

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1964)

Heft: 1452

Artikel: Switzerland's economic relations

Autor: [s.n.]

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691455>

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SWITZERLAND'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS

In the sixty-eighth report on economic relations in 1963, the Federal Council informed the Federal Assembly of measures taken according to decisions made in 1956 and 1962, as well as on a number of economic/political questions.

Last summer negotiations took place in Algiers which led to a trade agreement being signed on 5th July between the Confederation and the Algerian Democratic People's Republic.

Talks with the German Federal Finance Ministry in Bonn last July resulted in clearing up certain difficulties regarding turnover tax on Swiss machinery imported into Germany. It is hoped that agreement will soon be reached on a similar basis as with Austria.

According to the agreement between Switzerland and India in 1960, India can import investment goods to a total value of 110 million francs. Of this money, 52% are used on power station equipment and other electric machinery, 36% on equipment for chemical factories and the textile industry and 12% on other machinery. India has given orders in Europe for electric equipment for locomotives made in India. Of this, 15 million francs was the share which Switzerland received. The total value agreed in 1960 has now been increased to 140 million francs.

The Confederation has agreed to give an export guarantee to Swiss exporters in order to keep their traditional place on the Jugo-Slav market.

Before the war, Austria used to be Switzerland's main contractor for certain woods, but after 1945, this export was stopped, and even EFTA concessions did not make things easier. An agreement in October 1963 has now at last resulted in some improvement, and further imports of wood into Switzerland will be possible.

In 1962, the President of the new Republic of Rwanda made enquiries in Switzerland regarding the Confederation's help in the economic development of the new State. For the first time, Swiss Technical Assistance has now taken a new shape in as much as it does not concentrate on one given sector only, but gives general aid in the building up of the economic structure of a developing country.

The Federal Council's report then deals with the developments within GATT and EFTA and the relations with Common Market countries. Details of these have already been given in a previous issue of the "Swiss Observer" (13th March).

[A.T.S.]

FEDERAL ACCOUNTS FOR 1963

The Federal accounts for 1963 show an excess of income over expenditure of 126 million francs, the budget having estimated a surplus of 37 million francs.

Expenditure of 4,083 million francs shows an increase of 234 million francs. This increase was due to additional expenditure for the construction of national motor roads, loans, purchase of land and buildings, whilst the increase in revenue was mainly due to more income from customs and taxes.

[A.T.S.]

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

Dr. Fritz Bossardt (70), Sursee, Director of the Municipal Record Office and former teacher.

Prof. Max Hagemann (45), Basle, junior member of the publishing board of the "Nationalzeitung", since 1953 professor of international law at Basle University.

Dr. Georges Violier (52), Basle, liver specialist and head of a well-known chemical laboratory.

Dr. Pierre von Schumacher (65), Zurich, geologist and editor of the "Weltwoche".

Domherr Georges Rageth (73), St. Maurice, philosopher and theologian, former principal of the Kollegium St. Maurice.

Robert Wehrli (61), Winterthur, well-known painter.

Ernst Tanner (85), Teufen (Appenzell Ausserrhoden), pastry cook by trade, he became a prominent politician in the Canton and commune chief of Teufen.

Marino Bodenmann (71), Lausanne, one of the founders of the Swiss Communist Party and editor of the "Vorwaerts", politically active in Basle and Zurich.

Prof. Pierre Carraz (67), Geneva, internationally known as specialist in Gregorian music, former teacher of Latin at the High School for Girls in Geneva, honorary degree from the Apostolic Pontifical Institute in Rome; founder of the "Schola St. Gregoire-le-grand"; singing master at the Geneva Conservatoire.

Charles Boechat (77), Delémont, founder of the "Feuille d'Avis du Jura", pioneer of filming in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, one-time member of the Bernese parliament.

Alois Guenthart (83), pioneer in agriculture, founder of the community farm of Daellikon (Dielsdorf, Zurich), district judge and member of the Zurich parliament.

August Kramer (59), farmer and well-known politician, commune president of Rafz and member of the Zurich parliament.

Dr. Karl Langbein (71), Riehen Basle), headmaster of the Boys' Primary and Secondary School from 1927 — 1934 and of the "Mädchenrealschule" from 1938 to his retirement, Lieut.-Colonel of Artillery.

Prof. Dr. Martin Werner (76), Berne, protestant theologian and writer.

Willy Frick (71), Zurich, Socialist member of the Zurich parliament.

[A.T.S.]

THE FIRST HELICOPTER WAS SWISS

Switzerland numbers several pioneers in the field of flying. It was a Swiss watchmaker, Jacob Degen, for example, who between 1806 and 1817 made the first practical trials with a flying machine with flapping wings, propelled by muscular force. Others like Böcklin, Segantini and Steiger-Kirchhofer worked on the same problem along different lines. But the first helicopter in the world was built in Geneva. This machine, the work of the brothers Henri and Armand Dufaux, was driven by a petrol engine weighing just under 10 lb. It can still be seen today in a Paris museum.

[O.S.E.C.]