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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

M. MOTTA IN ROME.

The Swiss Minister, M. Wagnière presided at a Banquet given to Federal Councillor, M. Motta, on the occasion of his stay in Rome, by the Swiss Colony. M. Mussolini gave a small luncheon party in honour of M. Motta.

SWITZERLAND AND THE GOLD STANDARD.

The Federal Council has discussed the currency problem at their meeting of last Tuesday, it has been decided to adhere to the Gold Standard.

SWISS GOLD HOLDING.

In the week ended April 22 the gold holding of the Swiss National Bank decreased 74,000,000 Swiss francs to 2,465,000,000f. in order to satisfy the withdrawals of foreign depositors. French investors converted last week about 50,000,000 Swiss francs into French francs in fear of a possible drop of the Swiss franc as a result of the dollar going off gold, but as a rule Swiss investors retain their dollars.

Dollar cash and exchange is not held in large quantities in Switzerland, because exports from Switzerland to America have fallen, and since the drop in the pound the Swiss do not keep more dollars than is necessary. On the other hand, dollar stocks are held in Switzerland because Swiss investors hope that the gain by the possible rise of commodity prices in America and the ensuing revival of trade will largely offset the depreciation of the dollar compared with the Swiss franc. As for dollar bonds, Swiss investors trust in American good faith for repayment of gold bonds in real gold value, as most of these bonds have the gold clause.

SWISS DELEGATES TO THE WORLD ECONOMIC CONFERENCE.

It is freely rumoured in Swiss political circles, that M. Schulthess, President of the Swiss Confederation, will be one of the Delegates to represent Switzerland at the World Economic Conference, which will take place in June in London.

COLONEL BIBERSTEIN'S RESIGNATION.

Colonel Arnold Biberstein, commander of the 3rd Army Corps, has tendered his resignation to the Federal Council, for reasons of age. (He is 68). The latter has requested the distinguished officer to remain at his post, but it is doubtful whether he will accede to the wish of the Government.—

Colonel Biberstein, was, at the outbreak of the war, in command of the 16th Infantry Brigade (Thurgau and St. Gallen). When Colonel de Loys died, he was made a Division commander and chief of the 2nd division, this command he exchanged shortly after with the one of the 4th division. In 1925 he was promoted to the rank of Army-Corps Commander, and the command of the 3rd Army Corps was entrusted to him.

NATURALIZATIONS.

From the report of the Federal Justice and Police Dept. we take the following figures:

3995 (1931: 3287) applications for acquiring Swiss citizenship were received; of which 3470 (1931: 2891) were successful. The applicants were formerly members of the following countries: Germany 1951; Italy 821; France 228; Austria 163; Poland 80; Tschechoslovakia 72; Russia 32; Denmark 15; Hungary 14; Holland 12; Yugoslavia 10; Great Britain and Rumania 8 each; Lichtenstein, Belgium and Greece 5 each; Lettland, Turkey and America 4 each; Sweden and Spain 3 each; Persia 2; Bulgaria, Estland, Armenia, Egypt, S. Africa, Argentine and Peru 1 each. Nine had no former Nationality.

FEDERAL HOUSEHOLD.

According to the latest figures published, 64,700 persons are employed by the Confederation; of which number the Swiss Federal Railways absorb 32,200.

LESS UNEMPLOYED IN SWITZERLAND.

The unemployed figures at the end of March are 71,809, or 24,500 less than at the end of February. (96,273).

SWISS PRODUCERS' PETITION.

Swiss rayon yarn producers are petitioning the Government for further State protection, claiming that the quota restrictions introduced last October have failed in their purpose. The Federal authorities are stated to be now giving their consideration to new safeguarding measures.

TOURIST TRAFFIC IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Congress of Tourism, which has been recently held in Zurich, has once more shown what an important part the tourist traffic plays in Swiss economy. It is estimated that an eleventh part of the Swiss national capital—that is, about 4,500,000,000f.—is invested in the tourist industry, which in ordinary times yields nearly 500,000,000f. a year. Last winter, when the crisis was at its height, tourists brought between 50,000,000 and 60,000,000 francs' worth of foreign currency to Switzerland. Swiss agriculture sells one-tenth of its production to Swiss hotels, or about 136,000,000 francs' worth a year. The tourist industry makes good nearly one-fifth of the adverse balance of foreign trade.

The object of the congress was to bring together representatives of various organizations with a view to giving a new impetus to the tourist traffic. A general propaganda effort will be made to make Switzerland better known in other countries, and the congress has also contemplated the possibility of creating new travelling facilities. Travel in Switzerland is nowadays impeded by high fares on the railways, and it is believed that no definite improvement will be brought about in the tourist traffic until fares have been lowered by at least 30 per cent. Fares are lower in France, Italy, and Austria.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

A fire which broke out at the telephone Exchange in Oerlikon, caused much damage and inconvenience, nearly 14,000 lines were affected.

The customary "Sechseläuten" took place last Monday, the weather having been fine, large crowds witnessed the procession of the old guilds and the children, as well as the burning of the Bögg.

BERNE.

The famous Bad Heustrich, which was completely destroyed by fire last year, will be re-built.

BASLE.

