

ASPECTS FROM THE LIFE AND ACTIVITY OF ADJUTANT GENERAL ERNEST O. BALLIF, CROWN DOMAIN ADMINISTRATOR

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Abstract: The reason for which I have chosen to recall the memory of adjutant General Ernest Ballif was determined by the fact that he played a significant part in the process of Crown Domain reconstruction, seriously damaged in World War I (1916-1918).

Always present near the King family as deputy, Marshal of the Royal Court or Crown Domain Administrator, Ernest Ballif took part at the most important political or economical events between 1916-1941.

Although, his friend Radu Rosetti dedicated him very large biographical, there are a lot of aspects of the general Ballif activity, as Crown Domain Administrator, which have remained less know that's way I made this study.

Keywords: adjutant General Ernest O. Ballif, Crown Domain Administrator, 1920–1942, deputy, Marshal of the Royal Court.

The reason for which I have chosen to recall the memory of adjutant General Ernest Ballif, Crown Domain Administrator, was determined by the fact that, both his predecessor, Ion Kalinderu, and he, the first administrator of the institution (1894-1913), played a significant part in the process of Crown Domain reconstruction, seriously damaged in World War I (1916-1918).

The Crown Domain was founded through the law from June 10/21 1884, and there were six personalities of the time that succeeded to the management of the institution Ion Kalinderu (1st of October 1884 – 12th of December 1913), B. Știrbey (21st of December 1913 – 9th of December 1919), Nicolae Mișu (9th of December 1919 – 15th of May 1920), general Ernest Baliff (15th of May 1920 – 13th of February 1941), general Alexandru Manolescu (15th of February 1941 – 10th of July 1942), Dimitrie D. Negel (22nd of July 1942 – 30th of December 1947)¹.

Ernest Ballif was born on the 22nd of October 1871 at Paris, and deceased on the 13th of February 1914, at Bucharest, being buried at Iași. He was the descendant of a

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¹ Narcisa Maria Mitu, *Domeniile Coroanei Regale (1884-1948)*, Craiova, Aius Publishing House, 2011, p. 44.

French origin family that, according to the confessions of General Radu Rosetti, in the 17th century, was determined to leave the region of Orléans and settle in the western Switzerland, refusing to change their religious faith. Later on, his grandfather, Scarlat Ballif: “father and steadfast, quiet and hard-working man”², highly appreciated and respected by Petre P. Carp, emigrated in Bessarabia, where he was still living in 1812. This family was also related to Scherneuf family, and, the famous phrenologist, Gall. V. A. Urechia, PhD, a close friend of Baliff family, mentions the general Ernest Ballif’s grandfather, married to Fifine, the daughter of lady Duvivier, in the work called *Din tainele vieții*³ (*Some Secrets of Life*). The Ballifs had four children: two girls, Adela, married to the journalist from Tours, Petit; *Duduea*, married to the French consul from Iași, Victor Place⁴; and two boys, Alfred and Octav. The Ballif family owned a private boarding school, where there was taught in French, at Oșlobeni⁵. The income obtained from the administration of the private boarding school being insufficient, Scarlat Ballif was also holding a lease for few estates. One of the leased estates was that from Oșlobeni, who belonged to the mother of the historian V.A. Urechea.

Octav Ballif was married to Amelia Catalan in Paris and had several children. From documents, we have managed to identify the following: adjutant general Ernest, Leon (physician)⁶, Sebastian⁷, Gheorghe⁸, C. Ballif⁹ and E. (possible Elena) becoming Bădărău after marriage¹⁰. Octav Ballif was the administrator of the estate of Petre P. Carp, from Țibănești, Vaslui County¹¹.

On addressing the primary school – the final years –, Ernest O. Ballif attended the courses of the primary school from Țibănești, later on attending the courses of the National High-School from Iași (1883-1888).

² Radu C. Rosetti, *Despre generalul Ernest Ballif*, in “Revista Fundațiilor Regale”, Year VIII, No. 2/1941, p. 470.

