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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION.

The two Federal Chambers, sitting as one body have elected, on Wednesday, the new President for the year 1936. (Voting figures will be published in our next issue).

Dr. Albert Meyer, hitherto Vice-President, has been elected President; he was born in 1870 at Fällanden (Zurich), he studied law at the Universities of Zurich, Leipzig and Berlin, in 1895 he took his degrees as *doctor juris utriusque*, as well as *doctor juris publice et rerum camerallium* at the University of Zurich.

In 1897 he joined the editorial staff of the "Neuen Zürcher Zeitung" where he edited the commercial pages of the paper. From 1915-1929, Dr. Meyer was Editor in Chief of the N.Z.Z., he entered the Municipal Council of Zurich in 1907, over which he presided in 1912; three years later he was elected to Parliament. (National Council). From 1923-1929, Dr. Meyer acted as President of the central committee of the Liberal Democratic Party of Switzerland, from 1927-1929 he was a member of the Board of the National Bank. He was elected a member of the Federal Government in 1929 in succession to Federal Councillor Haab. In the army he reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel of Infantry.

FEDERAL JUDGE DR. ALBERT URSPRUNG †.

Dr. Albert Ursprung, Federal Judge, who was to retire at the end of this year, has died at Lausanne. He was born in 1862 and later on studied law at the Universities of Basle and Munich. Dr. Ursprung started his career as a clerk of the court (1883-1886); from 1886-1892 he occupied the post of President of the District Court in Zurzach. In 1892 he was appointed a member of the superior court of the canton of Aargau over which he presided in 1900-1901. A year later (1902) he was elected by the Federal Chambers to the Supreme Court, over which he presided in 1918/19; in 1927 he celebrated his 25th Jubilee as a Federal Judge. Already as a young man, Dr. Ursprung took an interest in politics, he entered the Grand Council at the early age of 24. From 1890-1902 he was a member of the National Council; he was also a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Basle.

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

M. Maurice Trollet of Châble (Valais) has been elected Vice-President of the National Council for 1936. Mr. Trollet is a member of the cantonal government since 1913, he entered the National Council in 1921 of which he was a member, with one interruption (1925/28).

NEW SWISS MINISTER.

Dr. Karl Bruggmann, hitherto "Chargé d'Affaires" to the Republic of Tcheco-Slovakia, has been promoted to the rank of Minister.

CHANGES IN THE HIGH COMMAND OF THE SWISS ARMY.

Colonel Wille, son of the late General Wille, has relinquished the command of the 2nd Army Corps, and has resumed his former post as "Waffenfach" of the Infantry.

Colonel Prist, has been promoted to the rank of Army Corps Commander, he has hitherto been at the head of the 3rd Division. He will take over the command of the 2nd Army Corps.

Colonel Borel has been appointed commander of the 3rd Division. He was formerly "Waffenfach" of the Infantry.

SWISS SKIING SEASON.

The skiing season has begun in Switzerland, where abundant snow has fallen during the past few days. The snow is more than 3ft deep at a height of 4,800ft., and nearly 2ft. at the 3,000ft. level. Many roads in the Jura are completely blocked.

MITTELHOLZER'S FLIGHT TO INDIA.

Walter Mittelholzer, of the "Swissair" will start, early next year a flight to India, in the company of Lord Beaverbrook.

This flight will be undertaken with a Douglas machine. The destination is the island of Bali, at the same time, a flight over the Himalaya is intended.

SWISS BANK REORGANISED.

As reported previously the Cantonal Bank of Neuchâtel met with difficulties owing to heavy withdrawals of deposits. An agreement has now been signed between the Cantonal Bank of Neuchâtel, on the one hand, and the Swiss Federal Council and various Cantonal banks on the other, with the purpose of putting the bank on a sound basis. The administration of the bank is being reorganised; Mr. G. A. Borel has been elected President of the administrative council.

BALANCING SWISS BUDGET.

Following the publication of the Finance Bill, the Swiss Federal Council has issued a detailed report in which it justifies the drastic measures it intends to take in order to balance the Federal Budget.

In the report the Federal Council makes it plain that it wishes to give a picture of the present situation as it is and to make clear to the Swiss population how grave the situation really is.

As far as foreign countries are concerned, however, one may be tempted to use brighter colours to preserve confidence and thus safeguard the Swiss franc.

In dealing with the problem of the economic crisis the report states that Switzerland will never succeed in alleviating the crisis by steps such as devaluation, inflation, clearing and quota systems, exports subsidies, &c.

Switzerland represents a link only in the long chain of world trade. So long as world trade is ailing, therefore, Switzerland is unable to recover by itself. The most adequate economic, financial and political guidance is thus unable to turn Switzerland into an "isle of prosperity."

