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HOME NEWS

The Federal Political Department has received a reply note from the French Government announcing its willingness to re-open negotiations in the *Savoie Zones* question. M. La Roche, from the Foreign Ministry in Paris, will be the appointed envoy of the French Government for the resumption of conversations in Berne, the appointed representatives of the Swiss Government being Prof. Dr. Laur (Brugg) and National Councillor Maunoir (Geneva). Genevese public opinion is now more hopeful that a mutually acceptable basis for the solution of this much perturbing problem will eventually be found.

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Negotiations which have been pending for some time between Switzerland and France have resulted in the French authorities declaring their agreement to transfer the Passport and Customs Offices from St. Louis to the Alsace Station in Bâle, where the French officials will exercise their duties from the 1st of June next.

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The Federal Council intends addressing an appeal to the Italian Government to issue an order to close the notorious gambling den in the Casino at Campione.

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From the Federal Revenue and Expenditure accounts for 1920 we extract the following interesting details:

Total receipts from import duty frs. 93,804,000. Higher duty on tobacco produced increased revenue of frs. 7,200,000, dutyable imports which previous to July 1920 were free of duty frs. 855,000, and other imported goods for which the import tariff has been raised since July 1920 frs. 2,400,000.

Stamp duties realised net revenue of frs. 17,144,000.

The accounts of the Federal Post show a deficit of frs. 28,276,783, towards which the telegraph service contributed to the tune of frs. 1,092,000, whereas the telephone service produced a profit of frs. 5,091,000.

The War Mobilisation debt, which in 1919 amounted to frs. 1,220,679,000, is now reduced to frs. 532,200,000, a large portion of the War Profits Tax going towards its reduction.

The cost to the State for cheapening such staple foods as milk, flour and bread, rice, sugar, etc., amounted to 55 million francs.

Expenditure in connection with repatriation of Swiss from Russia reached the figure of frs. 530,173, and the cost

of repatriating Russians from Switzerland were frs. 206,535, while the accompaniment of food and "Liebesgaben" trains to the Central States cost the Swiss nation frs. 43,939.

Mobilisation of parts of the Swiss Army in consequence of the general strike in 1918 involved the country in expenditure of nearly 34 million francs. Another item, which is causing extreme heartburn and which will in the course of the next few days be the subject of a public enquiry, is the loss of the 30 million francs invested by the Government in the ill-fated Seetransport Union.

The profits accruing to the State from the cheese monopoly amount to frs. 11,207,000, and have been allocated to the cattle-disease fund, which provides compensation to farmers whose cattle stocks have been decimated or extinguished through foot-and-mouth disease.

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The Federal Finance Department records that the War Profits Tax, due per end of March, 1921, amounts to frs. 740,525,000, of which 643.5 millions have been paid into the treasury by April 1st last. The cantons of Zurich and Bâle figure as the highest contributors with 126 and 87 millions respectively. From these receipts about 50 million francs have been distributed among the cantonal treasuries, and 99 million francs were allocated to the federal fund for unemployment benefits.

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Owing to the severe trade depression in Switzerland the number of unemployed and partially employed on May 9th reached the disquieting total of 150,481.

The official figures of the Federal Labour Bureau up to April 25th were: unemployed 47,949, partially employed 95,374, an increase since January 31st of 33 and 40% respectively.

The following industries are particularly hard hit: Textiles with 11,902 unemployed and 38,400 partially employed, Watchmaking 9,533 and 18,983, Metal and Machinery 5,579 and 16,387.

The cantons most adversely affected through total unemployment are: St. Gall and Appenzell 10,386, Berne 7,485, Neuchâtel 4,853, while the figures of the partially employed are very high in the cantons Zurich 22,642, Solothurn 13,967, Berne 8,395, Neuchâtel 7,487, St. Gall and Appenzell a.-Rh. 7,229, Basle 6,901.

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The severe crisis in the boot industry is still continuing. The recent Federal decree limiting imports is not likely to bring immediate relief owing to large stocks previously imported flooding the market.

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In 1920 Swiss emigrants numbered 9,276, the highest figure since 1884; 7,073 have left for the United States, the majority being farmers and workmen.

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The commission, composed of one American, one Belgian and one Swiss jurist, which has studied the Aaland

question has now published its conclusions and recommendations, which latter have been received with bitter disappointment both by Sweden and the Aaland Islands.

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Professor Logoz of the Geneva University (faculty of law) has been appointed President of the Tribunal which is to settle the differences between Bulgaria and Serbia.

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The President of the League of Nations has convened its members for the next meeting, which opens on September 5th next at Geneva.

