Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

TRADE OF SWITZERLAND.

Swiss economic conditions improved during the first quarter of the year, when exports showed a rise of nearly 8 per cent. over 1938. Imports reached a value of 398,315,000f., against 399,920,000f. the previous year, and exports totalled 329,818,000f., compared with 306,259,000f. in 1938. There was a rise in the imports of raw materials resulting from increased activity in industry, and of foodstuffs, coal, and petrol owing to the political situation, which induced the Government and traders to accumulate stocks. Nearly all categories of exports showed an increase, but the rise was particularly noticeable in regard to machines, vehicles, aluminium, chemicals, aniline dyes, and certain classes of textiles.

Commercial exchanges with Great Britain were satisfactory and are likely to be fostered by the new trade agreement which is now being negotiated in London. Imports from Britain totalled 25,051,020f., compared with 22,518,315f. in 1938, and exports to her reacher 43,950,815f., against 34,214,101f. the previous year. There was in March an important rise in exports of aluminium and aniline dyes to England. Trade with the British Empire totalled roughly 40,000,000f. in regard to imports, or about 8 per cent. of Swiss imports, and 56,000,000f. as regards exports, that is, nearly 17 per cent. of the total Swiss exports.

SWISS ACHIEVEMENT.

Professor Gilbert Murray and Senor Salvador de Madariaga both pay tribute to Switzerland in an attractively written and illustrated brochure which has been brought out for the Swiss National Fair, which opened at Zurich yesterday.

The Professor writes:

" I remember the great historical achievement of Switzerland in teaching men to live together in concord. Only here do French, German and Italian co-operate as free men, rejoicing in a common citizenship and service to society, finding their bond of union not in aggressive nationalism or dreams of military ambition, but in building up by united effort " a good life for man."

Senor de Madariaga concludes:

" And since it is evident that the specific feature of Western civilisation is precisely that it seeks to achieve clear aims by the operation of the human will, it follows that Switzerland is the prototype of our Western civilisation and the masterpiece thereof."

LEGACIES.

The community of Uster (Zurich) has received an anonymous donation amounting to 40,000 frs. for the " Bürgerheim." The late Adolf Schraner-Schwitter, Manufacturer in Oberurnen (Glarus) has left an amount of 50,000 frs. to charitable institutions. Dr. Fritz Funk, late Manager of the Engineering Works Brown, Boveri & Co., Ltd., has bequeathed the sum of 100,000 frs. to various institutions in the canton of Aargau. The late Karl Maeder-Schorno in Zollikon has bequeathed nearly 20,000 frs. to be distributed amongst various charitable institutions.

" LANDSGEMEINDEN."

All the members of the cantonal government of Appenzell A. Rh. were confirmed in their offices at the "Landsgemeinde" in Hundwil. M. Walter Ackermann was elected as " Landammann."

M. Christen, was elected " Landammann " at the " Landsgemeinde " which took place at Stans. (Ct. Nidwalden).

The " Landsgemeinde " of the canton of Obwalden, which took place in Sarnen elected M. Walter Amstalden, States Councillor, as " Landammann."

On the occasion of the " Landsgemeinde " of the canton of Appenzell J. Rh. which took place in Appenzell, M. Armin Locher, States Councillor, was elected " Landammann."

The " Landsgemeinde " of the canton of Glarus was postponed to the 14th of this month owing to bad weather.

DEFENCE OF SWISS LIBERTIES.

Big public demonstrations at which Switzerland's determination to maintain and defend her democratic institutions, her liberty, and the independence of her State was unmistakably shown, were held this week. In spite of the bad weather four *landsgemeinden* took place. In some of the German-speaking cantons the male population assembles, according to ancient tradition, once a year in an open place to decide upon certain laws and to elect their administrators and judges. These assemblies of voters are the *Landsgemeinden*.

At the annual assembly of the Radical Democratic Party two members of the Federal Council urged the necessity of reinforcing national defence and of establishing a union of all classes.

M. Obrecht, head of the Department of Public Economy, in his speech, explained what Switzerland had done and would do to reinforce national defence. He stated that an extraordinary Budget had been created for national defence and that the country had spent in the last few years altogether 1,000,000,000f. (£50,000,000), of which 400,000,000f. was on the defence of the frontiers, 340,000,000f. on aircraft, 180,000,000f. on fortifications, and 80,000,000f. on the construction of barracks.

The Minister of Finance, M. Wetter, declared that party politics were less important to-day than the struggle between the democracies and the totalitarian countries. Justice and law no longer played any part; only force counted . All the small countries had therefore to protect themselves. That was what Switzerland was doing. They still hoped for the triumph of reason, but if it had to be done every Swiss citizen would do his duty.

