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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

RHINE NAVIGATION.

Since the Rhine has been made navigable, the traffic on this river continues to grow. In 1937 the traffic of the Basle Rhine port amounted to 2.96 million tons; though in 1938 there was a slight decrease because of low water. About one-third of Swiss imports come in by way of the Rhine (especially coal, grain, petrol) and 30 per cent. of Swiss exports go through the port of Basle.

An agreement of 1929 between the Swiss and German Governments deemed it desirable to make the Rhine navigable from Basle to Lake Constance, or a distance of about 90 miles. Now Germany is urging that this agreement be carried out, so as to open up new traffic lines between Switzerland and Southern Germany and Austria, and through Austria to Italy. But the interests of Switzerland are not now what they were in 1929. The Swiss Federal Railways, in which 3,200 million francs are invested, would lose an important part of their traffic were most of the goods traffic with Eastern Switzerland, Austria and beyond to go via a German port on Lake Constance. As the conditions have changed, it seems that the question ought to be discussed again.

INCREASING DEFENCE EXPENDITURE.

After the war the defence expenditure of Switzerland remained almost on the same level until the year 1934.

The ordinary Budget contributed between 90 to 94 million francs towards this; and in addition 20 millions were voted in 1930 for strengthening air defences. After Germany's political change in 1933 the Swiss people showed a growing interest in the problems of military defence, regardless of party. After the "Anschluss" with the changing balance of power in Central Europe, Parliament decided to take further military defence measures.

The following figures show the effect of these on the Federal Budget:—

	Defence Expenditure.	
	(Million Swiss francs).	
	Ordinary	Extraordinary
1933	91	97
1936	97	235
1937	106	—
1938 (Budget)	124	100
1939 (Budget estimate)	132	196

The ordinary defence budget shows an increase of 45 per cent. over 1933. Extraordinary credits, unknown before 1930, reach the amount of 648,500,000 frs. in the years 1933-1939; and a further credit of 350 million francs is provided for in a Government recommendation.

That means a general expenditure of about 1,730 million francs in the period 1933-1939, a very heavy burden for a population of only 4½ million. To cover extraordinary expenditure, a tax on income and property is levied, provisionally for three years.

INCREASE OF SWISS AIR TRAFFIC.

Swiss aerodromes have had a big increase of traffic during the past year. The Official Air Travel Bulletin, after giving a detailed account of the new headquarters of Imperial Airways at Victoria, which it calls a "Palace of Icarus," tells of the business done at the airports of Geneva and Zurich.

Compared with 1937 the Geneva Airport at Cointrin handled 10,841 passengers against 8,265;

72.6 tons of mail against 49.7; and 10 tons of freight, which showed a very slight rise.

Zurich Airport at Dübendorf handled 32,498 passengers compared with 24,028; 205 tons of mail compared with 103; and 125 tons of express compared with 103. The number of passengers and tonnage of mail have tripled since 1933.

NEW SWISS MINISTER TO SPAIN.

The Federal Council has appointed Dr. Eugen Broye from Fribourg, hitherto Counsellor of Legation, to the post of Swiss Minister in Burgos.

Dr. Broye was, until recently, on the diplomatic staff of the Swiss Legation in Budapest.

NEW SPANISH MINISTER IN BERNE.

The Federal Council has agreed to the appointment of Señor De Las Barceñas as Minister representing the Nationalist Government of Spain in Berne. Señor De Las Barceñas has been the unofficial representative of General Franco in Switzerland since September, 1938.

SWITZERLAND TO MAKE AEROPLANES.

It is reported from Zurich that the erection of a factory in Switzerland for the manufacture of aeroplanes has been decided upon. The Federal Government have obtained a licence from a foreign firm of manufacturers, and military as well as civil aircraft will be produced.

The factory will be well protected against air raids, as it will be underground. The site will be hewn out of the rock of the Bürgenstock, which rises to a height of 2,926ft. on the bank of the Lake of Lucerne.

SCHWEIZERISCHER KAUFMAENNISCHER VEREIN.

The "Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein" in Switzerland registered a large influx of new members during the year 1938. The figures published show a membership of altogether 42,000 persons.

REFUGEES IN SWITZERLAND.

It is announced in Zurich that the number of refugees in Switzerland does not exceed 12,000. Of these, 3,000 are without means and are supported by the Union of Swiss Jewish Communities, which spends about 250,000 francs each month for this purpose. The well-to-do refugees are allowed to reside wherever they choose, but those without means are to be placed in labour camps.

NEW COMMAND OF FRONTIER BRIGADE.

Colonel Paul Spinnler has been appointed to the command of the Frontier Brigade, in succession to Colonel Alfred Strüby.

Colonel Spinnler, who for some time was a member of the General Staff, held previously the following commands: Battalion 53; Infantry Regiment 21 and Mountain Brigade 10.

DUTCH ROYAL VISIT.

Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard, together with their little daughter, Princess Beatrice, have arrived in Grindelwald, where they will stay for about three weeks.

