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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWITZERLAND'S ARMS PLANS.

Switzerland is feeling herself forced to arm against dangers from without, with the result that this week the Swiss Parliament voted about £16,000,000 for her defence.

In the first place the new credit is to be allocated for defence against air attack in the following ways:

1.—Bomb-proof shelters and chemical equipment for the civilian population against poison gas.

2.—Permanent anti-aircraft batteries to be established at Basle, Berne, Zurich, Lucerne, Geneva, and St. Gall.

The balance is to be expended on:

1.—Purchase of new aeroplanes.
2.—Construction of tanks (the first to be ordered for the Swiss Army). These are to be of the Vickers light pattern as supplied to the British Army.

3.—Purchase of new mountain warfare guns of the 4.1 Swedish model.

4.—Manufacture in Switzerland of anti-tank guns firing 1-lb. shells.

In addition, the Swiss Army is to be reorganised. In place of seven field divisions and two brigades of fortress troops, there are to be six divisions and four fortress brigades. The effect will be to double the cavalry forces behind which the Swiss field army may be mobilised.

Fortification work is also to be undertaken between Basle and the Lake Cantons.

The field army is to be reorganised with a view to making it more mobile. To each division are to be attached 16 tanks, a mechanised artillery brigade, a motorised cavalry division, and an armoured car company.

There is also a supplementary credit of about £300,000 for a new squadron of 40 special aeroplanes combining the qualities of chaser planes and bombers. These are to be the first home-made warplanes in Switzerland.

SWISS CONGRATULATIONS FOR POLISH PRESIDENT.

M. Meyer, President of the Swiss Confederation, has sent a telegram of congratulations to M. Moscicki, President of Poland, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his holding this high office.

DR. SCHACHT IN BERNE.

Dr. Schacht, President of the "Reichsbank" and German Minister of Economy has arrived in Berne. The German Minister in Berne has given a dinner in his honour, amongst the guests were M. Meyer, President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillors Motta and Obrecht, Minister Dr. Stucki and Professor Bachmann, President of the National Bank.

DAVIS CUP.

Ireland won the doubles match in their third round Davis Cup lawn tennis tie with Switzerland in Dublin.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR MINGER ILL.

Federal Councillor Minger, who has been suffering for some time with liver troubles, has been ordered by his medical advisers to take a long rest. Federal Councillor Obrecht will, for the time being, act in his stead.

SWISS AIR MANOEUVRES.

Extensive Air Manoeuvres of the Swiss Army will take place in Switzerland next week.

SWISS PROFESSOR DISMISSED.

Professor Gutzwiller, Lecturer on International Law, at the University in Heidelberg, has been dismissed from his post, no reason was given.

SWISS TOURIST FRANC PLAN.

Faced with bankruptcy, Swiss hotel-keepers have petitioned the Federal Government to introduce a "tourist franc," at more favourable rates of exchange. A conference of hotel-keepers held at St. Gallen was unanimous in declaring that either the Swiss franc must be devalued or that a tourist franc must be introduced.

Hotel-keepers doubt, however, if this measure would in itself suffice to restore prosperity. They point to the high cost of living, even if currencies off the gold standard could be reckoned at par. Moreover, they are convinced that very special inducements would require to be offered to win tourists away from other parts of Europe.

It is generally considered that in view of the high cost of living here the tourist franc would require to be offered at a lower rate than the tourist registered Reichmark. There is also a widespread desire that the exaggerated protection at present accorded to Swiss farmers should be modified to bring down the price of agricultural products.

The Swiss Federal Government is, on general principles, opposed to any form of devaluation.

SWISS CONSUL RECEIVES DAVIS CUP TEAM.

The Swiss Consul and Mrs. Benziger held a reception at 22, Clyde Road, Dublin, to the Swiss Tennis team.

The individual members of the foreign team were each introduced to the Irish guests by Mr. Benziger.

