

Home news

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FEDERAL.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

The unemployment figures just published show a slight improvement.

There are at present (end of December) 104,842 unemployed registered, or 14,000 less than twelve months ago.

SWISS VOTE ON ARMS TRADE.

Switzerland will shortly hold a nation-wide plebiscite on the question of State control of the armaments industry.

Under the Swiss Constitution, any sufficiently large group of citizens can demand a popular vote on a political issue, and 50,000 signatures have backed a proposal that the arms industry shall be taken over by the State.

Under the scheme, concessions for arms manufacture would be granted to Swiss firms only, after they had given guarantees that they were not tied up with foreign concerns.

DIVIDENDS OF SWISS BANKS.

Solothurner Handelsbank, Solothurn: 5 per cent. (1935: 5%); Darlehenskasse Wittenbach: 5 per cent. (1935: 5%); Sparkasse der Amtei Kriegstetten: 5½ per cent. (1935: 5½%); St. Gallische Hypothekarkasse, St. Gallen: 4 per cent. (1935: 4%); Handwerkerbank Basel: 5 per cent. (1935: 5%); St. Gallische Creditanstalt, St. Gallen: 7 per cent. (1935: 7%); Hypothekbank Lenzburg: 5½ per cent. (1935: 5½%); Hülfisbank Grosswangen Bank: 4½ per cent.; Bank in Gossau: 6 per cent. (1935: 5%); Spar und Leihkasse Sempach: 4½ per cent.; Spar und Leihkasse Kaltbrunn: 5½ per cent.; Schweizerische Darlehenskasse: 5 per cent.; Volksbank in Reinach: 5½ per cent. (1935: 5½%).

GOLD INGOT MISSING FROM LINER.

It was learned that a gold ingot valued at \$14,000 (£2,800), part of a consignment of gold worth \$6,000,000 (£1,200,000) which was landed at New York on Thursday from the French liner Paris for transfer to the Federal Reserve Bank in New York, was missing, having apparently been stolen.

The gold, which had been consigned by a Swiss Banking Company of Zurich and Basle, had been carried as ordinary parcel post and had not been specially insured or registered. (According to Swiss information the consignment was insured). It had been kept in a locked mail-room, encased in ordinary mail bags, under the supervision of the master-at-arms.

When the liner arrived on Thursday, after being delayed by fog, an employee of the transport company which had undertaken to transfer the gold noticed a slit in one of the bags, and declined to accept it. Comparison with the invoice showed that one ingot was missing, but another in the same bag was untouched. Postal inspectors made a thorough search of the liner without finding any trace of the missing gold.

The Paris left for Le Havre on the 16th inst., and it is expected that when she arrives there on Saturday she will be met by French police, who will make a full inquiry into the loss.

SWISS FEDERAL BANK.

The Banque Fédérale, S.A., one of Switzerland's leading banks, announces a dividend of 4 per cent. for 1936. No dividend was paid for 1935, against 3 per cent. for 1934.

Net profits for the past year's trading amount to Frs. 2,252,865 (say, £105,000) against Frs. 3,476,752 (£231,783 at rates then current). The payment of the dividend on the reduced share capital of Frs. 33,000,000 requires Frs. 1,320,000

and the amortisation of 1,521 shares Frs. 228,150. Frs. 704,715 (£33,558) is carried forward to new account.

SWISS ICE HOCKEY TEAM.

The following team has been chosen to represent Switzerland in the world and European ice hockey championships to be held in London in February:

Goal: Dr. Hirtz (Grasshoppers) and Kunzler (Zurich Skating Club); defence: Badrutt (Berne) and F. Geromini (Davos); forwards (first line): F. Cattini (Davos), H. Cattini (Davos), R. Torriani (Davos); second line: H. Kessler (Zurich Sporting Club), H. Lohrer (Zurich Skating Club), C. Kessler (Zurich Skating Club). Reserve: B. Ruedi (Davos).

The Swiss teams have been playing so well this season that high hopes are entertained of their winning the European title.

COLONEL ZIEGLER.

News from Berne states that Colonel Richard Ziegler, Director of the Federal Administration of Horses at Thoune has requested that he may be relieved of his duties on March 31st. The Federal Council has acceded to his request with gratitude for the great service he has rendered it. Colonel Ziegler, a native of Schaffhouse, is now about 65, although he betrays no signs of age. He is well-known in Ireland, for he has been purchasing army horses there for the past twenty years.

Formerly in the instruction branch of the Swiss Cavalry, in 1912 he became a major, when he was nominated Director of the Administration Department in connection with horses in Switzerland. This position he has filled successfully for a quarter of a century. In 1919 he was promoted to the rank of a cavalry colonel. Since his appointment to the position of director, Colonel Ziegler was also President of the Commission for the purchase of remounts for the Swiss cavalry, and since 1913 he was President of the Purchasing Commission for the Administration Department and for the Artillery dépôt.