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At the elections for the Cantonal Council of Solothurn the Liberal party secured 63 seats, the People's party 33, and the Socialists 34 seats.

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The election results for the St. Gall Municipal Council are as follows: Liberals 21 seats, Conservative People's party 17, Socialists 17, Democrats 9, and Young Liberals 6 seats.

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The 1920 budget of the Canton Wallis closes with a deficit of frs. 1,022,559.

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The Board of the Swiss Federal Railways has declined to return to the issue of cheap Sunday return fares and the popular monthly season tickets, which used to be available on all the State lines and entitling to special reductions on some of the private lines.

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Col. Emil Frey has resigned his position as director of the International Telegraph Bureau in Berne, retiring on, July 31st next.

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The issue of £2,000,000 8 per cent. preference shares of Nestlé's was entirely successful, the shares being now quoted at about 6d. premium.

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An Italian weekly, "Corriere Italiano," will be making its first appearance next month in Berne. This new journal aims at developing amicable relations between Italy and Switzerland and furthering mutual interests of the two countries, appertaining to commerce, traffic and labour movements. It will also serve as intellectual medium for the Italians resident in Switzerland.

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Arrangements are being made for the 23rd Federal Choral Festival to take place in Lucerne from June 23rd to 27th, 1922.

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The final for the Swiss football championship, season 1920-1921, has been won by the Zurich Football Club "Grasshoppers," who defeated the Bernese Football Club "Young Boys" at Zurich in the presence of some ten thousand spectators by 3 goals to 1.

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ANOTHER ECHO OF THE GREAT WAR.—In publishing C. Fred. Silberbauer's excellent English rendering of our national hymn—in the metre of the original—our contemporary "South Africa" remarks: Those of his fellow-South Africans who were interned as prisoners of war in Switzerland will be interested to have the only English version which ever appeared of a hymn the strains of whose musical setting (fully worthy of the words) welcomed them to a country where they received the blessing of health restored. On their ceremonial departure these strains likewise bade them "Godspeed."—ED., S.A.

THE SWISS PSALM.

(After the Original of Leonhard Widmer—1808-1868.)

When Thou com'st with reddening dawn
Thee I see in rays of morn
Through eternity and time
LORD SUBLIME.

When the Alps are crimson-glowing
Be your prayers, free Switzers, flowing
Unto Him Whose mighty hand
Formed your stately fatherland.

When the shades of eve are here
Thee I find in starry sphere,
Thee as Friend of man adored
LOVING LORD!

From yon shining realms elysian
Send to me the blessed vision
That true spirits understand:
"GOD—in heavenly fatherland!"

If a mist the heights enshroud
Thee I seek in seas of cloud,
Thee, Whose depth no man can learn
LORD ETERNE!

Lo, o'er vapours grey victorious,
Leads the sun his pageant glorious,
Bidding earthlings understand:
"GOD—in heavenly fatherland!"

When Thou rid'st the raging blast
Be Thou still our refuge fast
Whose hid purpose cannot err
RESCUER!

In the night of storm and terror,
Childlike trusting, without error,
May our spirits understand:
"GOD—in heavenly fatherland!"

—C. FRED. SILBERBAUER.

* * *

OBITUARY.

Alt-Regierungsrat Alfred Scheurer had attained the age of 81 when he was laid to rest recently at Gampelen, Canton Berne.

A politician and statesman of the old school—honest, straight and fearless—he commanded a tremendous following and profound admiration during a political career extending over 35 years, in the course of which he successively represented the Canton of Berne in the National and the State Councils, in addition to holding office as Director of Finance of the Canton of Berne for just over a quarter of a century. Alfred Scheurer was one of the prime moving spirits advocating the building of the Lötschbergbahn. At the funeral ceremony the Swiss Federal Council was represented by the President, Mr. Schulthess, and the Vice-President, Mr. Haab.

Dr. Ernest Picot, Judge of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court since 1904, succumbed to an operation on May 9th in Lausanne, aged 68.

The son of an old Genevese family, he studied law at the universities of Leipzig, Paris and Heidelberg, at which latter university he obtained his degree of doctor of law. In 1876-77 he was attached to the Swiss Legation in Paris. Returnig to Geneva, he became Deputy State Attorney and was elected Judge of the Cantonal Courts in 1884, to which he belonged until 1904, when he was elected member of the Supreme Court, which he presided in 1919-1920. The funeral service was celebrated at the Temple at Eaux Vives, delegates of the Swiss Federal Council, the Governments of Geneva and Vaud being present, interment following at Cologny.

Guiseppe Maraini, who has fought in 1866 under Garibaldi for the independence of Italy, has died at Lugano at the age of 81, and has bequeathed frs. 31,000 to benevolent institutions.