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HOME NEWS



FEDERAL.

SWISS BUDGET.

The accounts of the Swiss Confederation for 1930 are more satisfactory than expected, as they show a surplus of about £269,000. The Federal Budget for 1930 estimated expenditure at £15,311,200 and receipts at £15,320,000, the estimated surplus thus being £8,800. In the course of the year expenditure was increased by nearly £1,600,000 in consequence of the grant of several subsidies and of a rise in extraordinary expenses, so that the accounts were expected to show a deficit of at least £1,500,000. Owing to an unexpected increase of £2,004,249 in receipts, the deficit was in the end transformed into a surplus of £269,288, as receipts totalled £17,324,249 and expenditure £17,054,961. Among the items of increase was £260,000 in stamp duties, £584,000 in Customs duties, £204,000 in duties on butter and margarine, £496,000 in petrol tax., and £160,000 in tobacco duties. A sum of £1,016,000 derived from tobacco duties was during the year paid in the fund for old-age insurance, which now stands at nearly £5,000,000.

According to the plan providing for the gradual redemption of the public debt, the Federal Government repaid £2,400,000 out of the produce of the extraordinary War tax, while £1,846,800 was paid in the reserve fund for the debt redemption, which now aggregates over £3,880,000, and a further £260,000 was saved on the interest and service of the debt. Since 1926 when the redemption plan came into force, the Government has redeemed £11,760,000, and this has resulted in a saving of £400,000 on the annual interest. The Government is now taking the necessary measures with a view of repaying at the end of the year a loan of £4,000,000, and by issuing two loans of £4,000,000 each at 4 per cent., the produce of which will enable it to convert 5 per cent. loans, it will further reduce the interest on the debt by about £200,000. The financial position of the Swiss Confederation is therefore a sound one, but drastic measures should be taken to prevent a further rise in expenditure, as it is very uncertain whether receipts will every year show big increases such as in 1930.

CIVIL AVIATION IN SWITZERLAND.

The 1st of March witnessed the entry into force of the scheme for the centralisation of Swiss Air Traffic in the hands of the "Schweizerische Luftverkehrs-Aktiengesellschaft." This undertaking, which will be called the "Swissair" for short, has been formed by the amalgamation of the two principal air navigation companies in Switzerland, namely, the "Ad Astra-Aero Company" of Zurich, and the "Balair, S. A." of Basle, both of which have now ceased to exist, and whose fleet of aircraft and flying and ground organisation have passed into the hands of the new company. This change has placed Commercial Aviation in Switzerland on a sounder basis than hitherto, and is expected to have a beneficial effect on its development. Statistics published by the Federal Air Office show that in 1930, civil aircraft in Switzerland flew 1,447,190 miles in 16,868 hours. The number of passengers carried totalled 45,756, while freight, mail, and luggage transport (the latter at paying rates) amounted to 818,630, 386,875 and 120,610 lbs. respectively. Regular air services claimed the bulk of the traffic, international lines accounting for 652,505 miles in 7,461 hours, 12,283 passengers, 512,528 lbs. of freight, 146,123 lbs. of mail, and 78,524 lbs. of luggage, and Swiss lines for 472,562 miles in 5,281 hours, 11,533 passengers, 308,744 lbs. of freight, 200,724 lbs. of mail, and 42,085 lbs. of luggage. The balance is distributed among the other branches of Civil Aviation, such as flying schools and flying clubs, private flying, aerial photography, occasional passenger flights, etc.

TUBERCULOSIS TESTS AT CAMBRIDGE.

Public interest in the theories of Dr. Henri Spahlinger, the Swiss bacteriologist, will be re-

vived by the decision of the Royal Agricultural Society Council, taken at its meeting yesterday, to arrange for a preliminary test of the Spahlinger vaccine treatment for the prevention of tuberculosis.

It is announced that thirty calves, six months old, are to be used for the purpose. Twenty of them will be vaccinated and the remainder used as controls. Their progress will be watched at Cambridge by three well-known veterinary authorities, Professor Woodridge, Dr. Minett, and Dr. Buxton.

If Dr. Spahlinger approves of the full details of the experiments, the Royal Agricultural Society will bear the cost, which is expected to be £500. The duration of the tests will be eighteen months.

SWISS MUSICIANS AND TALKIES.

A Musicians' Defence Society has been formed in Switzerland to protect the interests of the members of the musical profession. The principal cause of the present unsatisfactory conditions is stated to be on account of the introduction of the talkies.

SWISS CLOTHING IMPORTS.

According to a report from the British Legation at Berne, ready-to-wear clothing to the extent of 2,319 tons, valued at 77,100,000 francs, was imported into Switzerland in 1930. Imports in 1929 were 2,084 tons.

Britain's share in this business is not specifically stated, but, taking Switzerland's import trade as a whole, Germany and France were the largest suppliers.

HIGHEST RAILWAY IN EUROPE.

