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The Swiss Observer

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FEDERAL.

SWISS GRAND PRIX.

The German driver Bernd Rosemeyer, at the wheel of an Auto-Union, won the Swiss motoring Grand Prix in Berne, on Sunday last. He covered the distance of about 325 miles in 3hr. 9min. 1.6sec., at an average speed of 161.755 kilometres an hour.

The only British competitor, Earl Howe, driving a Bugatti, retired in the twenty-fifth lap owing to engine trouble. The British racing motorist, R. J. B. Seaman, driving a Delage, won the Prix de Berne, the event for cars of under 1,500c.c., for the third year in succession. Seaman covered the twenty-eight laps of the 4½ mile course—a distance of about 125 miles—at an average speed of 141.381 kilometres (approximately 88½ miles) an hour. The Swiss driver H. Ruesch won the Prix de Berne on a Alfa Romeo car.

SILK IMPORT TARIFF INCREASED.

Of the 15,000 looms which were operating a few years ago in the Swiss silk industry, once the largest and most flourishing of the Swiss exporting industries, only about 4,000 are running to-day, and these, moreover, are on short time. Exports, too, have declined during the past nine years to less than one-sixth of their former volume. With a view, therefore, to protecting the home market as far as possible to the advantage of the domestic silk industry, the Swiss Federal Council has increased the import tariffs on silk tissues to between 600 and 800 frs. per 100 kgs. and on silk wearing apparel to between 1,200 and 1,500 frs. per 100 kgs.

SWISS FRANC'S FUTURE.

Dr. Jean M. Musy, a former President of the Swiss Confederation and ex-Finance Minister, who is on a visit to Holland, states in an interview with the "Algemeen Handelsblad" that an automatic adaptation of prices in the on-gold countries to those in the devaluation countries cannot be achieved. The only alternative is deflation or devaluation.

As to whether deflation—of which Dr. Musy had been a strong supporter—still has a chance of success in Switzerland, he said "I feel it is now too late for carrying on deflation. The Swiss population has lost its courage."

He added that any devaluation of the French franc would not automatically lead to devaluation of the Swiss currency. There was no close connection between the two currencies and the gold stocks of the Swiss National Bank were large enough to resist attacks. The Swiss authorities would therefore retain their liberty of action in the event of France devaluing her currency.

QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS.

Queen Wilhelmina and Princess Juliana of the Netherlands left Switzerland after a fortnight's holiday at Weissenburg in the Bernese Oberland.

SWISS STANDING ARMY PLAN.

Creation of a standing army to defend Switzerland against sudden invasion is being discussed by the Swiss General Staff, and a report on the subject will shortly be made to M. Minger, the Minister for Defence.

Up to the present Switzerland has had only a militia army varying in strength from 130,000 downwards, according to the number of men undergoing training at any one time, and it has been thought that it would always be possible to mobilise the force in time to meet any threatened invasion, as was done in 1914.

Recent developments of mechanised armies, however, have convinced the military authorities that there would be no time for mobilisation before an invader would be able to sweep across the northern frontier. The federal constitution speci-

cally forbids a permanent army, but it is believed that it would be possible to find a way out of the legal tangle.

SWISS COMMUNISTS SENT BACK.

Twelve young communists from Zurich, who intended to join the government forces in Spain, were detained at Basle by the police; they were sent back by the next train from "whence they came."

SWISS NATIONAL BANK.

The statement of the Swiss National Bank for the week ended August 22nd shows that the gold reserve has increased by 10,000,000fr., to 1,471,700,000fr., while the bank note circulation has decreased by 4,800,000fr. to 1,245,000,000fr. On August 22nd the gold reserve represented 86.89 per cent. of all the engagements of the Bank.

SWISS NEUTRALITY IN CIVIL WAR.

The Swiss Federal Council decided to take several new measures to ensure Switzerland's complete neutrality in the Spanish civil war.

According to these regulations, which came into effect immediately, anyone leaving Switzerland to take part in the hostilities, or preparing for or actually collecting money for any other than charitable work in connection with the war, or publicly provoking or inciting anyone to break the new regulations, is liable to a maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment or a maximum fine of 10,000 Swiss francs (more than £600), or to both.

The measures also provide that money collected to help to finance the hostilities, and all booklets, posters, or other printed matter which are considered likely to lead to an infraction of the regulations, will be seized by the police.

Finally they provide that all demonstrations organised in favour of one or other of the belligerents in Spain (particularly public meetings or parades) are forbidden without permission.

The new regulations complete the measures taken about a fortnight ago by the Federal Council, which provide for a total embargo on arms to Spain and forbid the enlistment of Swiss subjects as soldiers for either side.

The new measures are considered to be primarily an act of censure against the Socialist Mayor of Geneva, Leon Nicole, who a few years ago actively took part in a lively protest meeting against Spanish Fascists organised by the local Socialist and Communist party.

