

Swiss armaments

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SWISS ARMAMENTS.

On June 5th. the Swiss Parliament passed a resolution, by 159 votes against only 11, to raise immediately an extraordinary loan of 235 millions of Swiss Francs for new defence measures. The very critical position politically in Europe, directly forces our small country to provide adequate military protection, explained the Chief of our Military department, Federal Minister Minger. Nearly half of the proposed credit would be used for air-defences, also a great deal towards heavier artillery and fortifications along the frontier. The protection of the frontier must be built up to such an extent that any surprise attack could be stopped long enough to enable the main forces to march up within the shortest possible time and prevent invasion.

The large loan would be raised on short terms, to be amortised within about 20 years. Approximately 24 million Francs per annum would be necessary for interest and amortisation service; besides a large amount for increased military expenditures, materials, etc. Higher taxations will be imposed on beer and tobacco, also the military tax will be doubled.

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FAST EXPRESS TRAINS.

The railway authorities of Switzerland recently increased the speed of most train - services, thus creating 1.6 million extra mileage per annum. An outstanding innovation is the new express Zurich-Geneva of 2 trains daily covering the distance of 288 km. in 3 hours 25 minutes. The average speed over the whole distance is 85 km. per hour, and the maximum on straight runs 110 km. This fast train stops only in Bern and Lausanne for 2 minutes and is a delight to many, in this age of speed.

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TRAVEL - IMPRESSIONS.

The Loetschberg Railway: From Brigg, the fine and powerful electric train takes you swiftly uphill, past a roaring waterfall and over high viaducts. You look down upon the fertile Rhone Valley as from an aeroplane, and then you enter the great Loetschberg tunnel, the third in length among the Alpine railways. At Kandersteg you pause for a cup of coffee or an ice-cold beer, admiring the towering peaks that seem to protect rather than threaten this lovely mountain village. Proceeding down the valley over long and high viaducts and through more tunnels and past beautiful mountains, you arrive in Spiez on the famous lake of Thun. From there you may continue your journey either by rail or take a steam boat to Interlaken, the centre of the Bernese Oberland.

The Gotthard Railway: The Gotthard line, which takes you from Fluelen to Lugano, is a symbol of untamed, and at the same time of controlled, forces. The river Reuss, which you cross at first, is a wild mountain torrent, and the two electrical engines, that pull your train so easily up-hill to romantic Wassen, are a fine example of restrained or controlled power. The might of Zwinguri, the castle-ruin above Amsteg, where the one-time Austrian oppressor lived, was broken, and the torrent has been fettered in iron pipes that feed electric power-stations in the valley below. And even the strength of the mighty Gotthard was pierced by a nine-miles tunnel, which connects Northern and Southern Europe with each other. After an hour's fast journey through the enchanting Ticino you reach --

Lugano: the name that stands for a dreamland of rich, blossoming, Southern vegetation. Neither bold and rocky Mount San Salvatore, nor the Monte Bre can destroy the impression of perfect harmony; it seems rather to confirm the reality of colourful visions of an earthly paradise. You may spend an afternoon's delightful walk