The attendance included:

The Swiss team, the Irish team, Mr. A. P. Barry (captain, Davis Cup Team), Mr. W. Sandy (Hon. Sec., Davis Cup team), Mr. C. S. Almond (Davis Cup team), Mr. H. T. Ryan (Fitzwilliam L.T.C.), Mr. Cormack, Canadian Trade Commissioner; Col. and Mr. O'Brian, Mrs. Smyley, Mrs. Brian Cooper.

MOTHER OF SWISS CIRCUS OWNER DIES.

Mrs. Marie Knie, mother of the Knie Brothers, owners of the well-known Swiss tent circus, Cirque Knie, died at Rapperswil on May 27th, at the age of 79.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

RE UNION D' ETE

à laquelle les dames sont cordialement invitées

MARDI 16 JUIN à 7 HEURES 30

au BRENT BRIDGE HOTEL, HENDON.

Diner (6/6) — Dance jusqu'à minuit.

Tenue de Ville.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595)

Le Comité.

SETTLEMENTS BANK ASSETS INCREASE.

The balance-sheet of the Bank for International Settlements in Basle, for the month ended 3rd May, shows a total of Frs. 656,200,000 (Swiss), or Frs. 4,300,000 more than the total for the period ended 30th April, 1936.

Sight and short-term deposits of the Central Banks have increased by Frs. 6 million (Swiss). Deposits of the Central Banks for third parties have fallen. Deposits in gold on sight were increased by Frs. 4,800,000 and reached a total of Frs. 24,100,000 (Swiss).

Assets of the bank in the shape of gold ingots, which increased by Frs. 9 million (Swiss), reached a total of Frs. 32,200,000. There are thus Frs. 8 million (Swiss) more than the value of gold on sight.

SWISS FRANC DECISION.

An important meeting of Swiss bankers and Government authorities took place in Berne. The whole financial situation, especially the circumstances which would arise in the possible event of the devaluation of the French franc, was examined.

It was agreed that it would be possible to keep on gold if the dollar and pound followed the franc downwards. Assurances are said to have been received from Holland that a similar attitude will be observed by that country.

GERMAN SPY ELUDES SWISS POLICE.

The Swiss Federal authorities have issued a warrant for the arrest of a German student at Basle University named Kubler on a charge of spying for Germany.

Kubler has disappeared and is presumed to be in Germany. Police state that he carried secret information to the German Army's Intelligence Department from a Swiss — whose name is not disclosed — who was recently arrested for espionage by the French authorities in Alsace.

Papers found on the arrested Swiss gave details of French frontier fortifications and imprecise Kubler.

Kubler was in Germany at the time the warrant for his arrest was issued, and it is supposed that his chauffeur saw the warrant in a frontier post and warned him not to return.

Two other German students at Basle University, close friends of Kubler, have also disappeared.

ALPINE TRIAL.

Here is a brief résumé of the arrangements for the 1936 Alpine Trail, promoted this year by the Automobile Club de Suisse. The total distance will be about 1,400 miles.

Here are the daily stages with the principal passes involved. First stage, Lucerne to Lugano: Klausen, Oberalp, Lukmanier; distance 210 miles. Second stage, Lugano to St. Moritz: San Bernardino, Fluela, Ofen, Umbrail, Bernina; 195 miles. Third stage, St. Moritz to Thun: Albula, Julier, Splügen, San Bernardino, St. Gothard, Furka, Grimsel; 283 miles.

Fourth stage, Thun to Lausanne-Ouchy: Schallenberg, Villars s. Ollon, Col des Mosses, Col du Pillon; 245 miles. Fifth stage, Lausanne to Basle: Col du Marchairuz, Col du Mollendruz, Mauborgne, Col des Bayards, Weissensteinpass, Passwang; 224 miles. Sixth stage, Basle to Interlaken: Saignelegier, Mont Chasseral, Scheltenpass, Brunigpass; 240 miles.

DEAR PETROL PROTEST.

The Swiss Automobile Club has decided to call for a stoppage of all motor traffic in the country. This "motorists' strike" is intended as a protest against the Federal Government's plan of making it compulsory to mix alcohol with petrol.