If a proposal which is now before the Swiss Ministry of Traffic should come to fruition, the Jungfrauoch terminus of the Jungfrau Railway is, according to the *Railway Gazette*, likely to lose its present distinction of being the highest railway terminus in Europe. Jungfrauoch station is 11,342 ft. above sea level, but the railway which has been planned from Morteratsch—a station on the Bernina line, four miles from Pontresina—to a point near the summit of Piz Bernina, will, if carried out attain a maximum altitude of 12,512 ft. This altitude, at which it is intended to construct a hotel as well as the station, is 1,000 ft. short of the summit of the Piz Bernina. As Morteratsch is some 6,600 ft. above sea level, the difference in level to be surmounted by the railway is 4,742 ft., for which electrically-operated rack-and-pinion working would be employed, on a maximum gradient of 1 in 3. As with the Jungfrau line, tunnelling is contemplated for the final stage, but a sheltered location, not subject to avalanches, can be found on the slopes of the Chalchagn for a considerable distance.

IMPORTANT CHANGES IN SWISS ARMY COMMAND.

After the recent change in the command of the fourth division, further alterations will take place during this month.

Colonel Guisan, commander of the second division is taking over the first division, his successor to the second division will be Colonel de Diesbach. The new commander hails from the canton of Fribourg and was born in 1876. He took his commission in 1896 in the cavalry. From 1906-1912 he served as captain on the General Staff, where he acquainted himself with the various other branches of the army. In 1912 he was made a major and during the next few years he successively commanded the Fribourg battalions 16 and 17. At the end of 1917 he advanced to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in which capacity he commanded during six years the 7th Fribourg regiment.

In December 1923 he advanced to the rank of colonel and took over the command of the 4th Infantry brigade and later on he changed over to the 5th mountain brigade. In 1929, on the occasion of the army manoeuvres he was in charge of a manoeuvring division.

Colonel de Diesbach started his career as a lawyer and took his doctor's degree but never practised.

Colonel Grosselein, former commander of the first division who has resigned from his post, owing to differences with the army-corps commander, was at the head of his division since 1923. Before his appointment to this important post he was commander of the St. Maurice fortress.

Colonel Guisan, who has changed over to the first division was born in 1874. He is a Vaudois, and was since 1926 at the head of the second division.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A tramway accident occurred at the crossing of the Forchstrasse. A tramcar, owing to the failure of the brakes collided with a motor lorry. Three persons were seriously injured and had to be taken to hospital.

BERNE.

M. Max Degen, Editor in chief of the "Berne Tagblatt" has died in Berne at the age of 47. The deceased was a well-known personality in Journalistic circles and for many years Central President of the Swiss Press Association. *St. T.*

* * *
The two six year's old boys R. Wörner and E. Beutler fell in the river Aare below the Kornhausbruecke and were drowned. *V.*

LUCERNE.

The unusual spectacle of waves over three feet high was seen on Lake Lucerne, last week, when a great mass of rock suddenly slid into the lake near Alpnach.

* * *

The 18th International Horse Show and Jumping Competition (Concours Hippique) is to be held at Lucerne this year from July 4th to July 12th. The events comprise 10 international and one national competitions, among which the most renowned are the Prize of the Swiss Cavalry, the St. Gothard prize, the Amazon championship, and the Grand Prize of Lucerne.

A limit of six officers for each nation and the limiting of each competitor's horses to three will bring the programme down to a more reasonable length and make the whole Concours more attractive for the public. The competitions will again be held in the park of the Halde on the shores of Lake of Lucerne, where the numerous existing natural obstacles will be completed by artificial jumps arranged by international experts.

BASLE.

The death is reported from Allschwil of Dr. med. Döltschal who enjoyed a great popularity extending far over the borders of his sphere of activity. *N.Z.*

GRAUBUENDEN.

The oldest inhabitant of the Canton of Graubunden, Mrs. A. Capeder-Sonder has died at Satux at the age of 102. *N.Z.*

LAUSANNE.

For defalcations amounting to nearly 150,000 francs, Marcus Rossier an employee of the Municipal tramway company was sentenced to 3½ years imprisonment. *N.Z.*

TICINO.

A UNIVERSITY IN THE TICINO?

The recent discussion in the National Council on occasion of the granting of the special Federal subsidy of 60,000 francs, to the Ticino, for higher educational purposes, has reopened the question of the possibility of the establishment of a University in that Canton. Several leading personalities have taken the matter up again in the Ticino and an influential Committee has been formed to study the question. In any case, however, the aims are, for the present, limited to the faculties of Philosophy and Literature. One of the principal reasons advanced for such a venture appears to be the fact that Italian speaking Swiss following higher studies should be afforded an opportunity to acquire their education in their mother tongue under conditions of freedom of thought and of speech. The Federal Council and the Federal Assembly seem to favour the idea.

HOTEL INDUSTRY.

According to the statistics published in the papers the opening months of this season have been much less favourable for the Hotel Industry than they were last year. As this branch of activity is of considerable importance to the economic life of the Canton it is hoped that the position will undergo a substantial relative improvement in the coming months.

FOOTBALL.

A good deal of enthusiasm for the game has been awakened by the fact that the F.C. Lugano will be in the final of the Swiss Cup. They also occupy, so far, third position in the First League of Eastern Switzerland, only "Grasshoppers" and "Blue Stars" being ahead of them.