

Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

SWISS FOREIGN TRADE.

Swiss foreign trade returns for the first half year show a big drop in imports and a small decrease in exports. During that period imports totalled 622,581,548f. compared with 712,618,222f. in 1934, a drop of 90,036,674f., which is partly due to import quotas and partly to a decrease in the importation of raw materials, a sign of reduced activity in Swiss industry. Exports aggregated 402,162,814f., as against 405,008,719f. in 1934, a decrease of 3,845,905f., which is much smaller than had been anticipated, but which shows that the depression has not yet reached its end. The adverse balance is 220,418,734f., or about 36 per cent., while it was 307,609,503f., or nearly 40 per cent. the previous year.

Of the four chief exporting industries, watch-making — which has slowly improved since the beginning of last year—records a rise of 6,000,000f., and the machines industry a rise of 2,000,000f. On the other hand, the silk and cotton industries register drops of respectively 10,000,000f. and 8,000,000f.

Commercial exchanges with Great Britain were rather slack. Imports from Great Britain totalled 37,700,000f. (45,400,000f. in 1934), and exports to Great Britain 35,400,000f. (43,700,000f. in 1934). Great Britain holds the fourth place among the chief customers of Switzerland; Germany (161,690,000f.), France (106,200,000f.), Italy (47,000,000), Great Britain (37,700,000f.), U.S.A. (32,600,000f.) Great Britain also holds the fourth place among the chief buyers of Swiss goods: Germany (90,100,000f.), France (60,400,000f.), Italy (38,200,000f.), Great Britain (35,400,000f.), U.S.A. (20,700,000f.).

SWISS BANKING STATEMENTS.

According to the Swiss Banking Law, every Swiss bank whose balance-sheet sum exceeds 20,000,000f. is compelled to issue a half-yearly balance-sheet. Although this decree came into force on March 1st last, ever since 1931 leading Swiss banks have made it a habit of issuing quarterly balance-sheets.

Several balance-sheets of leading Swiss banks made up to June 30 are now available. All of them have one main feature — namely, a considerable drop in the balance-sheet total, which is due to a great extent to the pressure on the Swiss franc last spring.

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

During the week ended July 23rd the gold reserve of the Swiss National Bank increased 25,900,000f. to 1,278,000,000f., while the note circulation decreased 15,300,000f. to 1,230,000,000f. On July 23rd the gold reserve represented 83.4 per cent. of all the engagements of the bank.

GERMAN-SWISS ARBITRATION.

The Swiss and German Governments signed an arbitration agreement on the subject of the abduction from Swiss territory of the German journalist Herr Berthold Jakob.

It will be remembered that Herr Jakob, who had ventured to criticise the Nazi regime, was enticed to Basle by Nazi agents last March and by them forcibly abducted over the German frontier, this abduction constituting a violation of Swiss sovereignty.

The Swiss Government protested energetically in Berlin against this attack on its sovereign rights, and the result is the arbitration agreement signed yesterday. Professor Huber, the eminent authority on International Law, will represent the Swiss point of view.

TWO MILLION POUNDS OWED TO THE LEAGUE.

The League of Nations and its subsidiary organisations are costing more to run.

The budget estimate, now announced, for 1936 is £2,200,000, a total representing an increase of £180,000.

Great Britain's payments — the largest individual contribution of any State to the League Budget — will, however, be reduced by about £200,000 for 1936.

The total amount budgeted for League expenditure is never spent, for over-budgeting is resorted to on account of the number of countries which are in arrears with subscriptions.

Abyssinia was £962 in arrears with her contribution for 1934 on April 30th, 1935, Honduras has never paid a full year's subscription since her admission to the League in 1920.

In all, 23 of the League's 59 member States owed money in respect of past contributions on April 30th this year. The total sum due was just under £2,000,000.

ROAD ACCIDENTS IN SWITZERLAND.

The figures of road accidents in Switzerland during 1934 have just been published. They are appalling. No less than 625 people have been killed, whilst 12,200 have been more or less seriously injured.

LOCAL.

BASLE.

The death is reported from Basle at the age of 70, of M. Gottfried Sieber, for 29 years teacher of the English language at the "Unteren Real-schule" in Basle. M. Sieber was also a teacher, for over 14 years, at the Swiss Mercantile Society in Basle.

M. Karl Soucoup, a member of the Editorial Staff of the "National Zeitung" since 1919, has retired from his post.

M. Jakob Gysin, rector of the "Basler Mädchenprimar und Sekundarschule" has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary.

ZURICH.

Professor C. G. Jung, the well-known medical scientist, is celebrating his 60th birthday anniversary in Zurich-Kusnacht. Dr. Jung was born in Kesswil in 1875, and studied medicine at the University in Basle; where later on he officiated as a teacher. In 1909 and 1912 he was made a *doctor honoris causa* of the Clark-University in the U.S.A. and the Fordham University in N. York respectively. In 1909 he opened a practice in Küsnacht-Zurich, after having been previously an assistant surgeon at the asylum of the "Burghölzli." On several occasions he went to Africa and Mexico to study various diseases on the spot. Professor Jung is the author of many books on medical subjects which have procured him an honoured name far beyond the frontiers of our country.

M. Heinrich Müller-Jelmoli, a former General Manager and President of the Board of the "Zurich," "Allgemeine Unfall and Haftpflicht Versicherungs A.G." has died in Zurich at the age of 91. M. Müller was a great authority in the Insurance profession in Switzerland.