The Government's proposed action would cause a rise in the price of petrol.

NO BASLE DELEGATION TO HEIDELBERG.

It is reported from Basle that the authorities of the Basle canton have forbidden students at Basle University to send a delegation to the celebrations of the Heidelberg University, which take place this summer. The Basle authorities fear that the celebrations may assume a political character.

LOCAL.**BASLE.**

Mme. Anna Walter-Strauss, a former famous singer, who celebrated, a few months ago, her 90th birthday anniversary, has died in Basle. The deceased was principally known as a Lieder and Oratorio singer. She was born at Lenzburg, and first made a name as a piano player; at the early age of 9, she played a Mozart piano concerto. She studied at the conservatory in Geneva, and at one time she was a pupil of the celebrated Theobald Böhm in Munich. Her first appearance as a singer took place in Basle in 1867; in the presence of Richard and Cosima Wagner and Hans Bulow. After having studied some time with the famous singer Viardot-Garcia, she started on an extensive concert tour through Europe. In 1869 she married August Walter, a conductor in Basle, where she settled down. For many years Mme. Walter-Strauss made a regular appearance on the concert platforms in Switzerland and the large European cities.

GRISONS.

The 500th anniversary of the foundation of the "Ligue des Dix-Juridictions" was celebrated last Saturday and Sunday at Davos, in the presence of Federal Councillor Etter.

URI.

The elections for the "Landrat" of the canton of Uri have taken place last week.

The strength of the various parties in the new council is as follows: 31 Conservatives (33); 16 Liberals (13); 2 Socialists (3).

ST. GALL.

Dr. R. O. Gsell, at present "Oberarzt" at the "Kantonsspital" Zurich, has been nominated surgeon-in-chief of the "Kantonsspital" St. Gallen.

NEUCHATEL.

The municipalities of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle, centres of the Swiss watch industry, have been granted a one-year debt moratorium.

* * *

Mme. Rosat-Sandoz, a former teacher of Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States has died at Le Locle at the age of 74.

FOOTBALL.

7th June, 1936.

Luzern, by drawing the second game (1:1) for the First League championship with Grenchen, have won the title and promotion to the National League. Congratulations!

MITROPA CUP, PRELIMINARY ROUND.

Young Fellows (Zurich) 0 Phoebus (Budapest) 3 F. C. Bern 1 F. C. Torino 4 Zidenice (Brünn) 5 Lausanne-Sports 0 Austria (Vienna) 3 Grasshoppers Club 1

In the last few years this competition was contested between Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Italy. Each nation put four teams in the field, generally the first four in the national championship, or the first three and the national cup-winners. Play proceeds in accordance with the Cup- or knock-out system, with this difference that in each round the opponents play not only one, but two matches, one home and one away, and the final total score decides, who is to drop out. In case of equality, lots are to be drawn in the preliminary round; in the round proper a third match on neutral ground is to be played. This year, for the first time, Switzerland was invited to join in the contest. Not thinking overmuch of our prowess, we were to fight our way into the competition proper by surviving a preliminary round, a new invention, as between our four leading teams and the weakest qualified of the other four nations. Thus the competition proper would again start with 16 teams.

Alas, the results published above vividly confirm the poor opinion the other competitors seem to harbour concerning the standard of Swiss Football. Young Fellows and Bern lose with three goals difference at home, Lausanne-Sports, our worthy champions and conquerors of West Ham United by 1:0, get licked by a Czechoslovakian nobody by five clear goals away, and Grasshoppers alone secure an honourable defeat in Vienna, but defeat nevertheless. In the four games our leading teams find the net just twice, conceding at the same time fifteen goals. 'nuff said! Where is the super optimist who can still hope that in the return matches Young Fellows and Bern will win away by at least four goals difference, or Lausanne at home by at least six? Perhaps there is just a chance that Grasshoppers may beat Austria in Zurich with a three goals margin, but, as one of my friends has it: "Not much!"

