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BUNDESRAT MOTTA AN MINISTER PARAVICINI.

Der Chef des Eidg. politischen Departements, Bundesrat Motta, hat an Herrn Minister Paravicini ein überaus herzlich gehaltenes Dankschreiben gerichtet, das die erfolgreiche 20jährige diplomatische Tätigkeit des Gesandten und die wertvolle Unterstützung, die er bei seiner Gattin fand, würdigt. "Sie wissen," schreibt Bundesrat Motta u. a., "welchem Interesse in Bern die lange Reihe ihrer politischen Berichte begegnete, in denen sich neben Ihrem so abgewogenen Urteil Ihre vollkommene Kenntnis der britischen Einrichtungen und der Persönlichkeiten des Hofes und der Regierung widerspiegelte. Ich fand darin oft wertvolle Anhaltspunkte, um mir eine Meinung über die zahlreichen widersprechenden und mitunter so schweren Ereignisse bilden zu können, die die Zeit zwischen den beiden Kriegen gekennzeichnet haben. Ich weiss Ihnen dafür grossen Dank. Aber noch erkenntlicher bin ich Ihnen für die Hilfe, die Sie uns immer zuteil werden liessen, um in England Verständnis und eine günstige Aufnahme für die politischen Notwendigkeiten unseres kleinen Landes zu erwirken, die der Regierung eines so mächtigen Imperiums nur durch ständig erneuerte Anstrengungen des guten Willens fassbar werden konnten. Dank der festen Freundschaftsbande, die Sie in London zu knüpfen und zu unterhalten wussten, ist Ihnen dies aufs beste gelungen und Sie konnten mit Genugtuung sehen, dass die Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und Grossbritannien während heurührender Wechselfälle freundschaftlich und vertrauensvoll geblieben sind."

REPORT ON SWISS TRADE AND INDUSTRY IN 1938.

The "Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry" has just published its annual *Report on Swiss Trade and Industry during the year 1938*. The abundance of economic facts and figures will enable any reader to obtain an insight into Swiss economic conditions.

As formerly, the general part of the Report contains a succinct statement about certain important questions concerning prices, commercial policy and political economy.

Then follows a statistical part, giving all the most important data about the different branches of Swiss economics, such as: population, waterpower, factories, labour questions, cost of living, banking, foreign trade and finance.

The greater part of the volume is devoted to special reports in the individual branches of trade and industry, on traffic, insurance and banking, on production and distribution of electric energy and on technical and commercial education.

The Report appears like last year in a French and in a German edition and may be obtained at the reduced price of Swiss francs 5.— (plus postage) from the "Secretariat of the Swiss Federation of Commerce and Industry," Zurich, Börsenstrasse 17.

SWISS RAILWAYS IN WARTIME.

(*"Modern Transport,"* 6.1.40.)

The Swiss Federal Railways have completed their preparations for dealing with the conditions imposed by war in Europe, vast quantities of stores having been acquired and credits voted for the purchase of additional rolling stock. A visible sign of preparedness is the sight of huge stacks of coal in the open spaces adjoining the larger stations and sheds, these supplies having been purchased from Germany as part of the tourists-for-coal barter agreement. Meanwhile, all available steam locomotives have been repaired and made ready for use to haul supplementary trains on the lines which are still steam-operated, and also upon the electrified lines, if necessary. As regards international traffic, Switzerland has concluded agreements with neighbouring States under which free transit is granted to Switzerland from certain Atlantic and Mediterranean ports. In this connection, however, plans have been completed to operate such services with Swiss rolling stock and personnel, as experience during the war of 1914-18 proved that it was necessary for the Swiss to run their own trains to the ports concerned if they were to be successful in obtaining delivery of the goods. As an indication of the traffic now passing over the Swiss Federal Railways, it is interesting to note that in November, 1939, tonnage increased by 765,365 tons to 1,900,000 tons, and earnings from goods traffic amounted during that month to 23,442,000 Swiss francs, as compared with 13,687,912 Swiss francs in the corresponding month of 1938, whilst the total operating earnings were 32,744,000 Swiss francs, an increase of 9,932,000 francs as compared with November, 1938. Purchases of new rolling stock, for which 7,822,000 Swiss francs have been voted, include 28 light all-metal coaches and 280 goods wagons.

THE DEFENCES OF SWITZERLAND.

(*"The Times,"* 3.1.40.)

The Alpine skiing season has begun — less for urbans (for several frontier districts are closed to them) than for soldiers. The Swiss Alpine troops have been using skis from the very beginning, but the Army Command is now forming new units of skiers composed of volunteers drawn from all Army units. These men, mostly members of the Swiss Alpine Club and Association of Swiss Ski Clubs, are undergoing special training courses in the mountains. They carry about 40lb. on their backs, and they shelter in the huts of the Swiss Alpine Club (which have all been commandeered by the Army), or dig holes in the snow, or build igloos, in which they sleep very comfortably. Apart from these units there are special frontier squads, which are stationed on the border, sometimes at 9,000ft., where they stay from 10 to 15 days before coming down to the valley to enjoy civilized life again. Most of the men belonging to these squads are Alpine guides and porters, but they also include a small number of town people, who do splendidly in the snow wilderness.

Some military critics still hold that, as it is almost impossible for the Germans to break through the