant archer when on July 15th Altdorf, near Flüelen, on the Lake of Lucerne, resumes its old Tell performances. In Tell's home-town there is a special playhouse for this

purpose. About 200 native actors are participating and the presentations will be given every Sunday afternoon until and including September 9th.

Ski races and ski-jumping are events one usually associates with winter, but Switzerland, the land of many contrasts, is able to stage similar events also in summer. Yearly, in the middle of July, such contests take place on Jungfraujoch, 11,340 feet above sea level, and the marvel of it is that this all-year winter playground, where sleigh rides with Polar dogs are another thriller, is reached from Interlaken by mountain railways in 3½ hours. Mid-summer ski-races are also arranged around this time on Piz Corvatsch, above St. Moritz, and on the Theodul Pass above Zermatt.

Anyone interested in good marksmanship, which after all is an essential factor in national defence, will enjoy the Federal Shooting Festival which is being held at lovely old Fribourg, from July 20 until August 5. Preparations for this great national event, which is celebrated in a different locality every five years, were started over a year ago, and the latest reports predict a tremendous success.

On August 1st, Swiss Independence Day, there are joyous, yet absolutely sane and safe celebrations in every hamlet and town. Music, speeches, parades, bonfires, Venetian night festivals and special dinners mark this anniversary of national freedom, but private use of fire-crackers and fireworks are taboo. An opportunity for spiritual uplift in the great outdoors is provided on August 5th, when the annual open-air Divine service is held in the Gasternt valley, near Kandersteg, and when natives and pilgrims ascend on the same day from Zermatt to the little chapel of “Maria zum Schnee” on the Schwarze See.

Musicians from all parts of the universe will meet for an International Music Contest at Geneva from August 12th to 17th, and the League capital will also be the scene of brilliant “International Festivals” when the League of Nations meets again for its annual session in September. A Concours Hippique is also promised at Geneva for September 23rd, and at fair Montreux there will be a National Costumes Festival on September 22nd and 23rd. Word has been received that this latter manifestation will be an event de luxe. Ancient dress has for some time been enjoying a revival in Switzerland, and historic costumes from all parts of the country will reappear in all their colourful glory and charming styles in the festival parade.

A Valaisan Vineyard and Autumn Fête will prove a seasonal event at Sion, capital of the Valais, on September 29th and 30th, and other vineyard festivals with gay parades will do homage to the grape harvest season at Neuchâtel, in the Jura, and Lugano, in the Ticino, at about the same time.

The Swiss Season Calendar abounds with a wealth of other attractive events, entirely too numerous for individual specification. Long-distance bicycle races, national and international rowing and sailing regattas, swimming meets, golf and tennis matches, automobile races in the lowlands and on mountain passes, native contests in gymnastics, wrestling, yodeling and other pastimes fill the summer programme to the brim. Hiking, climbing and fishing are always a boon to those who love to commune with Nature, and chamois hunting proves a thrilling sport in autumn.

Switzerland, Creation's masterpiece, lavishly blessed with scenic charms, rejuvenating climate, health springs and a multitude of other desirable features, truly excels in opportunities and attractions for the vacationist. It is within quick and convenient reach from anywhere, and everything is being done by the authorities to eliminate tiresome formalities.

Since times immemorial Switzerland has been proclaimed as the climax of a vacation in Europe! This year the land of the Alps belongs to the tourist at bargain rates. However, traditional Swiss hospitality lives on in undiminished fervour, and more care and money than ever will be spent on the comfort and entertainment of those who will harken to Switzerland's call.

A SWISS FILM.

The première of a famous Swiss film, presented by the Mentor Film A.G. in Zurich, will take place on Tuesday, May 15th, at the Curzon Cinema, Curzon Street, W.

The film is entitled “Rapt,” and deals with a story taken from the novel, “La Séparation des Rases,” by the Swiss author, C. F. Ramuz.

The music has been composed by our celebrated countryman, Arthur Honegger. The beautiful scenery and the fine mise-en-scène, depicting Swiss folk lore, as well as Swiss customs and art, should appeal especially to our countrymen living far away from the home borders. We hope that the members of the Swiss Colony in London will attend in great force at this first performance, in order to give this fine film a deserving send-off.