There are many who are wondering why the economic crisis has not been overcome long ago. Instead, one ought to wonder that Switzerland has not become still a greater victim of the crisis, especially as she, more than any other country, is dependent upon exports.

The fact that unemployment in Switzerland is still lower than in other countries which can be approached for the purpose of a comparison shows that the Swiss economic policy has, after all, not miscarried as many a critic believes.

The report admits that the economic and financial situation has become more serious in recent months. In the opinion of the Swiss Federal Council this is mainly due to the slackness in the building trade. For a long time the home market was artificially supported by what must be described as an exaggerated building activity.

This activity was partly due to an unusually high liquidity in the Money market, which lasted until the spring of 1935. It must also be ascribed to a flight into anything representing real value, whereby foreign "flight money" also played its rôle.

Amid a period of crisis, therefore, Switzerland, during recent years, experienced a partial "prosperity." The setback was inevitable.

At a time when it appears that world trade is on its way to recovery, Switzerland sinks more and more into the crisis. There is no reason for despair, however, "let us remember that in Switzerland the turning point from prosperity to crisis set in at a somewhat later date than abroad, so that a later recovery should not in the least surprise us," says the report.

"Let us also remember that after the world crisis following the war the depression in Switzerland also lasted longer." Switzerland ought to rejoice at the fact that some of the leading nations show signs of improvement, the report says, as this will be Switzerland's chance to find its lost markets again.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE IN SWITZERLAND.

Sir Samuel Hoare has arrived at Zuoz (Grisons) where he is to spend a fortnight's holiday with Lady Hoare at the Hotel Concordia.

SWISS SCIENTIST HONOURED.

The Medical Faculty of the University of Paris, has allotted the Albert I of Monaco Prize (1000,000 French Francs) to M. Maurice Arthur of Fribourg, for his work in the sphere of Micro-Biology.

GOLD BLOCK BANKS.

In a special interview granted to "Algemeen Handelsblad," the President of the Swiss National Bank, Professor Bachmann, stresses the importance of the co-operation between the Central Banks of the gold bloc.

He stipulated that this co-operation and the present monetary of the gold countries could only be continued if these countries were able to maintain their commercial relations with foreign countries in such a way that their balance of payments would be kept in equilibrium.

Switzerland, he said, can only then maintain its excess of imports over exports if the income out of tourist trade continues to flow and if at the same time she can depend upon the transfer of the interest on her foreign investments.

The impediments on foreign trade, Professor Bachmann emphasised, form a menace to the basis of the gold standard. Switzerland, in particular, is more and more thrown upon its trade with the gold bloc countries. Economic co-operation between the gold countries is therefore of vital importance.

FLIGHT-CAPTAIN HANS SCHAER.

Flight-Captain Hans Schär of the "Swissair" has become an "Air Millionaire," i.e., he has flown a total of one million kilometers or 25 times round the earth.

M. H. Schär hails from the canton of Aargau, he was born in 1896 at Avenches where he spent his youth. Later on he went to Burgdorf where he was a pupil at the "Sekundar-Schule." After leaving school he underwent an apprenticeship as a mechanic for four years in Berne; after which he joined the firm of Gebrüder Sulzer. In 1918 he underwent training as a Military pilot at Dübendorf. Four years later he joined the Ad Astra Aero in Zurich as a pilot and in 1927 he joined the pilot staff of the Balair in Basle. On the amalgamation of the two companies under the name of "Swissair" he was put on the staff as a pilot. He has actually been in the air for over 8,000 hours and has accomplished in his career nearly as many flights.

SWITZERLAND'S TRADE WITH IRISH FREE STATE.

Figures which have just been published show that Irish Exports to Switzerland in 1934 amounted to £69,815 as compared with £59,160 in 1922, and £61,983 in 1929.

In each year, with the exception of 1934, Switzerland bought more goods in the Irish Free State than the Free State purchased in Switzerland, which, for many years, has been one of the largest buyers of Irish horses. In 1934 one tenth of the total number of Irish horses exported went to Switzerland, where, as a rule, they are trained in the army and then used for agricultural work. Irish imports from Switzerland are made up of machinery and watches.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

The Bernese Consular Body has celebrated last week its 25th Anniversary since its foundation. The doyen of this body, General-Consul Klawin-Ellanski, welcomed the official guests amongst them Federal Councillor Motta, Ministers Bonn and Stucki, the Presidents of the Federal Chambers, and representatives of the cantonal government of Berne.

* * *

Dr. Fritz Schwendimann, until recently Professor of medicine at the University of Berne, has died at the age of 73.

* * *

The death has occurred in Berne of M. Achille Grospiere, a former National Councillor (1917-1935) at the age of 64.

GENEVA.

