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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. P. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

(Compiled by courtesy of the following contemporaries: National Zeitung, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, St. Galler Tagblatt, Vaterland and Tribune de Genève).

### FEDERAL.

#### SWITZERLAND'S NEW DEFENCE PLAN.

The Federal Council will shortly submit to the Federal Chambers a bill authorising an outlay of 100 Million francs for the reorganisation of Switzerland's defences.

There has been considerable discussion in Switzerland for some time past over reports in a Lausanne newspaper, that the German general staff had prepared a plan that would involve German armies marching through Switzerland, to take the French line of fortifications in the rear. These reports, although officially denied in Berlin, have encouraged the feeling that Switzerland must be able to defend her security. It is to this end that the new bill is proposed.

#### VISIT AT THE FEDERAL PALAIS.

M. H. Avenol, General Secretary of the League of Nations has paid an official visit to the Federal Council; he was received by M. Schulthess, President of the Swiss Confederation, and M. Motta, head of the Federal political Dept. A luncheon was offered to M. Avenol at which the Federal Council was present in *corpo*.

#### ESPIONAGE OF A SWISS OFFICER.

Lieutenant Steiner, who has recently been arrested under a charge of having divulged military secrets to France and Italy, will shortly appear before the Tribunal of the 3rd division. The case will be heard *in camera*.

#### INCREASED CUSTOMS RECEIPTS.

The customs receipts for the 3rd quarter of the current year show an increase of 6,403,806.39 frs.

#### SWISS NATIONAL BANK RETURN.

The latest return of the Swiss National Bank for the period ended 14th October shows a further small increase in gold holdings to Frs. 1,858,451,000, as against only Frs. 1,817,000,000 at the end of June last. Gold exchanges were also increased by Frs. 3,453,000, and it would seem that the Swiss authorities are again building up a reserve which had to be used to defend the franc during the critical period in the summer.

Against this, holdings of domestic bills have been reduced by a further Frs. 22,000,000 to a low level of Frs. 14,269,000 by repayment of Treasury bills. Advances have decreased by Frs. 13,000,000 to Frs. 57,000,000, mainly owing to repayment of temporary advances made to one of the Cantons now being consolidated into a longer-dated security.

The note circulation and sight engagements together are covered to the extent of nearly 95 per cent. by gold or gold currencies, a fact which justifies the emphatic declarations of the Swiss Finance Minister concerning the belief of the authorities in the necessity of maintaining the gold standard at all costs.

#### SETTLEMENTS BANK.

The September balance-sheet of the Bank for International Settlements shows noteworthy variations in the figures. For instance, the turnover fell from 720,000,000 Swiss francs on 31st August to Frs. 669,000,000 on 30th September. This appears to be due mainly to the fluctuations in the bank's turnover created by the withdrawals of portions of their deposits by the central banks. These deposits, both at sight and at 90 days, have since 31st March, 1933, fallen from 452,000,000 Swiss francs to Frs. 180,000,000 on 30th September.

#### ELECTRICAL PROGRESS.

According to a return recently issued by the Office Fédérale de l'Economie Electrique and the Union des Centrales Suisses d'Electricité, the output of electricity in Switzerland during the six

months ended with June last amounted to 1,844 million kWh, as compared with 1,791 million kWh in the corresponding half of 1932. The return relates only to the production of power for distribution to third parties and does not include that produced in plants belonging to the Swiss Federal Railway authorities for traction purposes.

#### MILK CONTROL IN BERNE.

All milk consumed in Berne is consigned to a central depot, where, on arrival, it is cooled to 41 degrees F. before it is issued to the retailer. To ensure that the consumer gets his supply fresh, the depot takes back any surplus that is returned within four hours of issue. Milk so returned is not issued again for direct consumption. This arrangement is a relief to the retailer who finds that a fine Sunday brings a fall in sales and a public holiday a rise.

### LOCAL.

#### ZURICH.

M. Ernst Schaerer, at present Manager of the Excelsior Hotel in Cologne, has been appointed Manager of the Hotel Baur au Lac in Zurich.

#### LUCERNE.

The annual meeting of the Swiss Liberals took place last Sunday at Lucerne, over 4,000 delegates were present. M. Schulthess, President of the Swiss Confederation, and M. Pilet, Federal Councillor addressed the meeting.

#### BERNE.

The 100th Anniversary of the foundation of the Army Officers Association of the canton of Berne took place last Sunday in Bern. Over 1,000 Officers in uniform were present. In the morning a service was held at the Minster, the sermon was given by Army chaplain Tenger.

A Banquet was served later at which speeches were made by Federal Councillor Minger, Colonels Guisan, commander of the 2nd Army-Corps, Prisi, Bircher, v. Graffenried. M. Minger, head of the Federal Military Dept., said in his speech:

"The words Free as our Fathers' must always be the rallying-cry of Switzerland. The desire of the Swiss people for peace is well known." He described the plans drawn up for improving the frontier defences of Switzerland, and added that they were being closely studied by the General Staff. He concluded his address by saying: "The only guarantee of Swiss neutrality, lies in the obviousness of a well-trained, and equipped Swiss Army."