SWISS PAPERS REPRIMANDED.

The Federal Council has addressed a severe warning to the Editors of the "Schweizerische Zeitung am Sonntag," and the "Risveglio" for having published incorrect news concerning a friendly neighbouring country.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Dr. H. Brockmann-Jerosch, Professor of Geography at the "Oberrealschule" in Zurich, has died following a motor accident.

GRISONS.

The death is announced from Chur of M. Leonard Cantieni, who was for forty years Manager of the "Kurhaus Hotel" Lenzersheide, at the age of 80. The deceased was one of the pioneers of the Hotel profession in the canton of Grisons.

AARGAU.

The late Daniel Lüscher-Greminger in Aarau, has left an amount of 60,000 frs. for various charitable institutions in the canton of Aargau.

TICINO.

The final result of the elections for the Grand Council of the canton of Ticino is as follows: Liberal Radicals 22 (old Council: 19); Con-

servatives 24 (old Council: 22); Socialists 8 (old Council: 10); Democrats 8 (old Council: 9); Peasant Party 3 (old Council: 3).

From Bellinzona comes the news of the death of M. Bruno Bruni, advocate. M. Bruni was President of the Grand Council. For a great number of years he rendered invaluable services to the town and community of Bellinzona. In the army he reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

LA POLITIQUE.

Les élections tessinoises.

Le canton du Tessin a eu, il y a huit jours, ses élections cantonales, le Conseil d'Etat comme le Grand Conseil étant soumis à l'épreuve du scrutin populaire.

Les partis radical-libéral et conservateur avaient proposé l'élection tacite, par la voie d'un arrangement amiable entre les diverses organisations politiques; non qu'ils eussent des motifs de craindre la lutte, mais parce qu'ils estimaient que, dans les circonstances présentes, on pouvait éviter, au profit de tous, une compétition stérile. Ce ne fut point l'avis des politiciens influents de l'extrême-gauche, et de leurs amis démocrates, qui voulurent la bataille, qui l'ont eue, et qui en ont fait les frais.

Au Grand Conseil, en effet, les conservateurs et les radicaux-libéraux ont obtenu une indiscutable victoire, les premiers enregistrant 13,057 suffrages, les seconds 11,978, tandis que les socialistes arrivaient à 4,621, les démocrates à 4,117, les agrariens, enfin, à 1,624. Il s'ensuit que les conservateurs obtiennent vingt-quatre sièges, contre vingt-deux pour la précédente législature; les radicaux libéraux, vingt-deux (au lieu de dix-neuf); les socialistes huit (au lieu de dix); les démocrates huit (au lieu de neuf). Deux sièges précédemment occupés par la "Ligue nationale" sont revenus aux partis historiques.

Les conservateurs ont gagné deux sièges; les radicaux-libéraux en ont gagné trois. Les socialistes en perdent deux, les démocrates un. Sans exagérer la signification de ce scrutin, on peut bien dire qu'il traduit la confiance du peuple tessinois dans les partis nationaux et qu'il équivaut à une douche froide sur le dos de l'opposition.

Ici, il est utile d'ouvrir une parenthèse et d'expliquer qui sont ces "démocrates," dont l'on parle toujours à propos de la politique tessinoise, comme à propos de celle de Zurich. Les démocrates forment une sorte de scission du parti radical et se situent un peu plus à gauche, comme à Zurich le groupe auquel appartient M. Wettstein. Sur le terrain cantonal ils sont carrément schismatiques. A Berne, ils appartiennent au groupe radical. Leur représentant au Conseil national, le sympathique et disert M. Gian-Battista Rusca, syndic de Locarno, — "il sindaco della pace," comme on l'avait appelé à l'époque des mémorables conférences européennes qui se tinrent dans sa charmante cité — est membre du groupe radical; mais il vote souvent avec les socialistes, comme les Billieux, les Rittmeyer, et autre "guigne-à-gauche."

Ces accointances parlementaires, sur le terrain fédéral, ne sont point dénuées de signification; elles laissent entendre beaucoup de choses, et quand on a vu ce qu'un terrible agité, heureusement voué aujourd'hui à des travaux plus tranquilles, a pu tirer, en fait d'espoirs, de certains rapprochements, on ne juge pas sans intérêt les expériences de front populaire tentées sur le terrain cantonal.

Celle du Tessin est claire: la grande majorité du peuple a donné sa confiance aux deux partis qui représentent la collaboration nationale, dans un esprit modéré. Pour le Conseil d'Etat, les magistrats sortants, deux conservateurs, deux radicaux-libéraux, un socialiste ont été confirmés.

Le parti socialiste suisse, où pourtant les dissensions ont été, ces derniers temps, assez remarquables et remarquées, proclame sans cesse qu'il a l'opinion publique avec lui, que ses conquêtes iront désormais se multipliant, qu'il a le droit d'avoir au moins deux représentants au Conseil fédéral. Dans la mesure où les scrutins cantonaux peuvent servir d'indication, il ne faut