³ V.A. Urechia, *Foița. Din tainele vieții* in “Telegraful român”, year XLVIII, no. 59 from the 27th of May/9th of June 1900, Sibiu, p. 235; Idem, *Din tainele vieții. Amintiri contimporane (1840-1882)*, Bucharest, Polirom Publishing House, 2014, p. VI.

⁴ His name is related to the unionist movement, led by M. Kogălniceanu, Costache Negri, V. Alexandri, Panu, Lascăr Catargiu etc.

⁵ Camelia Toporaș, *Vasile Alexandrescu Urechea. Fișă bibliografică* in “AXIS LIBRI”, *Anul Urechea la 175 de ani de la naștere*, year II, no. 5, Decembre 2009, p. 2.

⁶ Leon Ballif (18th of February 1882, Țibănești, Iași County – 18th of May 1967, Iași) was a psychiatrist, professor at Faculty of Medicine from Iași, rector of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University from Iași (1947-1948), director of “Socola” Hospital and one of the representative figures of the psychiatry school from “Socola”.

⁷ Radu R. Rosetti, *Pagini de jurnal*, Edition supervised by Cristian Popișteanu, Marian Ștefan, Ioana Ursu, Bucharest, Adevărul Publishing House, 1993, p. 91.

⁸ Gheorghe O. Ballif was the director of “Vega” Oil Distillery from Ploiești. See Ioan Boacă, *Prahova și idealul legionar. Amintiri din prigoane și pribegii*, Munich, Collection “Omul Nou”, 1981, pp. 12-13.

⁹ Radu R. Rosetti, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 208.

¹¹ Violeta Onișoru, *Aspecte privind activitatea generalului Ernest O. Ballif*, in “Cercetări istorice”, New Series, XVIII-XX, 1999-2001, Iași, 2002, p. 403.

In 1899, he married Octavia Gall. Octavia Ballif was employed by the Crown Domain Administration for 21 years (1920-1941). She retired, at her request, on the 13th of February 1941, immediately after the death of her husband, with a pension of 8,220 lei¹².

The military career started once with the graduation of the School of Officers from Bucharest (1893). The military training continued even after the graduation of the School of Cavalry Training, the one with an identical programme from Saumur, France (1900-1904), and the Superior School of War, where he was a colleague with Radu Rosetti¹³.

Along the time, he obtained all the military degrees: captain (1905), when he activated at Regiment 6 of Roșiori (military men wearing red-coloured uniforms) and the at Regiments 8 and 7 Cavalry; major at the Superior School of War (starting on the 1st of April 1911), lieutenant-colonel (1915), colonel (1916), general of brigade (1917) and general of a reserve division (1932)¹⁴. His military career ended on the 13th of April 1920.

After the short period of time spent in the regiments of cavalry, Ernest Ballif was co-opted in the administrative department of the army. In 1921 he was appointed the principal secretary of the minister of war C. Hârjeu, a position that he occupied during the governing of Brătianu. On the 10th of May 1914, he was appointed royal adjutant of Prince Ferdinand, and, later, at Queen Mary's request, in 1916, the Prince's adjutant, a role that he kept until the 13th of April 1920 when, resigning from the army, he became Administrator of the Crown Domains¹⁵. His friend, Radu Rosetti, mentioned the reasons that had determined him to leave the army in 1920: "Forced, due to his position, to not be an active part within the war of territorial integrity – but not willingly – left the army after the concluding of peace, motivating that he could not be the commander of the people who had faced the bullets of the war"¹⁶. "An excellent horseman and a passionate of the horses, he left the cavalry, for which he had worked hard, when he was requested to accept a position of great trust, for which he was the appropriate person"¹⁷.

After he had decided to be put in reserve, Ernest Ballif continued to serve the royal family, being an honorary adjutant of Ferdinand, and even the chief of the Royal Military House, in 1927. In parallel, he carried out the function of Crown Domain administrator (1920-1914), administrator and share-holder of "Sirius" Oil and Mining

¹² Central Historic National Archives, Bucharest, Central Administration, file no. 115/1941, ff. 2-3 (further quoted as CHNA, Bucharest).

¹³ Radu Rosetti, *Mărturisiri*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1940, p. 177.

¹⁴ Violeta Onișoru, *art. cit.* in "loc. cit.", p. 404.

¹⁵ Maria Regina României, *Jurnal de Război 1917-1918* (translated from English by Anca Bărbulescu), Edition supervised and preface by Lucian Boia, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2015, p. 17; N. Iorga, *Memorii (tristețea și sfârșitul unei domnii)*, vol. III, Bucharest, 1930, p. 10.

¹⁶ Radu C. Rosetti, *Despre generalul Ernest Ballif*, in "loc. cit.", p. 470.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

Company¹⁸, president of the Administration Board of “Concordia” Oil Company¹⁹, member of the administration and president of “Uzinele de Fier și Domeniile din Reșița” joint-stock Company²⁰; member of the Administration Board from Reșița Company²¹ and Creditul Carbonifer, in 1938, member in the Administration Board of the Romanian Bank Company, president of “King Ferdinand I” Foundation from Iași (25th of June – 13th of February 1914), when he passed away²². As president of the Foundation, he was preoccupied with the finalisation of the construction that today represents the Central University Library from Iași.

On the 12th of August 1936, he was appointed Marshal of the Royal Court, a post of honour from which he was replaced in March 1937, by Ernest Urdăreanu, who he had an argument with. From March 1938, he was a royal counsellor and, through the Decree from the 5th of June 1939, he was appointed, by the King, senator, for a period of nine years²³. He was in the middle of the events from 1939-1940: he signed the petition for the creation of the National Renaissance Front, constituted through a Decree-law, on the 15th of December 1938²⁴, on the 6th of September 1939, he pronounced himself for the neutrality of the country²⁵, and, on the 30th of August 1940, he declared himself in favour of the neutrality of the country²⁶; within the Crown Council, from the night of the 27th-28th of June 1940, he voted for the acceptance of the Soviet ultimatum, and the “retreat” from Bessarabia and the north of Bucovina and, on the 30th of August 1940, he pronounced himself in favour of the “award” from Vienna²⁷. After the assassination of the premier Armand Călinescu, on the 21st of

¹⁸ “Official Gazette” no. 277 from 15.12.1925 (further quoted as: Of. G.); Ionela Nițu, Dan Ovidiu Pintilie, *Societatea petrolieră “Internațională Română” (Interum-Amsterdam)* in Doru Sinaci, Emil Arbonie (coord.), *Administrație românească arădeană. Studii și comunicări din Banat – Crișana, 95 de ani*, vol. VIII, Arad, “Vasile Goldiș” University Press, 2014, pp. 8-9; Dan Ovidiu Pintilie, *Istoricul societății “Concordia”, 1907-1948*, Petrol-Gaze University Publishing House, Ploiești, 2007, pp. 102-103.

¹⁹ Dan Ovidiu Pintilie, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103; Of. G., part II, no. 233 from 5th of October/1940, pp. 8391-8393.

²⁰ “Adevărul”, year 44, no. 14545 from the 2nd of June 1931, p. 3; Of. G., part II, no. 193 from the 20th of August/1931, p. 37; Idem, part II, no.182 from the 10th of August/1933, p. 6335.

²¹ “Adevărul”, year 50, no. 16103, from the 24th of July, 1936, p. 4.

²² Ina Chirilă, *Pe urmele unei colecții. Documentele lui Gheorghe Chibănescu în Arhivele din Iași* in “Arhiva Moldaviae”, IV (2012), Iași, Societatea de Studii Istorice din România Publishing House, p. 256; Of. G., year CIX, part 1, no. 67, p. 1390.

²³ Regele Carol al II-lea al României, *Însemnări zilnice. 1937-1951*, vol. II, 13 martie – 15 decembrie 1939, (Caietele 8-10), Edition supervised, notes, glossary and index by Nicolae Rauș, Bucharest Scripta Publishing House, 2003, p. 344; *Ibidem*, vol. III, 15 decembrie 1939 – 7 septembrie 1940 (Caietele 11-11A), Bucharest, Scripta Publishing House, 1998, p. 333.

