

# Home news

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# The Swiss Observer

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## FEDERAL.

### CHARGE D'AFFAIRE FOR SHANGHAI.

The Federal Council has decided to appoint a Chargé d'Affaire in Shanghai, instead of a General Consul as hitherto.

### SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN THE SWISS WATCH INDUSTRY.

In consequence of an improvement in the watch industry, due to seasonal orders, unemployment in this particular trade has gone down during the last month. The number of unemployed at the end of July amounted to 11,022, whilst at the same period of last month, 9,241 persons were reported as out of work.

### SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS.

Month by month it becomes more evident that the Swiss Federal Railways are seriously affected by the general crisis. During the first six months of 1932 only 56,116,427 passengers were carried, or 10 per cent. less than during the corresponding period in 1931, while goods traffic amounted to 7,395,632 tons and showed a decrease of 11.7 per cent. The receipts fell from 183,274,070fr. to 162,948,850fr., or 11.1 per cent. At the same time, if one compares their situation with that of the private railways or with that of the majority of railways in other countries, their losses would appear more than bearable. The principal railways in the United States show a decline in traffic amounting to 29.3 per cent., the receipts from passenger traffic on the German railways during the period under review register a drop of 22.4 per cent., the French "P.L.M." a decline of 18.7 per cent., the Belgian National Company 14.4 per cent., the Italian State Railways 12.1 per cent., and the Austrian Federal Railways 11.6 per cent.

In respect of goods traffic a decrease of 11.7 per cent. in receipts does not appear unsatisfactory when compared with 30.8 per cent. on the German railways, 23.9 per cent. on the Belgian railways, 23.7 per cent. on the French Nord Company, and 23.4 per cent. on the chief American railways. In fact, if one looked at the question merely from the point of view of receipts the situation of the Federal Railways would certainly appear to be privileged. But it is on the expenditure side that the Swiss railways are most seriously handicapped, as in spite of great efforts it has only proved possible to cut expenditure by 2.3 per cent. This cut is insignificant when compared with the 14.3 per cent. of the Germans, the 10.5 per cent. of the Belgians, and the 23.9 per cent. of the Americans.

The work of reorganizing and rationalizing the Federal Railways, which is now taking place, is revealing the difficulty of finding new possibilities of saving in either staff or mechanism. It will therefore be necessary for the Federal authorities to examine the financial position carefully, and it is expected that the whole question will be gone into next month during the Parliamentary Sessions. It is hoped that the Confederation will see its way to put the railways on a sounder financial basis by compensating them for various losses incurred in carrying out work for the Government both during the War and later.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

Thousands of dead fish have been found floating on the surface of the Greifensee near Zurich. On examination they were found to have been attacked by some epizootic complaint, caused, it was at first thought, by the drainage from factories.

This view has now been dismissed, since the discharge of the factories has, it seems, not been in excess of the average daily drainage for some years past, during which period the fish have never once been affected. The latest opinion put forward

by some scientists is that through some physical change, as yet unexplained the water became deficient in oxygen.

The liquidation account of the Engineering firm, Escher, Wyss & Cie, at Zurich, shows 12 million f. assets against 52 million f. liabilities. The commission which was appointed to verify the accounts, has reported, that for some considerable time, the balance sheet was not in conformity with the actual financial status of the firm.

A German commercial traveller made the acquaintance of two men, who proposed to sell him a bar of gold. Taking the offer to be a bona fide one, he handed over to them goods to the value of 16,300f. Later on he found that the bag contained some worthless metal, but by that time the sellers of the would be gold had disappeared.

The death is reported from Zurich of Mme. Lina Brenner-Sturzenegger, widow of the late Federal Councillor Dr. Ernest Brenner, at the age of 73.

Dr. Hans Schneider, Professor of History at the cantonal commercial school has retired from his post after concluding 43 years as a teacher. Dr. Schneider has written various books on Swiss History.

### BERNE.

During the month of September, altogether 64 traffic accidents happened in the town of Berne, two of which proved fatal; whilst 27 persons were more or less seriously hurt. The damage on material is estimated at 15,000f.

Owing to the dismissal of a workman, who had 30 years of service with the Fire Work firm Hamberger at Oberried, 70 work hands went on strike.

The number of unemployed of the town of Bienne has been reduced by about 300. The register shows a number of 2,543 out of work.

The school house at Friedliswart, near the Taubenlochschlucht was completely destroyed by fire.

### BASLE-COUNTY.

The police of Allschwil has arrested a lady dressmaker, aged 38, for telling fortunes, a previous conviction for the same offence was proved.