M. Fridolin Heer, Pastor at the St. Matthäus Church has died in Basle at the age of 49 from heart failure. M. Heer, who was a popular preacher, was born in Flecken (Glarus); he studied at the Universities of Zurich and Marburg; previous to his appointment at the St. Matthäus Church, he was Pastor in Matt (Glarus), and Lucerne.

A terrible accident, occurred on the "Viadukt" about a 100m. from the crossing Bachtletenstrasse-Steinering, when a motor-car, through a skid collided with a tram car. The chauffeur, Carl Läuble, Coiffeur R. Fretz, passenger and proprietor of the car, age 22 and his fiancée, Anna Kaus, age 23 from Arlesheim were killed outright. Both motor-and tram car were heavily damaged.

GENEVA.

The directing committee of the Swiss Socialist Party has decided to break off relations with the Geneva Socialists who have decided to organize the May Day celebrations in common with the Communists. The Geneva Socialist leaders for the past three years have striven to bring over their party to Communism.

AARGAU.

A sharp frost, which occurred last Sunday night, has caused much damage to fruit trees in the Fricktal and in the neighbourhood of Baden.

LAUSANNE.

Three clerks of one of the Branch offices at Lausanne of the Swiss Bank Corporation were bound and gagged by burglars, who entered the premises with the intent to commit a robbery. They however, did not succeed, and the Police are on their heels.

VAUD.

The town of Lausanne has conferred on M. & Mme. Paderewski, the freedom of the City, as a token of "admiration for the great musician, idealist and honoured guest." M. Paderewski will be the 7th honorary citizen of the town of Lausanne.

RAPPORT SUR L'ACTIVITE DU SECRETARIAT DES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER.

Malgré les difficultés d'ordre financier avec lesquelles le Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger est aux prises, il a pu poursuivre jusqu'ici encore sa tâche avec succès. Ce n'est pas à dire que certaines branches de son activité ne souffrent cruellement des limites imposées par un budget trop restreint. On ne peut faire avec 45,000 francs ce que l'on faisait avec 80,000, et passées certaines normes, les restrictions deviennent des coups de grâce. Si le Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger devait vivre longtemps encore comme il a dû le faire cette année, les fruits d'une grande partie de son labeur seraient perdus.

C'est toute une éducation, en somme, qu'il a donnée aux groupes N.S.H. à l'Étranger. Autrefois, les Suisses à l'Étranger se réunissaient pour jouer au jass, pour danser ou faire des excursions. Sans abandonner ces sports, nos compatriotes aiment à se rencontrer maintenant pour parler des problèmes qui intéressent notre pays, pour étudier les moyens de lui être utiles, pour le faire connaître par des conférences, des séances de cinéma, en organisant des voyages en Suisse, etc., etc. Bref, grâce à l'orientation patiente et persévérante donnée par le Secrétariat, les groupes N.S.H. de l'étranger sont devenus, pour notre pays, des agents de propagande de premier ordre, tant au point de vue économique que "culturel." Nous connaissons des villes de l'étranger où les milieux indigènes nourrissent une sympathie enthousiaste à l'égard de notre pays, qui date des initiatives prises par les groupes N.S.H. à l'instigation du Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger. Et c'est là seulement un des aspects de son influence. Si nous y insistons particulièrement, c'est que nous pensons à l'isolement du pays qui va grandissant avec la crise. Il faudrait donc faire tout pour sauvegarder et accroître les relations avec l'étranger, afin d'être à même de défendre nos intérêts vitaux. Nous avons, dans nos colonies, des agents admirables, qui n'attendent que l'aide et la collaboration du Secrétariat pour agir. Allons-nous, faute d'énergie pour trouver de quoi faire vivre l'une des plus heureuses créations de la Nouvelle Société Helvétique, laisser tomber une activité dont notre pays a le plus grand besoin et qui ne se fera pas sans nous?

Abordons, maintenant, les événements qui ont marqué la vie et l'œuvre du Secrétariat durant l'année qui vient de s'écouler.

La Commission des Suisses à l'Étranger, formée de membres et de non membres de la N.S.H., a continué à être présidée avec beaucoup de dévouement par M. Koch. Elle a eu malheureusement à déplorer la démission de M. de Reynold et de M. de Traz, les inspirateurs et les fondateurs du Secrétariat. M. Job, ancien chef du Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger, et M. Henry-Louis Henriod, de Genève, secrétaire général de la Fédération Universelle des Associations Chrétiennes d'Étudiants, ancien membre de la N.S.H. de Londres, ont bien voulu accepter de combler les vides.

Jusqu'ici et depuis quelques années, l'activité du Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Étranger était assurée par un premier secrétaire alémanique et un deuxième secrétaire romand. M. Job, ayant quitté en janvier, au regret de chacun, son poste de premier secrétaire pour prendre la direction du Radio-Zurich, il a été remplacé par M. J. C. Meyer, docteur en droit, originaire de Schaffhouse. Dès lors, ce sont les deux secrétaires, M. Meyer et Mlle Briod, qui assument à titre égal la direction du Secrétariat.

Le nombre des groupes ne cesse de s'accroître. Durant l'année écoulée, 11 nouveaux groupes se sont affiliés à l'Organisation des Suisses à l'Étranger: un en Allemagne, celui de Darmstadt, 5 en