SWISS BANKING MORATORIUM.

Closuit and Co., a private banking firm, of Martigny, in the Canton of Valais, has been granted a 12 months' moratorium. The bank was founded in 1885.

AIRPORT FOR ST. MORITZ.

A scheme to enable British visitors to get into an air liner at Croydon and land within ten minutes of St. Moritz and Pontresina is being discussed by the municipalities of the Engadine towns.

The proposal is to build an airport, to be called "Upper Engadine Aerodrome," at Samaden. The site is a large flat field, near the golf course, frequently used in the past as a landing ground by private aircraft.

The estimated cost is approximately £13,000. The Swiss Labour Board will make a grant of about one-tenth of the total towards wages and workmen's insurances. Part is to be raised by collections in the neighbouring communes, and the remainder by a Cantonal lottery.

It is hoped to have the aerodrome ready by the beginning of the winter sports season in December.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The deficit for 1935 of the accounts of the canton of Zurich amounts to 5,293,525 frs. (Deficit 1934: 8,488,252 frs.)

The founder and since 1928 President of the Christian-Socialist party, National-Councillor Bernard Widmer, has celebrated his 60th birthday anniversary.

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. H. Pallmann from Frauenfeld to the post of Professor of Chemistry at the Federal Technical University in Zurich.

The town council of Zurich has made a presentation (Kunstmappe) to Doctor Bircher-Benner on the occasion of his 60th birthday anniversary, in recognition for his services rendered to medical science.

BASLE.

Through the death of Pastor Jakob Täschler, the congregation of the Basle Minster loses one of its favourite former preachers, who for 25 years occupied the pulpit.

BERNE.

M. Eduard Egger-Lehnherr, proprietor of the "Bären" and Hotel "Schweizerhof" in Kandersteg, has died at the age of 70. M. Egger was a well-known personality in Hotel circles both at home and abroad.

Lieutenant H. Bosch, attached to the Field-Battery 43 at Thun, was killed in a motor accident.

LUCERNE.

M. Hans Emmenegger, one of Switzerland's best known landscape painters, has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary. After having studied in Paris and Munich, he established himself in Switzerland in 1900; his pictures were exhibited at numerous exhibitions both at home and abroad.

SOLOTHURN.

The death is reported from Solothurn of Dr. W. Kottmann, who was for many years connected with the "Bürgerspital." From 1927-1932 he occupied the post as surgeon-in-chief.

THURGAU.

The canton of Thurgau makes no exception from other cantons in showing a deficit in their accounts for 1935. (Fr. 360,720,40.)

The late Colonel P. Lardy from Kreuzlingen has left an amount of 65,000 frs. for charitable purposes.

ST. GALLEN.

M. Walter Zollikofer-Kern, senior partner of the well-known Printing Works, Zollikofer and Co. in St. Gall has celebrated his 70th birthday anniversary.

GENEVA.

Pastor Ernest Sauvin died at Geneva at a great age. He took over a pastorate in the canton of Neuchâtel in 1882 and in 1899 he was appointed pastor at Geneva. For many years he was European Secretary of the Y.M.C.A.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The Cement Works at St. Sulpice have closed down for want of work. Forty-five workmen are thus unemployed.

TICINO.

Great excitement was caused at Cureglia, where a bomb exploded at the town hall. It is reported that the damage caused to the structure of the building is considerable. The police have opened an investigation.

The buildings of the "Korkplattenfabrik Margaroli" at Biasca were destroyed by fire. The damage is estimated to be considerable.

SWISS FOREIGN TRADE RETURNS.

The foreign trade returns for the first half of 1936 show a decrease over 1935 both in imports and exports, but the 1936 results are not as unsatisfactory as had at one time been forecast. Imports totalled 542,013,180 francs, a drop of nearly 80,500,000 francs over 1935, which was mainly due to import quotas. Exports totalled 396,210,434 francs, a drop of about 6 millions over 1935. The import surplus, which was 220 millions last year, was reduced to 145,750,000 in 1936.

The results for the four chief exporting industries are nevertheless encouraging. These industries' exports totalled 186.5 millions for the first six months, as against 178.75 millions the previous year. Exports of the watch-making industry reached 55.7 millions, compared with 48.8 millions in 1935; the market for Swiss watches has somewhat expanded, and there was a noticeable improvement in the demand for the better quality watches. Silk and cotton goods exports showed a small decrease over last year, but the machines industry's exported products rose by 3 millions.

Imports from Great Britain dropped to 33,600,012 francs from 37,719,719 francs in 1935, and exports to Great Britain rose from 35,443,683 francs in 1935 to 41,934,255 francs in 1936. Trade with the five principal countries was as follows (in millions of francs):—

	Imports from	Exports to
	1935	1936
Germany	161.6	144.8
France	106.2	82.4
Great Britain	37.5	33.3
U.S.A.	32.6	29.8
Italy	47.0	28.4