Dr. Gertrud Woker, lecturer of chemistry at the University of Berne, has been promoted to Professor extraordinary at the University of the capital.

The passenger steamer "Beatus," in commission on the lake of Thonne, went aground in a thick fog near the landing stage at Beatenbucht. The steamer was damaged, but later on managed to get clear.

#### BASLE.

The "Basler Volksblatt," the leading organ of the Basle catholics has been prohibited throughout Germany.

#### GENEVA.

Army-Corps Commander Sarasin, head of the 1st Army-corps has died at Geneva at the age of 63.

Colonel Sarasin was promoted to divisional commander in 1920, in 1927 he succeeded Colonel Bornand as commander of the 1st Army-corps. Colonel Sarasin was formerly a lecturer of Geology at the University of Geneva, and is a doctor of natural science.

## CITY SWISS CLUB.

PLEASE RESERVE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24th

for the

ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

at the

Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

Admission by ticket only, obtainable from Members of the Committee.

## LE ROLE DE LA SUISSE DANS L'ECONOMIE ET DANS LA POLITIQUE EUROPEENNES

par M. SCHULTHESS

Président de la Confédération helvétique.

### II.

Quant à notre politique économique à l'intérieur, elle doit reposer aussi sur un juste équilibre entre les intérêts de nos industries d'exportation et ceux des branches de notre activité économique qui produisent pour le marché national. L'intervention de l'Etat en faveur de ces dernières est assurément plus facile et plus efficace que ne peut l'être les mesures qui sont prises au bénéfice de notre industrie d'exportation. Aussi est-il injuste de prétendre que les intérêts des agriculteurs et des producteurs travaillant pour le marché intérieur sont sacrifiés à ceux des exportateurs. Ne l'oublions pas, toutes les branches de la production nationale, y compris celles qui fournissent le marché intérieur, ont le plus grand intérêt au relèvement et au développement de l'industrie d'exportation, en faveur de laquelle nous allons proposer sous peu des mesures qui, en définitive, profiteront à la collectivité. Dans les circonstances difficiles que nous traversons, toutes les catégories professionnelles et sociales devraient se souvenir de la solidarité qui les lie et éviter les polémiques de nature à troubler l'unité de notre action économique vis-à-vis de l'étranger. Nous rencontrons assez de difficultés au delà de nos frontières pour que l'on s'abstienne d'entretenir chez nous des antagonismes qui reposent presque toujours sur des erreurs et des malentendus.

Pas plus que dans le domaine des relations internationales, nous ne pouvons maintenir à l'intérieur le principe absolu de la liberté économique. Evidemment, il ne saurait être question de jeter pardessus bord la liberté du commerce et de l'industrie garantie par la constitution ou de substituer l'Etat à l'initiative privée. L'expérience a toutefois démontré que, dans certains cas, il est indispensable de rompre avec le principe de la liberté, précisément pour permettre aux initiatives de se développer librement dans maintes branches de l'activité économique pour venir en aide aux entreprises petites et moyennes.

Ne perdons pas non plus de vue que l'efficacité des mesures prises par les pouvoirs publics est limitée. Ces mesures ne sont salutaires et utiles que si elles tendent à des fins raisonnables et ne visent pas à l'impossible. Elles seraient inopérantes et même nuisibles, surtout dans un petit pays comme la Suisse, si nous exagérons, si nous pratiquons une politique d'antarchie, si nous cherchions à maintenir chez nous des conditions économiques totalement différentes de celles des autres pays. C'est une erreur de croire que l'Etat est tout-puissant, qu'il a le pouvoir magique de rendre prospères l'agriculture, l'industrie, l'artisanat et le commerce, en particulier de fixer et de régler les prix pour ainsi dire à son gré. Nous ne pouvons pas nous soustraire à l'influence des phénomènes économiques qui se produisent au delà de nos frontières. Si nous entendons rester dans la bonne voie, il faut nous tenir compte des conditions qui existent dans d'autres pays.

Notre politique économique a aussi une portée sociale. En soutenant et en sauvegardant la production, nous faisons preuve de sollicitude envers l'ouvrier et cherchons à lui procurer son travail normal et son gagne-pain à la place qui lui convient.

Mais la politique sociale n'a pas pour seule mission de se préoccuper du sort des salariés. Il faut aussi qu'elle prête son attention aux petits paysans, artisans et commerçants; elle doit protéger les intérêts des classes moyennes qui, dans une démocratie comme la nôtre, ont une grande importance. Pour que l'on soit en mesure d'accorder cette protection, il est nécessaire d'introduire dans la constitution un article qui donne à la Confédération le pouvoir de légiférer dans tout le domaine économique. Le Conseil fédéral a déjà approuvé les principes de cet article.

Notre troisième et grand devoir est de conserver nos particularités suisses, l'union et la cohésion dans notre pays. Seule une communauté nationale active et résolue pourra résister aux convulsions politiques de notre temps et résoudre les problèmes économiques.

Comme par le passé, notre vie publique et notre politique doivent demeurer autochtones et