M. Max Hirzel, the famous operatic tenor at the Opera House in Dresden, and a native of Zurich, has been informed that his engagement is terminated and that he should leave the country. He is charged with having made some disparaging remarks during a stay in Switzerland about the Hitler régime; charges which he strenuously denies.

BERNE.

Two young men from Berne, von Grünigen and Graf were killed when climbing the Blümlisalp horn, their bodies were found by a rescue party.

LUCERNE.

During the Federal Music Festival which took place in Lucerne on July 19th-21st, over 55,000 people from all parts of Switzerland have visited this competition. Federal Councillor Etter, who represented the Government made a patriotic speech.

The oldest of the three hotels on the Rigi-kulm, the "Schulhaus" has been completely destroyed by fire; it had accommodation for 130 people.

The death is reported from Lucerne of M. Charles Blankart, a former manager of the "Crédit Suisse" in Lucerne. The deceased has been for over 35 years an outstanding personality in the Swiss Banking profession. He was a director of many important industrial concerns.

ST. GALL.

The late Mme. Elise Segmüller from Altstätten has left an amount of 100,000frs. to various religious and charitable institutions.

VALAIS.

The Zinal Rothorn, 13,855ft. high, has been climbed by a one-legged man. He is Mr. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, brother of Lord Kennet, formerly Sir Hilton Young.

Leaving the Rifflalp Hotel, above Zermatt, he spent the night at the Trift hut and reached the summit at one the next afternoon. He was accompanied by Capt. Heywood and two guides, named Knubel and Lagger.

Mr. Young, who lost his leg during the war, had successfully scaled the Matterhorn three seasons ago, and had also other climbs to his credit.

TICINO.

Mme. Marguerita Merlini, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Locarno, has celebrated her 100th birthday anniversary.

LES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER ET LA MERE-PATRIE.

PAR GERHART SCHUCH, Berne.
Article publié "Dans Mon Pays"

Le Pays des Waldstätten fut peuplé jadis, si l'on en croit une légende, par des hommes venus du Nord, dont la "Landsgemeinde" avait décidé, vu la misère des temps, qu'un habitant sur dix, désigné par le sort, quitterait le pays de ses pères, et s'en irait au loin, chercher des possibilités de vie. Le même destin poursuivait les descendants de ces émigrés: de nos jours encore, un dixième de notre population demande à l'étranger le pain et les ressources que la patrie ne peut lui donner.

Cette proportion suffirait pour nous intéresser à nos concitoyens qui vivent à l'étranger; mais elle ne saurait à elle seule expliquer l'importance du rôle national éminent joué par nos colonies. Si les quelques milliers de Suisses qui se trouvent au loin avaient manqué leur vie, s'ils étaient des traitres à la patrie, s'ils l'avaient tout au moins oubliée, quelle signification auraient-ils pour nous? Qui s'intéresserait à leur sort, s'ils n'étaient que l'écumé rejetée par notre population?

Chacun sait que, bien au contraire, la Suisse à l'étranger n'est pas seulement grande par le nombre, mais par la valeur de ceux qui la représentent. Elle est grande aussi par leur fidélité à la patrie. Ces exiles qui, dans des circonstances extrêmement difficiles, résistent courageusement aux forces qui veulent les arracher à leur pays d'origine, comptent parmi nos citoyens les plus précieux et les plus utiles. Si bien qu'on n'étudierait pas les questions qui les touchent comme un simple problème démographique; on leur verra une active sympathie, on saura se réjouir de leurs succès, partager leurs peines et, en reconnaissance de l'activité qu'ils déploient pour le plus grand bénéfice de notre prospérité nationale, on les aidera vigoureusement, on les soutiendra fraternellement dans leurs postes d'avant-garde.

On pourrait facilement raconter une série de faits qui montrent d'une manière touchante l'admirable patriotisme de nos concitoyens, forcés de quitter la Suisse. Au soir de sa vie, toute de misères et de privations, une brave Suisse, exilée au loin, dans une grande ville industrielle, n'avait plus qu'un désir: revoir une fois encore, avant de mourir, son cher lac de Zurich; et, comme ce souhait n'était pas réalisable, elle voulut, au moins, plonger ses yeux dans ceux d'un compatriote qui devait retourner bientôt près de la rive aimée, et pourrait ainsi, pensait-elle, la contempler à sa place. Un jeune Suisse de l'Amérique du Sud, obligé de prendre la nationalité de sa seconde patrie et d'y faire son service militaire, tint à honneur, bien qu'il en fût dispensé, d'accomplir aussi son devoir de citoyen envers sa patrie d'origine; son école de recrue terminée, il voulut, avant de repasser l'océan pour rejoindre sa famille, se charger d'une cassette qu'il remplissait de terre du pays: son père avait dit que, s'il devait mourir à l'étranger, il désirait, au moins, un peu de terre suisse pour recouvrir sa déponille. Nous pourrions nommer encore un professeur qui préféra sacrifier un brillant avenir plutôt que de renoncer à sa nationalité suisse, comme l'aurait exigé la loi du pays étranger où il se trouvait.

Celui de nos compatriotes émigrés qui traduisit avec le plus d'éloquence l'amour du pays natal est peut-être Gottfried Keller, l'auteur du chant célèbre: