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HOME NEWS

FEDERAL.

DIPLOMATIC CHANGES.

Sir Claude Russel, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Berne, has visited the President of the Confederation on relinquishing his post. The Federal Council has offered a dinner to the departing diplomat. His successor will be Sir Howland William Kennard. Sir Howland, who was born at Brighton, is fifty-three years of age, and he has been in the Diplomatic Service for over thirty years, his first appointment being at Rome. He has also served at Teheran, Washington, Havana and Tangier, and is a distinguished Persian and Arabic scholar.

SWISS UNEMPLOYMENT GRANTS.

The Federal Council has granted a credit of 5,000,000 Swiss francs (£200,000) for distribution to various unemployment insurance organizations. This sum is designed to supplement the statutory relief grants allocated by the Federal and Cantonal Governments and to enable them to increase the dole. This decision is due to the growth of unemployment and the consequent strain on the resources of unemployment insurance societies. According to the latest figures, which appeared at the end of February last, the number of unemployed in this country totalled 26,886, as compared with only 12,462 in February 1930. The question of a further increase in Federal grants to unemployment insurance organizations is said to be under consideration.

SWISS RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

The Federal Railways have passed contracts with the Fabrique Suisse de locomotives et de machines, Winterthur; Brown, Boveri & Co., Baden; the Ateliers de Secheron, Geneva; the Société industrielle suisse de Neuhausen, and the Fabrique suisse de wagons et d'ascenseurs, Schlieren; for the supply of 25 electric locomotives, 86 8-wheeled carriages (76 with centre corridor for inland use and 10 with side corridor for international use) and 320 wagons. A credit of 25,750,000 fr. has been granted for this material.

INTERESTING PUBLICITY SUBVENTION

The total subventions granted by the Federal Government in 1913 were 24,365,000 fr., and in 1930, 72,462,000 fr., but whereas the subvention for agriculture has increased from 4,430,000 fr. to 18,436,410 fr., that for commercial, industrial and tourist propaganda has decreased from 3,330,000 fr. to 2,965,000 fr., which has naturally raised a protest from those directly interested in the results of tourist publicity.

FEDERAL RAILWAY LOAN.

Of the new 200,000,000 fr. loan (4 per cent., 20 years) issued at 99.75 per cent., it has been decided to offer 150,000,000 fr. for conversion and public subscription, and to reserve 50,000,000 fr. for special railway funds.

LOANS TO RUMANIA.

Swiss bankers are making loans to Rumania for the construction of strategic railways and a larger explosives factory.

COMPAGNIE FONCIERE ET BANCAIRE GENEVA.

The net profits of the Compagnie Fonciere et Bancaire, which was established in 1928 by the Frankfurt banking firm, Lazard-Speyer-Elissen, amounted to 572,000 Swiss francs in 1930. A dividend of 7 per cent. has been declared.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. Volkmar Andrea the distinguished composer and conductor has celebrated his 25th Anniversary as a conductor. N.Z.

BERNE.

A remarkable escape from death of three German students in the Swiss Alps has just come to light.

While climbing the northern slope of the Finsteraarhorn they fell nearly 700 feet. The

fourth member of the party managed with the greatest difficulty and risk to carry one after the other to the nearest hut, but could not reach the hut on the Jungfraujoch for help until yesterday afternoon owing to the snow, which was five feet deep.

The students were rescued later. Their injuries were mainly to the legs in spite of their terrible fall.

* * *

Three hundreds of thousands who enjoyed the spectacle at Oberammergau last year, will from June to September have available to them the presentation of Frederic Schiller's great drama, "William Tell." This play relates to the Swiss deliverance from the Hapsburg dynasty (1308.)

The plays were produced in Interlaken in 1912-1914. This year 250 performers will participate amid all the rural charm and magnificent scenery which gives this play its peculiar character.

The setting includes the village of Altdorf, with its towering church, and the home of the Tell family, while the mediæval costumes are each one of them a perfect study. The drama is embroidered by the introduction of typical folk melodies, herds of the finest Oberland cattle, and quaint Swiss customs.

UNTERWALDEN.

M. Joseph Odermatt, State Councillor has resigned from the cantonal government, this is the second resignation from this body within a week. S.T.

ZUG.

At the age of 62 years, Josef Schmid, Manager of the Bank in Zug died at Zug.

BASLE.

