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# The Swiss Observer

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### SWISS FINANCE BILL.

The Swiss Federal Council has approved a Finance Bill prepared by the Department of Finance. The Bill, if passed by Parliament during the December session, will introduce drastic measures for the purpose of balancing the Federal Budget.

Owing to the general opposition, the turnover tax, which would have yielded 40,000,000f. per annum, and the taxation of bank saving accounts has been dropped.

Instead the Bill provides for a duty of 3f. per 100 kilograms on wheat, bringing in an additional revenue of 12,000,000f., and for an increased beer tax of 6 centimes per litre. The existing wheat duty is 60 centimes and the beer tax 4 centimes.

A stamp fee will be introduced on all Customs receipts, which will bring in 8,000,000f. The stamp and coupon tax on bonds and shares is to be raised from 3 to 4 per cent. and 4½ to 6 per cent. respectively.

As to expenditure, there will be an all-round cut of 40 per cent. in subsidies, while the subsidies towards Cantonal "primary schools" will be reduced by 30 per cent.

The salaries and pensions of Federal civil servants are to be reduced.

In addition to the above measures there is the "crisis tax," which will be maintained and increased by 25 per cent. The increase in the duty on sugar and petrol introduced last summer will be maintained.

The Bill also provides that the quota system on the importation of oil and fat and raw materials for its manufacture will be abolished. Instead, there is to be an increase in the duty.

By the introduction of these new sources of revenue and the cutting down of expenditure, the Swiss Federal Council hopes to save as much as 130,000,000f. per annum.

Owing to the extreme urgency of the Finance Bill, the Bill of Economy will now be submitted to Parliament in an amended form after the New Year.

#### DEFICIT OF THE FEDERAL ALCOHOL ADMINISTRATION.

The accounts of the Federal Alcohol Administration, which closed at the end of June, show a deficit of 21 million francs.

#### STRENGTH OF THE PARTIES IN THE STATES COUNCIL (STAENDERAT).

The elections for the States Council having now been completed, the strength of the various parties, is as follows:

	New Council.	Old Council.
Radical Democrats	15	16
Catholic Conservatives	19	19
Liberal Conservatives	2	2
Peasant Party	3	3
Democrats	2	2
Socialists	3	1
Freiwirtschaftler	0	1

#### SWITZERLAND AND THE GERMAN CLEARING AGREEMENT.

The Swiss-German Clearing Agreement, under which Switzerland bought German coal, and the sums due for these imports furnished the advances to German tourists, will come to an end on the 15th of next month. Experience has shown that the clearing agreement favoured the German Reichsbank too much. A new agreement is at present discussed.

#### SWISS EXCHANGE AND WINTER SEASON.

The Federal Council has been unable to accede to the wish of the Swiss Hotel Association, to again guarantee the £ sterling rate for English tourists during the Winter season 1935/36.

This guarantee, which was granted for the last season, cost the Confederation an amount of 174,000 frs. The chief reason for the refusal was given, that other countries might with equal right claim the same consideration.

#### STRIKING SWISS SUCCESS.

The Omega watch has just been designated as the only sport watch to be used for the official timing at the XIth Olympiad to be held in Berlin in 1936.

This brilliant success of the Omega watch honours the whole of the Swiss watchmaking

#### SWISS BUDGET.

In the Swiss Budget for 1936 receipts are estimated at 419,400,000f., a decrease of about 17,000,000f., and expenditure at 496,500,000f., a rise of 18,000,000f. The estimated deficit is thus 77,100,000f., against 42,000,000f. in the 1935 Budget. The national defence estimate is 98,000,000f., against 70,000,000f.

With the deficit of the Federal Railways the total amount to be found will be over 100,000,000f. Herr Meyer, Chief of the Finance Department, proposes to save 11,000,000f. on general administration expenses and a further 10,000,000f. by reducing salaries of State officials, who two years ago accepted a reduction of about 5 per cent. but do not seem very willing to accept a new cut. Receipts would be increased about 100,000,000f. by a series of new taxes — 5,000,000f. from bank deposits, 40,000,000f. from commercial profits and receipts of industrial, commercial, and banking concerns, 15,000,000f. more from drink, 32,000,000f. from sugar and petrol, and 10,000,000f. more from the "crisis tax." There is much resentment at the prospect of new taxation, but it is not certain that the opposition will be strong enough to resist the Government's proposals.

#### THE JACOB KIDNAPPING CASE.

It is announced that Dr. Hans Weseman, the Nazi secret agent, will be put on trial at Basle next month for the part he played in organising the kidnapping of the Jewish journalist Berthold Jacob. It will be remembered that Herr Jacob was lured from Strassburg to Basle and then rushed across the Swiss-German frontier. Herr Jacob was kept in the Berlin prison for six months.

According to the Basle Penal Code, Weseman can be sentenced if found guilty, to eight years' imprisonment. The minimum sentence is six months.

#### NEW SWISS FUNICULAR.

One of the most daring funiculars ever constructed is the new wire-rope railway just completed by the Swiss Federal Railways between the village of Châtelard and the great Barberine power station, which stands by the fine waterfall of that name near the Franco-Swiss frontier. The mean gradient is as high as 63 per cent., rising to 87 per cent. on the steepest section. The lower station is at an altitude of 3,475 feet above sea-level, and in forty minutes the traveller is carried to a height of 5,650 feet, whence a magnificent view is obtained of the imposing Mont Blanc chain opposite.

#### IRON ORE MINING IN SWITZERLAND.

Working of extensive iron-ore deposits in the Frick Valley, is to begin very soon. Exploitation of the deposits, for which a considerable sum of money has been set aside by the authorities, will provide work for a good number of unemployed. The existence of iron-ore deposits in the west of the Frick Valley has been known for over a hundred years. The iron industry on the Upper Rhine in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for which the Black Forest supplied charcoal for smelting purposes, used to obtain its iron ore from the Frick Valley, especially from Herzschach.

#### LOCAL.

#### BASLE.

Following the dismissal of a number of employees during recent months, the Banque Commerciale de Bâle now announces that another 65 of its staff will be dismissed on January 1st next. The Banque Commerciale was granted a partial moratorium last summer.

\* \* \*

On the occasion of the *Dies academicus* of the University of Basle the following have received the degrees of *doctor honoris causa*: Pastor Johann Anstein, Basel; Professor, Dr. Arthur Stoll, (Chemische Fabrik, vorm. Sandoz); Max Oechslin, Altdorf (Oberförster); Dr. G. Keller, Aarau, States Councillor.

#### BERNE.

Dr. G. Flückiger, Director of the Federal Veterinary Office, has been appointed Professor at the University of Berne.

\* \* \*

Professor F. de Quervain has been elected rector for 1935/36 of the University of Berne. M. Alfred Schorer, President of the Administration Court in Berne, and Dr. H. Schiller from Rapperswil (St. Gall) have received the degrees of *doctor honoris causa* of the University.

\* \* \*

The death is reported from Biel of Dr. Paul Aeschbacher, a teacher at the "Progymnasium" in Biel, at the age of 48. The deceased was a well-known historian. His book "Grafen von Nidau" was widely read.

#### GENEVA.

M. Keller-Kohler, who in 1934, on the occasion of a creditor's meeting, accused M. Martin Messmer, Manager of the Zurich branch of the "Diskontbank," to have acted irregularly, was fined an amount of 5,000 frs. for defamation, by a Geneva Court. M. Messmer has in the meantime died.

#### THURGAU.

The Cantonal Government has decided to reduce the salaries of its employees by 8 per cent.

#### TICINO.

M. Olgiati, President of the Liberal-Radical Party has resigned from his seat, which he held in the National Council. M. G. B. Rusca, President of the Community of Locarno is his successor.

#### VAUD.

A serious motor-car accident occurred at "La Banderolle" in the community of Prangins when a motor lorry collided with a private car. Four people were seriously injured and had to be taken to hospital.

\* \* \*

M. Houriet, Sub-Manager of the Banque de Bex, which recently closed its doors, has committed suicide. He suffered lately from fits of depression.

#### ST. GALLEN.

The late Mme. Elise Segmüller-Giess of St. Gall, has left an amount of nearly 90,000 frs. to various religious and charitable institutions in the canton of St. Gall.

#### SOLOTHURN.

The death is reported from Dornach of M. Georg Stadler, Founder and Director of the Metallwerke A.G. Dornach, at the age of 73. M. Stadler, who was in the real sense of the word a self-made man, has built up this important concern from very small beginnings.

#### AARGAU.

M. Ed. Heinis-Walser, formerly Director of the "Strafanstalt" in Liestal and his wife have celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

#### BASLE-COUNTY.

M. W. Schaub, (Socialist) has been elected a member of the States Council with 10,513 votes; his opponent M. E. Rüdin, who thus loses his seat, polled 8,097 votes.

#### GRISON.

Dr. Gian Mohr, Editor of the "Freien Rätier" has been elected Maire of the town of Chur. Dr. Mohr, who is a Liberal, received 1596 votes whilst the candidate of the socialists, Ottiger polled 1,057 votes.

#### NEUCHATEL.

From Neuchâtel comes the news of the death of M. J. Borel, a noted specialist for Ear and Nose diseases at the age of 68. Dr. Borel was the Founder of the clinic Le Crêt.

#### FOOTBALL.

(Last Sunday's Results)

#### NATIONAL LEAGUE.

Servette	0	Biel	1
Chaux-de-Fonds	3	Bern	7
Locarno	1	Lausanne-Sports	1
Grasshoppers	2	Nordstern	0
Basel	2	Young Fellows	3
Young Boys	0	Aarau	1
St. Gallen	2	Lugano	0

#### FIRST LEAGUE.

Cantonal, Neuenburg	3	Vevey Sports	5
Racing Lausanne	0	Olten	3
Montreux-Sports	2	Freiburg	0
Monthey	4	Pruntrut	1
Seebach	0	Brühl	2
Winterthur	0	Oerlikon	1
Blue Stars	1	Concordia Basel	1
F. C. Zurich	1	Juventus Zurich	3
Solothurn	4	Etoile Carouge	2
Lucerne	1	Schaffhausen Sparta	1
Chiasso	2	Krenzlingen	1
Urania Genf	2	Grenchen	3