HEAVY SNOW FALLS IN SWITZERLAND.

Snow has fallen in abundance on the mountains down to the 2,000ft. level in Switzerland. There are over 3ft. of fresh snow on the Simplon Pass, and the road will not be open to vehicles.

MORE RAPIDES FOR SWITZERLAND.

Alpar Schweizerische Luftverkehrs A.G., the Swiss internal air traffic company, has just taken delivery of two Dragon Rapides from Hatfield.

In ten years of operation the company has been flying internally in Switzerland, and for the past six years working a line from Zürich to Berne, Lausanne and Geneva. It runs three or four times daily during the Summer to connect with international services.

Alpar also runs a special connection between Berne and La Chaux-de-Fonds, and twice daily in the Summer between Berne and Basle to connect with Swissair and Imperials. The Rapides are for the last-named route and they will also be used for Alpine pleasure flights which are the basis upon which the company grew up.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS A.R.P.

The extraordinary credits voted by the Swiss Government for defence measures include an item of about £80,000 for protection of the railways in an emergency. It is understood that materials for various structures and improvement works will be ordered immediately.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The management of the Swiss National Exhibition gave a dinner to the 3,000 workmen who were engaged in the erection of the exhibition. Dr. Meili, on behalf of the exhibition authorities thanked the guests for the work and the efforts they made to get the Exhibition ready in good time.

BERNE.

The death has ocurred in Berne of Dr. Otto Schulthess, from 1907-1932 Professor of classical philology at the University of Berne.

SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION 1939 ZURICH.

Opened Friday, May 5th.

A small state with great activities.

On the map of the world Switzerland is but a tiny spot, on that of Europe an insignificant plot of land. Although her geographical situation gives her a not inconsiderable importance, she cannot, as a small neutral state, play any important part in international politics. But, as one of her great writers has said, she possesses one great factor which " idealistically and completely outweighs the tremendous advantages of a Great Power, viz., real and actual liberty," for " a small state exists so that there may be one spot in the world where the majority of its inhabitants are citizens in the full sense of the word." (J. Burckhardt " Considerations on Universal History "). This greatness is not borne by the heroic figures that determine the fate of great nations and in whom the longings and volition of the masses are incorporated, but by the " citizen in the full sense of the word." This citizen is characterised by his attachment to his native soil and the manners and customs of his environment, but at the same time he possesses world-awareness and a gift of comprehension and creation which lifts him far above the merely provincial.

The structure of the Swiss State and the fact that this small country, with its French, German and Italian-speaking districts shares in three European cultures, are a happy augury that this ideal can also become that of large numbers of other people.

Communal autonomy is the political school in which the citizen gets his first practical elementary instruction in democratic rights and liberties. The organisation of a commune is that of the state *in petto*. What is learnt there enables the citizen himself to judge the problems to be solved by each Canton and the Federation. The elementary school, of which the spiritual founder was the great Swiss pedagogue Heinrich Pestalozzi, is in Switzerland devoted to a high degree to the formation of personality and character. On its broad and comprehensive foundations a highly differentiated system of higher education has been built up. There are excellent public and private middle and vocational schools, and these are not only to be found in the big towns but everywhere up and down the country. Switzerland, whose population does not exceed that of a big continental metropolis, has no fewer than seven universities. Those who have attended these middle schools and colleges, but often, indeed, those whose knowledge has been acquired in the elementary school and by experience, are the men and women who form the aspiring *élite* in the state, the community and the family, who watches over politics, science, art and economy and the preservation of liberty. At the same time Switzerland remains faithful to her ideal of world-citizenship and is in constant mental and spiritual contact with her friendly neighbours.

From May 6th to October 29th, the Swiss National Exhibition is held in Zurich. One of the objects of this thematic display is to give visitors a comprehensive picture of the history of Swiss civilization, the means of development offered to her citizens by this small state with its many divisions, and the manifold creations in all directions in which so many minds have co-operated.

Two shores — two worlds.

The Swiss National Exhibition at Zurich, which opened its doors yesterday, is established on both shores of the Lake of Zurich. On the right shore are the Swiss village, the festival hall and the comprehensive agricultural display; on the left the exhibits of industry, tourism and the great cultural institutions of the country. The neat wooden buildings, the regional wine lodges, the hunting and fishing huts and the halls for livestock, the country products of field, forest, vineyard, orchard and kitchen garden, the farms and houses of cottage workers are pleasantly scattered in the shade of a magnificent park on the one side, and on the other one huge hall after another rears its head full of machinery at work, with the endless diversity of a highly developed industrial state, the exhibits of the universities, schools and churches, the state and the army, art and trade, hotel-keeping and traffic.