

Home news

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A Special "Souvenir" Number.

Owing to the many demands for extra copies of the last three issues of the "S. O.," we have decided to reprint the articles referring to the "Jubilé Décennal" of our Minister. This Souvenir number, which is ready now (price 3d.), is printed in brown on toned art paper and contains the illustrated article of May 31st and the full report of the subsequent Dinner and Presentation with the speeches *in extenso*, as published in the two following issues.



HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

PROPOSED TIME EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

In the States Council a private member's bill (Motion) submitted and approved in the National Council as long ago as December 1928 was passed without much discussion. The bill calls upon the Federal Council to study and report upon the desirability of extending the life of the National Council from three to four years. It is conceded on all sides that the longer life would promote a more satisfactory consideration and prompt disposal of parliamentary business which would be less influenced by political side-issues. The measure has the support of all parties mainly for financial reasons: the respective party funds are absorbed by a general election and the longer intervening period affords more time for replenishing the depleted electioneering coffers. The States Council was unanimous in its approval and the bill was taken charge of by Federal President Muisy. In the ordinary course of events this new proposal which necessitates a change in our Constitution (art. 76, 96 and 105) will be submitted to the electorate in about a year's time.

NEW FEDERAL JUDGE.

In the room of the late Dr. Oser the two chambers of the Swiss Parliament elected Dr. Josef Andermatt judge at the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne. Dr. Andermatt who was born in 1871 at Baar, is a well-known advocate in Zug and belongs to the catholic conservative party; his candidature was supported by all the parties as he obtained 163 out of 173 valid votes.

M. MOTTA AND HIS CRITICS.

Last week the report of the political department was submitted to the National Council for approval. The socialist members engaged in unflattering remarks about M. Motta's supposed partiality towards fascist manifestations in Switzerland. Regrets were also recorded that the official steps, based on the Hague Treaty, to obtain redress for war losses and damages suffered by Swiss residing in belligerent countries had not been of the slightest avail. Federal Councillor Motta replied in general terms condemning the attitude of communist papers which purposely exaggerated local frontier incidents thereby inciting political feeling and creating abroad an impression of serious differences.

HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE ARMY.

Considerable criticism preceded the approval in the National Council of the official report on military health insurance. Several speakers belonging to the medical profession maintained that recruits joined the army in a doubtful state of health and apart from time spent in military hospitals made financial claims against the military department for illness supposed to have been contracted during military service. It was suggested that young men belonging to admittedly tuberculous families should be rejected altogether and that every recruit should sign a declaration enumerating any illnesses he had suffered from childhood. During the past year 28,364 soldiers had spent on an average 23 days each in hospital and the sum paid for compensation exceeded the budgeted amount by nearly four million francs. Federal Councillor Minger in his reply admitted the shortcomings and foreshadowed an early revision to improve matters.

A NEW SOCIAL BILL.

A Federal Bill to regulate the weekly rest for workers in Switzerland has been circulated by the Government, and is now under discussion. The regulations governing weekly rest vary at present from canton to canton. The benefits of the Bill would be extended to workers in industry, commerce, handicrafts, transport, and certain other occupations. A special section is devoted to the weekly rest for hotel employees, whose conditions are particularly bad. D.H.

A JAPANESE VISITOR.

Prince Takamatsu, brother of the Emperor of Japan, paid an official visit last week to M. Muisy, President of the Swiss Confederation, in Berne.

LOCARNO'S STOPPED CLOCK.

To commemorate the Peace Conference of 1925, the clock on the wall of the room in the Palace of Justice at Locarno, in which the Pact was signed, has been stopped for ever at the hour of 7.35, the moment at which the final signature to the Pact was written.

The table in the room remains covered with the original red cloth, now slightly faded after the passing of five years. Beside the inkstand in which the gold pen of the signatories was dipped stands the seal with which the Pact was stamped.

These simple objects in the not very large room make a peculiarly dramatic memorial of one of the greatest political acts in history.

Locarno, which once for a short time blazed in the vivid limelight of world politics, is now its quiet self again. The lovely little campanile of the Church of the Madonna del Sasso broods gently above the blue of Lake Maggiore. Summer tourists come to the town to drink in the beauty of lake and mountain and the vividly flowered southern gardens, and to witness the annual Camellia Fête. The new plage recently constructed on the warm lakeside sands echoes to the laughter of young people who were but school-children in October 1925.