Though 1930 was not very favourable to navigation on the Rhine, the Swiss port of Basel showed considerably increased activity, and its traffic was 78 per cent. greater than in 1929. Last year will go down as an important date in the history of Swiss Rhine navigation as the international convention providing for the regularisation of the river was then enforced, and the port of Basel registered a new record, its traffic having attained about 1,000,000 tons, compared with 618,000 in 1929. The port is likely to develop further in future years when the Rhine has been canalized from Strasbourg to Basel and deep water steamers can proceed to the Swiss port. Vessels of 1,000 tons and over will then be able to use the higher reaches of the Rhine, and the Swiss railways will act as distributors over a wide area of Central and Southern Europe. The Rhine traffic mainly consists of cereals, cement, coal, petrol, and oil.

* * *

Dr. Ludwig Braun, the eminent geologist died at Basle at the age of 51 years. N.Z.

* * *

Dr. Albert Grieder, member of the cantonal government and chief of the military Dept., has resigned his post for reasons of health. N.Z.Z.

NEUCHÂTEL.

The elections for the cantonal government took place last Sunday. For the five seats available, six candidates were elected outright: Alfred Clottu (14,960 votes), Ernest Béguin (14,937 votes), Edgar Renaud (14,287 votes). The following received votes: Alfred Guinchard (12,117), Paul Graber (11,854), Antoine Borel (10,974). A further Ballot for two seats not yet filled will take place on Sunday next.

The result of the elections for the Grand Council are as follows: 27 radicals, 23 liberals, 11 progressists, and 43 socialists. The Socialists have gained 4 seats and the liberals two, whilst the radicals lost 4 and the progressists 1 seat. N.Z.

* * *

The death is reported from Derendingen of Nicolas Roth at the age of 48. N. Roth was the eldest member of the famous champion wrestler family. J.S.P.

TICINO.

The death is reported of M. Erennio Spinelli, a former National Councillor and for many years leader of the conservatives. The deceased was 82 years of age.

CARL SPITTELER.

As reported in our last number, the inauguration of the Spitteler Monument, designed by the Swiss sculptor August Suter will take place next Sunday in the presence of Federal Councillor Meyer, and it is perhaps appropriate to recall this distinguished countryman to our memory. Carl Spitteler died about five years ago, and the Swiss Government appointed a commission to prepare a complete national edition of his works—a signal honour which shows how much this distinguished writer is thought of. One of his most enthusiastic admirers is Romain Rolland, the author of "Jean Christophe," who has called him "the modern Homer." A promenade at Lucerne has been named after him. In addition it might interest our readers to learn that translations of several of his works have been published here, Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne (whose book about Byron bids to be another classic) and Dr. I. F. Muirhead translated "Selected Poems," the latter also translated "Laughing Truths," a book of essays which admirably shows the vitality and energy of the writer, and "Prometheus and Epimetheus" which came out recently. Weingartner, (the famous conductor) boldly says that one day we shall name Carl Spitteler along with Homer, Virgil and Dante.

ICE HOCKEY.

HOW DAVOS ICE HOCKEY CLUB HAS PROGRESSED IN A DOZEN YEARS.

The Davos Ice-Hockey Club, which has just concluded a most successful tour in England, was founded in 1919 by Dr. Paul Müller, who is at present the manager of this famous Swiss team. With a population of only 10,000, there are considerable difficulties in forming a good team, so the youngsters are encouraged to take up the game at an early age. Visitors to Davos will see many children from four to six years of age playing ice-hockey.

There are now three regular teams, each consisting of nine players who have left school, and one team consisting of students at the Davos Grammar School. Four junior sides are formed, one team for boys from seven to nine years of age, one from ten to eleven, one eleven to twelve, and one from thirteen to fifteen.

Davos Club since 1926 has won the Swiss National Championship five times, and the Swiss International Championship four times. To illustrate the improvement of the ice-hockey at Davos it may be mentioned that in 1922 Davos was beaten by the Oxford Canadians by 23 goals to none; but in 1925 Davos beat the University teams of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1927 the Montreal team beat Davos by 11 to 1; in 1930 the Toronto team beat Davos by 9 to 2; and in 1931 Manitoba beat Davos by 2 to 1. This is a record of rapid progress.

From 1919-1927 Dr. Müller was President of the Club and Coach of the team. In 1928-9 Davos had a Canadian trainer. In 1930 Dr. Müller resumed his position of coach, and the success of the recent English tour was a splendid tribute to his coaching skill.

ROLLER SKATING CHAMPIONSHIP OF EUROPE.

The result of the "Roller-Skating Championship of Europe" which was held at Montreux a fortnight ago, is as follows:—

1st. England	12 points.
2nd. France	9 "
3rd. Switzerland	9 "
4th. Italy	6 "
5th. Germany	6 "
6th. Portugal	3 "
7th. Belgium	0 "

THE LATE MR. CASTELLI.

Mr. Saverio Thomas Castelli, of Maresfield-Gardens, Hampstead, N.W., late Managing Director of the Swiss Bank Corporation, left £35,514 (net £25,883)