As President of these Commissions Colonel Ziegler went to Ireland about six times every year. He purchased thousands of Irish horses, despite the fact that his patronage of the horses of other countries was largely solicited. He paid the highest price of any foreign army buyer for the horses he bought there. Colonel Ziegler has always been intensely interested in Ireland, where he is extremely popular. It was due to his initiative that the Swiss jumping team first came to compete at the Royal Dublin Society's Horse Shows at Ballsbridge. During recent years he endeavoured to further trade relations between Ireland and Switzerland, and he was instrumental in the establishment of a Swiss Consulate in the Saorstát.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The "Sechseläuten" in Zurich will take place on Monday, the 19th of April.

M. U. Winterthaler, since 1926 Manager of the Municipal Tramway Co., in Zurich, has died at the age of 62; he was connected with the company for the last 38 years.

The population of the town of Zurich at the end of 1936 numbered 319,850.

M. Hans Hofmann, from Zurich, has been appointed architect-in-chief for the "Schweizerische Landesausstellung," which is taking place at Zurich in 1939.

BERNE.

Dr. Rudolf von Fischer has been appointed keeper of the archives of the canton of Berne.

Dr. W. Loosli, advocate in Berne, has been appointed President of the District Court.

The death is reported from Aarberg of M. Hugo Peter, Advocate and Administrator of the "Aamtersparnkasse" Aarberg. M. Peter reached the rank of Colonel in the army and was at one time commander of the Artillery regiment 5.

LUCERNE.

Our contemporary the "Vaterland" is again permitted to circulate in Germany.

ZUG.

The Federal Military Dept. has decided to give up the "Waffenplatz" at Zug.

SCHWYZ.

At the age of 80 died in Lachen, Dr. Martin Steinegger, who sat in Parliament (National Council) from 1910-1919.

GLARUS.

The death has occurred at Glarus of National Councillor Rudolf Tschudy at the age of 59.

M. Tschudy was born in 1878, he studied Art in Florence and later on Law at the Universities of Berne and Zurich. In 1905 he was appointed editor of the "Glärner Nachrichten." The deceased played a conspicuous part in the political sphere of the canton of Glarus.

In 1925 he entered Parliament (National Council) in succession to Landammann E. Blumer, where he was one of the most active members.

ST. GALL.

The death is reported from St. Gall of Dr. Walter Müller, for many years Professor of Philosophy at the "Kantonsschule" in St. Gall. Dr. Müller played for many years an important part as a pedagogue, he reached the age of 74.

Professor Thomas Brändle, for 36 years a teacher at the "Verkehrsschule" in St. Gall, is shortly retiring from his post.

NEUCHÂTEL.

MM. Paul Lebet, Charles-André Tissot and Charles-Michel Grivaz, who appeared before the Tribunal at Neuchâtel, charged with espionage in Germany for the benefit of France, were acquitted.

GENEVA.

M. Edmond Isaak, until recently Director of the prison of St. Antoine has committed suicide. The deceased who was 50 years old was relieved of his post by the new cantonal government, and an enquiry was pending about some irregularities which have occurred.

Colonel Fritz Walty, for several years Commander of the Artillery Brigade 4, has died in Geneva at the age of 64. Colonel Walty was a qualified engineer by profession.

WHAT OTHER'S THINK OF US.

The Neutral Swiss.

Some who are facing the problem of European organization for peace are turning to the example of the Swiss Confederation for fresh inspiration to solve the problem of a more united Europe. Couldn't Europe be a large-scale Switzerland?

If the Swiss have succeeded in welding four nationalities into a single nation enjoying peace and democratic self-government, a large measure of credit for this goes to their ability of having evolved, through the years, a policy of neutrality as a corollary, whose aspects might deserve more than mere cursory examination by those now searching for effective non-intervention policies.

Although Swiss neutrality has its origin as far back as the movement which created the Italian republics from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, which was also the essence of present Swiss existence, the more effective maintenance of its neutral rights practically begins with the signing of the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 which recognized as an established fact the Federative Swiss Republic created by Napoleon. The evolution and maintenance of Swiss neutrality amid Europe's storms of more than a century has certainly not been achieved without much thought and effort. But Switzerland today presents the picture of a heterogeneous people united under one flag, well schooled and disciplined in the art of a "permanent neutrality."

A case in point might be the steps taken by the Swiss Federal Council in regard to the Spanish conflict. Switzerland, like other powers, was requested by Britain and France to join in a general declaration of non-intervention last summer. The Federal Council replied that while several automatic decisions would be taken, for reasons emanating from the permanent neutrality of the Confederation, it could not participate in a common declaration. In other words, so well established is Swiss neutral policy in Europe, that any special official declaration as to Spain was superfluous — even, perhaps, harmful, since it might imply a departure from the country's known policy.