But a stopped clock, an inkstand and a faded red tablecloth commemorate an hour when the eyes of the whole world were tensely fixed upon a small Swiss Town. B.G.

ENGLISH ENGINEERS' VISIT TO SWITZERLAND.

One hundred members of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers have spent five days in Switzerland to study on the spot the results of the electrification of the Federal Railways. A dinner at Huguenin in Zurich united the British engineers and some of the leaders of Swiss engineering establishments for an interesting and enjoyable evening. Mr. H. Kelsey-Bamber reviewed in his speech the visits paid to Sulzers and to the Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik, to Oerlikon and to Brown-Boveri, and the impressions obtained at the St. Gotthard, at Amsteg, Ritom and Bellinzona. He paid a warm tribute to the achievements of Swiss engineers. Cantonal Councillor Dr. O. Denzler, Director of Schweizerische Lokomotiv- und Maschinenfabrik in Winterthur, replied to the guests in their own language; he excused the unavoidable absence of Zurich's Mayor and of the chief of the Office of Works, and he delved into his long experience in warning them against attaching too much importance to theory as against practical experiments. He further stressed the necessity of international co-operation, reminded the assembly of the pioneer work done in England, the land of birth of the locomotive, and recalled to memory Charles Brown, the British engineer who came to Winterthur, Oerlikon and Baden and gave such an impetus to our industry. Last, but not least, he expressed his admiration of the work done by the 1,200 members of the Institution of Locomotive Engineers. N.Z.Z.

LOCAL.

BERNE.

The storm on Whit-Sunday has caused extensive damage to agriculture. Reports from Zollikofen, Münsingen, Gribetal, Thun, etc., speak of flooded roads and gardens, and damage by lightning. N.

LUCERNE.

The barracks at Luzern have, for a considerable time, been the subject of negotiations with a view to bringing them up to date. The Commission, under the presidency of Federal Councillor Minger, have come to the conclusion that the old barracks cannot be usefully reconstructed. It is now proposed to erect a new building on the Allmend. The Cantonal Office of Works has been instructed to prepare plans and estimates of the cost. N.Z.Z.

UNTERWALDEN.

A serious accident occurred near the Brünigpasshöhe on Whit Sunday. H. Bürgisser, a butcher at Schlieren, and his family were crossing the Brünig in their car when, overtaking another car, they fell over the side of the road. After a somersault the car got wedged between two big pines. Mrs. Bürgisser, aged about 50, had her head and chest crushed between a wheel and the body of the car and died very shortly afterwards. Bürgisser's son broke a leg, while father and daughter escaped with cuts. N.Z.Z.

ZUG.

Rudolf Bachofner, who died at Baar at the end of May, was well-known and highly respected throughout the whole Canton. Born in 1863 in Zurich, where his father was Director of the Evangelisches Seminar Unterstrass, he became a teacher and joined the staff of the Swiss School in Naples, where he remained for 4 years. Pfarrer Lentwyler then secured his services for the former's new orphanage in Chile. For 10 years he educated the children of immigrants and took an active interest in the welfare of his compatriots. Returned home, he was elected to the protestant school at Baar, where he taught for 26 years. He was a born teacher and his life was regulated by a firm belief in religion. His activities as teacher, organist, secretary of the Church Council, and Tax Collector were characterised by tact and goodwill, so that he enjoyed the esteem of Protestants and Catholics alike, as was witnessed at his funeral, when both sides were represented. N.Z.Z.

SCHAFFHOUSE.

The Executive Council has decided to refuse permission to erect an industrial plant at the Rhine falls, as proposed by the Schweizerische Industriegesellschaft in Neuhausen. The plans were considered to be unsuitable, if the harmony of the landscape is to be preserved. N.Z.Z.

BASLE.

Dr. Wellauer, member of the Grand Council, has tabled a motion to declare illegal all communistic associations in the Canton of Bâle-Town. N.

A thief entered the post office at the Albankirchrain and stole 1,500 Frs. in money and about 6,000 Frs. in stamps. Barely 24 hours after the deed, Kantonspolizist Schoch arrested the criminal in Zurich. The officer was in the Belvoirpark in Zurich in the early morning and found a suspicious looking individual, with a leather case under his arm, on a seat. He asked for the man's papers, which were produced; while the officer scrutinised the papers, the stranger suddenly threw the case in the policeman's face and took to his heels. But Schoch was accompanied by his police dog, which stopped the suspect after a few metres. Most of the money and all the stamps have been recovered. The thief is a young Austrian. N.