At any rate, our debut in the Mitropa Cup has been most inglorious and quite on a par with the deeds, or rather misdeeds, of our national eleven. I am sorely tempted to ask: Why not take up the game of darts, or marbles, or shove-halfpenny? I know, one cannot win every game; but if one cannot win *any*, it were better to stay modestly at home, using in the meantime every endeavour to become more proficient, before one crosses swords with opponents who are at present obviously streets ahead of us.

M.G.

SWITZERLAND IN THE CURRENCY CRISIS.

Last week the Swiss National Bank parted with gold to the net value, after deducting a small acquisition of "gold equivalent exchanges," of close upon 50,000,000 Swiss francs, or 2,000,000 sovereigns. At times of selling pressure against Swiss francs the National Bank is to be expected to show a diminished gold reserve and at the same time a somewhat increased reserve of gold equivalent exchanges, that is, of French francs, for under the "gold block" arrangements of the last three years the Swiss authorities have redeemed Swiss bank-notes not directly in gold but in French francs at par, leaving the withdrawer of French francs to obtain gold at the Bank of France. To obtain French francs for current requirements the Swiss National Bank has to sell gold to the Bank of France, since it will not at present risk holding more than a very small stock.

As the Bank of France is itself prepared to sell gold only in large quantities, the Swiss bank-note holder can only obtain gold by an indirect method and at some percentage of loss on the official parity. He must, moreover, first change Swiss francs into French francs, a risk which many have been hesitating to assume even for a few hours. The Swiss National Bank thus gains a considerable distance from the possible pressure of the note-holders. The gold reserve is actually at present considerably greater than a year ago, slightly greater than at the end of 1935, and equivalent to just three-quarters of that of the end of 1934.

Even less than the Bank of France, then, can the Swiss National Bank be regarded as exposed to a "run" which would mean the end of the gold standard. At the same time Swiss citizens have pretty certainly not altogether refrained from making preparations against the end of the gold standard as at present working. The Swiss have very considerable foreign investments, and may have refrained from converting recent interests coupons on these investments into Swiss francs. They may also have temporarily invested the proceeds of export sales outside the country. Nobody in Switzerland would deny that they may soon be rewarded by a general appreciation of those non-Swiss assets in terms of Swiss francs.

Swiss exporting industries, and among these that great purveyor of "invisible exports" the hotel industry, are also awaiting that moment in the hope of regaining some of the custom lost in the last four years of progressive frustration. The commercial banks of Switzerland have also much reason to look forward to the change, if its actual consequences are in line with the forecasts, for the Swiss banks are committed to a great extent in these industries, and it is said that scarcely one of the big Swiss hotels is still paying its mortgage debts.

Another enterprise greatly in need of restored tourist traffic is the Swiss national railway system. The system has for last year registered the second largest recorded annual deficit, with a 5 per cent. decline in passenger receipts and a 6 per cent. decline in merchandise receipts against the previous year. The passengers in 1935 numbered less than 110,000,000, against 128,000,000 in 1930. Absence of foreign tourists is far from being the only preoccupation of the railway authorities. Even given a full complement of tourists, in Switzerland the competition of road transport is likely to continue to deprive the enterprise of a large proportion of the traffic in whose expectation it was constructed and, at the beginning of the century, unified and nationalised. But at the present moment, after a depreciation rate recognised as quite inadequate, the system is unable to earn more than a fraction of the interest on the 3,000,000,000 of debentures outstanding. The problem of balancing the railway accounts would, however, be somewhat eased by a return of "tourism" to the figures of five years ago.

(Manchester Guardian).

STAFFORD

SCHILLER FOUNDATION.

M. C. F. Ramuz, the well-known Vaudois writer has received the Schiller prize amounting to 5,000 frs.

Amongst other authors who have been honoured, is Marie Bretscher (Winterthur) for her book "Der Wanderer gegen Abend," which we reviewed in our columns, some time ago, she receives the sum of 500 frs. Marie Bretscher is the sister of our collaborator, "Kyburg."

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