### BASLE.

The Federal Council has appointed M. Alfred Dietiker to the post of "Kreispostdirektor," in succession to M. Martin Jøgge, who has resigned for reasons of health. M. Dietiker has 40 years experience in the Postal service.

On the occasion of the Gordon-Bennett Balloon race, 1637 toy balloons took the air, 440 of which have landed. One of them has travelled a distance of 976 km. from Basle to Jbasc-Chodecz (Poland) whilst two others have gone a distance of 660 and 570 km. respectively.

### FRIBOURG.

The government of the canton of Fribourg has passed an act, that all public servants reaching the age of seventy, and having held office for 30 years, will have to retire under a pension scheme.

M. de Borcard, commissioner of the cantonal police, and M. M. Mauroux, prefect of Fribourg have resigned from their posts. These resignations are connected with the serious riots which occurred recently. The cantonal government has accepted these resignations. M. Brühlhart, a police officer from Basle has been appointed head of the police, and M. Renevey, a former prefect of Estavayer, has been nominated prefect of Fribourg..

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25th

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

May Fair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

## GENEVA.

The death is reported of M. Henri Troesch, the doyen of the Geneva police. M. Troesch has been a member of the force since 1899, he was due to resign from his post by the 7th of next month.

## AARGAU.

The cantonal budget for 1933 could be adjusted without having to resort to a reduction in the pay of public servants.

The delegates meeting of the Federal Gymnastic Society took place at Baden. With 106 against 103 votes, it was decided to hold the next Federal Gymnastic Festival in 1936 at Winterthur. The town of Zurich unsuccessfully competed against Winterthur.

## APPENZEL A.Rh.

A new institution has been founded under the name "Invalidenheim Ziel" with the aim of acquiring the former Embroidery works Ziel; it is proposed to use the buildings as a home for invalids.

## ST. GALLEN.

The inauguration of the newly erected agriculture school at Flawil took place last Saturday, in the presence of Federal Councillor Schulthess, the building can accommodate 120 pupils, and the cost amounted to 1,040,000fr., of which the community of Flawil subscribed an amount of 100,000fr.

## SCHAFFHAUSEN.

The cantonal government consisting of the following members: Altortler, Lieb, Kuhn, Schärrier and Sturzenegger has been confirmed for the period 1933-36.

## VAUD.

A motor-car driven by Mlle. Germaine Rod, carrying M. Henri Rod, Manager of the Fabrique de matériaux de construction à Renens, Mme. Henri Rod and two young girls, left the road near Bex and collided with a tree. Mme. Rod was killed instantly, whilst the other occupants were seriously injured.

## TICINO.

Colonel Karl Vorbrott, a former member of the instruction corps, has died at Morcote after a long illness.

## SWISS FOREIGN TRADE AND INDUSTRY.

Foreign trade returns for the first half-year reflect the acuteness of the economic crisis now prevailing in Switzerland. Imports reached a value of 905,709,588 francs, compared with 1,108,779,539 francs in 1931. That drop of 203,069 951 francs — or about 18 per cent. — is due not only to reduced demand, but also to the import restrictions set with a view to protecting home industry. Exports totalled 416,465,240 francs, as against 709,823,978 francs in 1931, a decrease of 293,358,738 francs, or nearly 41 per cent. The adverse balance is therefore 489,244,348 francs, or about 54 per cent., while it was 398,955,541 francs, or nearly 36 per cent. in 1931. It will not be made good by invisible exports, as banking receipts are likely to be much lower, and the earnings of the hotel industry will be very poor owing to bad weather in July and the small number of tourists who visited the country.

In examining these figures, one should take into account the fact that prices have dropped considerably. Imports decreased much less than exports, a sign of resistance of the home market. While the value of imports dropped by, roughly, 203 million francs as compared with 1931, the quantities increased by about 200,000 tons. On the other hand, the drop in the value of exports was 293 millions and in quantity about 130,000 tons. The exports of the four chief industries — watch-making, silk, cotton and machines — have been dwindling month after month, and the aggregate figures for the first half-year show a drop of nearly 50 per cent. from the corresponding period of last year.

Conditions seem to be somewhat better at present, but it is too early to say whether the tide is turning, or whether this is only a temporary improvement. It is true that there is a renewed activity on the Bourses and in banking in general, that prices of raw materials are rising, that there is more work in the watchmaking industry, and passenger traffic on the railways has been increasing since the middle of August. The number of