Oberstkorpskommandant Dr. Isaac Iselin died last Monday in his 79th year. He was one of Bâle's most distinguished sons. From 1893 to 1906 he was a member of the cantonal government, and from 1896 until 1917 he represented Bâle in the National Council. For five years (1912-1917) he held the command of the 2nd Army Corps.

ST. GALL.

Mr. Emil Reichenbach, embroidery manufacturer, well-known to the French Authorities and Chambers of Commerce for his endeavours on behalf of the long-suffering St. Gall industry, has given an interview to the "Journal Suisse de Paris" and is reported as having said: "The embroidery industry, the creator of St. Gall's greatness, has lost much ground. Sixty years ago, this was a staple industry. Embroideries were fashionable, the only changes being in the designs. St. Gall was then known all over the world as the manufacturing centre for beautiful embroideries, indeed some of them real works of art. Even to-day, the town still has excellent manufacturers, designers and merchants. Their duty must be to adapt themselves: some of the embroideries are no longer in use, others are still in demand. The policy must, therefore, be to follow the demands of fashion and to adapt the means of production to these demands. With good will this is not impossible. Some embroidery manufacturers have increased their turnover in spite of unfavourable conditions by producing different articles." St. G. T.

GRAUBUENDEN.

Three dwellings and eight stables and farm buildings at Vattiz near Igels, in the Lugnez, have been destroyed by fire. The San Nikolaus chapel is also practically burned down. Although insurance covers the buildings, the owners are suffering heavy losses by the destruction of furniture and provisions, which were not insured. Additional trouble is caused by the fact that the hay will have to be cut very soon and there are now no sheds in which to store it. N.Z.Z.

GENEVA.

Once again, the playing with a loaded gun has caused one death and has brought a man into the dock. Georges Truttmann, a 23-year-old inhabitant of Geneva, was pointing a gun at his fiancé's head, in fun, as he said, when suddenly a shot rang out and the girl collapsed at his feet. Half demented by fear of what had happened, the man fetched the landlord, who in his turn called for a doctor, who could only verify the death of the unfortunate girl, a bullet having passed through her spine causing instantaneous death. The man, who declared that he was not aware that the gun was loaded, was arrested and sent to the prison of Saint-Antoine. M. Plotron, commissioner of Police has opened an investigation.

The "Conseil administratif" of Geneva has entered into an agreement to acquire the two properties of "Plongeon," this agreement will be placed for ratification before the "Conseil Municipal" shortly. It is proposed to open these estates for public use and to erect a natural historic museum in the grounds. As the selling price of these properties is considered a very reasonable one it is hoped that the municipal authorities will fall in with this proposal, which will provide the town of Geneva with an additional beauty spot. T.G.

TICINO.

After four days sitting the court at Lugano brought the following verdict against Giovanni Strambi, of Meggio, who last January, when under the influence of drink, fired a gun at some members of the "Garde Luigi Rossi" with whom he picked a quarrel, wounding four men more or less seriously: one year imprisonment, a fine of 200 Frs. and 1,300 Frs. damages. T.G.

Giuseppe Peretti, a citizen of the Canton Ticino, who, as will be remembered, was condemned last December to two years imprisonment for a political offence in Italy, has been pardoned. His liberation, which has caused general satisfaction in Swiss political circles, will take place almost immediately.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SWITZERLAND.

The Federal Council has given its approval to the accounts of the Swiss Confederation for 1929, which are highly satisfactory. Receipts in the 1929 Budget were estimated at £14,112,000 and expenditure at £14,038,200, thus leaving an estimated surplus of £73,800. Receipts for the year 1929 aggregated £15,838,273 and expenditure £14,878,642, thus leaving a surplus of £959,631. This excellent result is due to the increased yield of Customs duties, which produced £8,560,000, and of the stamp duty, which yielded £3,140,000, as well as to the profit recorded by the post, telegraph and telephone service. The surplus will be used in paying the Federal Railways an instalment of £600,000 on the subsidy of £1,400,000 granted to them by the Government for repaying their heavy war debt; a sum of £260,000 will be paid to the special reserve for the redemption of the public debt, while the remaining £99,631 will help to increase the reserve funds of the various federal services.