A grandstand to seat 103,000 people is to be built on the lake-side at Geneva for the motoring Grand Prix on June 1st, 1936.

* * *

Slum demolition by direct action caused a sensation at Geneva.

Thirty unemployed men "condemned" a group of old houses and started to tear them down. Though besieged by police they held out until the State Council sent an official to say that a deputation would be received.

An attack by 100 policemen was repulsed by the house-wreckers' volleys of tiles and rubble. The men eventually agreed to come down from the roof of a building on condition that no arrests were made.

They received an ovation from the dense crowd when they came down. The police made no attempt to seize them.

VAUD.

The death has occurred at Villeneuve, of M. Henri Chenaux at the age of 72. The deceased was a member of the "Grand Conseil" from 1901-1926. He was also a member of the National Council for some time. Since 1890, M. Chenaux was Professor of topography at the "L'école d'ingénieurs" in Lausanne.

AARGAU.

M. Gottfried Bader, Proprietor of the "Eisengiesserei Erzenberg" has died at Liestal at the age of 60.

TICINO.

Three hundred gangers are working to clear a landslide on the St. Gotthard Railway line between the tunnels at Biasca and Osgona. The line is completely blocked for a distance of 200 yards, and it is expected that the work of clearing it will not be completed for two days. A motor service is meanwhile carrying passengers, baggage, and mail between Biasca and Osgona.

VIOLETTA MONTUSCHI.

At a recent concert of the Recital Club of London we had the great pleasure of hearing Miss Violetta Montuschi, whose father is well-known to many members of the Swiss Colony, playing various compositions on the piano with great technical perfection and a fine sense of musical values. Her programme included some lovely selections from Bach, Scarlatti and Haydn, a Brahms Rhapsody and various pieces by Chopin. While the more formal style of the older composers may perhaps suit Miss Montuschi's self-possessed temperament better than the strong emotionality of Chopin and Brahms, she nevertheless showed herself fully equal to giving an interesting and pleasing interpretation of the latter as well as the former. A clever and a charming artist!

Dr. E.

W. WETTER

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REMINISCENCES.

"Disastrous consequences of my first ball."

By ST.

Continued.

One little happening on that memorable evening pleased me mightily, although it consisted in the fact, that my fair partner, made, what is called in French a *fau pas* or in English "putting one's foot into it."

Amongst the numerous spectators, was my aunt, — the one who had intimated that my mental faculties were somehow impaired through the fall which I had sustained at a very tender age. — There she sat in all her glory, as if it was *her* show. Her critical eye scanned the happy faces of the revellers, but the happiness of all the young people, which was written on their faces, did not seem to find an echo in her spinster bosom.

Each time I passed her, I noticed a sarcastic smile passing over her visage, in fact it was so obvious that my partner asked me, who that lady with the "rhinoceros face" was.

I could have hugged her for that remark, but as it rather cast a slur on my family I had to inform her, that the Lady with such "distinguished" features was a great-aunt of mine; which brought forth some profuse apologies, which, I need hardly mention, were accepted in good grace.

In fact, this little slip of the tongue, increased her attention to me, and I noticed consequently a little squeeze of the hand, which I took for a happy omen. —

As all good things come to an end, so this "Soirée Dansante" finished up amongst great enthusiasm. Many a parting glance, from a pair of sparkling eyes laid the foundation for future romance.

This time my cab took us back, minus the chocolate box, but with an additional weight of happiness and sweet remembrances.

WIT AND HUMOUR.
From the Mother of Parliaments.

In moving the address to the King's Speech in the House of Commons Mr. W. W. Wakefield (C.) in a maiden speech said that he approached his task with great diffidence, for in touching on great political questions of the day he must do so without introducing matters of a controversial nature, and he was not sure how that was to be done. If he crossed the white line he begged the forbearance of the House for he was a beginner, steering through the maze of traffic without even a large red letter L attached to his person fore and aft.

Referring to the air defences, he continued: Just over 300 years ago efforts were made to expedite the business of the House from below. To-day we might still search the cellars with various fears — and hopes — but the real threat was from the clouds.

Mr. Attlee (Opposition Leader) in criticising the King's Speech was struck by a "lull" in foreign affairs, believing that there was still a war in Abyssinia. He described the attitude of the Government in the latter conflict as follows:

What we want to-day is a vindication of public law against an aggressor. Can you imagine a situation in which the Home Secretary could get up and deplore an outbreak of house-breaking, but could say that he hoped he would shortly come to a settlement which would be equally acceptable to the house-breakers, the victims, and the Home Secretary?

It would be a difficult task. But I am sure the present Home Secretary would be equal to it, because, after all, that is exactly the line he took in the case of Japan. That would involve sympathy with the house-breakers.