This is the second time since 1910 that a surplus in the Swiss State finances has been recorded. From 1910 to 1927 substantial deficits, ranging from £64,000 in 1927 to £5,104,000 in 1921, were regularly registered. From 1921 to 1924, drastic curtailments were made in all State expenditure, with the result that the yearly deficits were progressively reduced. There was a surplus of £952,000 in 1928, and, thanks to the increase of all State receipts, it is hoped, as stated by the chief of the Finance Department, Federal Councillor M. Muzy, that the era of deficits is now closed. It may, nevertheless, be remarked that expenditure has been growing again since 1925 in consequence of the grant of higher Government subsidies to industry and to the Cantons for public works of all sorts. It is very much hoped that some measures will be taken by the Government to stop the rise in expenditure, and to alleviate the heavy burden under which trade and industry are labouring. This might be done by reducing the post, telegraph and telephone rates, as well as indirect taxation, especially as receipts during the first quarter of the year were substantially higher than in the same period of 1929.

The economic depression which is now prevailing in Switzerland is clearly reflected by the foreign trade returns, which are, on the whole,

very unsatisfactory. During the first quarter of the year imports totalled £25,620,637, as against £25,044,342 during the corresponding period of 1929, while the value of exports was £18,500,348, compared with £19,868,239 last year. There was a rise in the imports of cereals, food-stuffs, vehicles, chemicals, and a few classes of metals, while imports of raw materials and coal generally decreased. Exports were nearly all lower than in the previous year, both in value and quantity, but there was a small rise in machines and chemicals. Trade with the five principal countries was as follows (in million £):—

	Imports.		Exports.	
	1929.	1930.	1929.	1930.
Germany	6.0	6.7	3.3	3.0
France	4.6	4.8	1.5	1.8
Italy	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.2
Great Britain	1.6	1.2	2.6	2.4
U.S.A.	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.5

Trade with Great Britain has been steadily decreasing since 1928; British exports to Switzerland have suffered from German and American competition, and from the fact that the Swiss demand for coal has been considerably reduced in consequence of the increasing use of electric power; Swiss exports to Britain declined as a result of the McKenna duties. The present slump is furthermore reflected by the drop in the receipts of the Federal Railways, which reached £3,542,000 for the first quarter, as against £3,662,000 last year. The surplus, which was £1,056,000 in 1929, was this year reduced to £877,000 for the first three months. The decrease is due to a drop both in passenger and goods traffic.

The home market is similarly depressed, and retail traders complain of the fact that business is uncommonly slack. The position, though not encouraging, is not definitely bad, as unemployment is not increasing. Employment was generally normal in most industries, except in the watchmaking industry and in the manufactures producing machines for the textile and watchmaking industry. The number of unemployed was as follows:—

	1929.	1930.
January	16,284	14,846
February	15,979	12,462
March	7,098	10,138

The crisis in the watchmaking industry is continuing, and, recently, the few factories which had found it possible to maintain the six days' working week, decided to close one day every week. The Federal Government has also decided to prolong the payment of unemployment benefit for another three months. The slump is felt in all industries except the building industry, which continues to be very active in the towns despite some minor strikes at Basel and Canton Ticino.

The situation is now made more gloomy by the coming decision of the U.S.A. to raise by 100 to 500 per cent. import duties on several classes of Swiss goods, particularly on watches and cotton goods. Some manufacturers are trying to start a campaign to induce the Swiss population to boycott United States products. It is doubtful whether such measures would induce the United States to abandon their scheme for the raising of duties on Swiss products, and it would by no means benefit Swiss exports.—*Economist.*

ANGLO-SWISS TRADE.

Some disquieting facts concerning the unsatisfactory development of British trade with Switzerland have just been disclosed by Mr. Evans F. Crowe, president of the British Chamber of Commerce at Bale.

At the tenth annual meeting of the Chamber, which was attended by Mr. Claude Russell, the British Minister at Berne, the Consuls-General in Zurich and Bale and the Consul in Geneva, Mr. Crowe mentioned that whereas the United Kingdom occupied second place as a purchaser of Swiss goods, she held only the fifth place as a

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