²⁴ Radu Florian Bruja, *Originea și înființarea Frontului Renașterii Naționale*, p. 237, available at atlas.usv.ro/www/codru_net/CC10/frontul.pdf.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, vol. III, p. 219.

²⁶ Carol al II-lea al României, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 206.

²⁷ Doinea Leahu, *Însemnări inedite ale lui Victor Iamandi în Consiliul de Coroana din 29/30 august 1940*, in “Muzeul Național” I, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 229-230; A. Simion, *Dictatul de la Viena*, 2nd Edition, 1996, p. 353.

September 1939, Carol II proposed him for the vacant position, but, after the intervention of Victor Iamandi, General Gheorghe Argeșanu was chosen²⁸.

Ernest Ballif took part to the armed events in which Romania was involved. He participated to the military expedition from Bulgaria, accompanying the Minister of War, Constantin Hârjeu²⁹. He had an intense activity during World War II (1916-1918), when, in his quality of adjutant of the royal family, was trusted with several important missions. Alexandru Marghiloman was mentioning that, on the 17th of September 1916, Ernest Ballif was sent, by King Ferdinand in Dobrogea, to organise military operations on the Danube, from where he returned with “a terrible impression”, fearing that, in case of failure in the attempt to surround Giurgiu, the line of Constanța would be in danger. Taking into consideration this sombre result, he was advising Aurel Solacolu to evacuate his entire farm possessions from Murfatlar³⁰. In November 1916, when Buftea was bombarded, the Queen asked Ernest Ballif to save her children³¹. Along with Barbu Știrbey, he made an evacuation plan for the royal family, at Iași, in the same time taking care of the transportation details and the finding of a dwelling place, appropriate for the royal family³². Frequently, he was providing Queen Mary with information on addressing the evolution of the military operations, and was accompanying her on the battle-front or when there were organised social assistance measures. There were a lot of moments when the Queen confessed she was very fond of Ballif. Moreover, he accompanied the Queen to the Peace Conference from Paris, on the 7th of March 1919, where the sovereign met Clemenceau³³. Furthermore, Ballif stood next to the Queen until her last moments, and he was the one who accompanied her, in June 1938, on the occasion of her return into the country, from “Weisser Hirsch” Clinique in the city of Dresda, where she spent the last weeks of her life³⁴.

The trust that the general enjoyed, amongst the royal family, is obvious also due to the missions that they entrusted him³⁵. In August 1918, the Queen delegated him to go to Odessa, to try to determine Prince Carol to renounce the marriage with Zizi Lambrino. The journey did not have the expected result, Ballif returned with a

²⁸ Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 227.

²⁹ Constantin Hârjeu, Minister of War (14th of October 1912 – 13th of December 1913) in the second government of Titu Maiorescu.

³⁰ Alexandru Marghiloman, *Note politice, 1897–1924*, vol II, (1916-1917), Bucharest, 1927, p. 200.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 276.

³² Hannah Pakula, *Ultima romantică. Viața Reginei Maria a României/The last romantic. A biography of Queen Mary of Romania*, Bucharest, Lider Publishing House, 2004, pp. 258, 260-261.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 348; Diana Mandache, *Capitole târzii din viața mea. Memorii redescoperite. Regina Maria a României*, vol. IV – continuation of the series Regina Maria, *Povestea vieții mele*, Allfa Publishing House, 2007, p. 30.

³⁴ Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 11 martie 1937 – 4 septembrie 1938 (Caietele 1-6), Republished, Bucharest, Scripta Publishing House, 2001, pp. 145, 196-197, 293; Tatiana Niculescu Bran, *Regina Maria – ultima dorință*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2015, pp. 16-17.

³⁵ Regina Maria, *Povestea vieții mele*, vol. III, Bucharest, Eminescu Publishing House, 1996, p. 362.

letter, reading that prince Carol was declaring that he was willing to abdicate, expressing his wish to leave, along with his wife, on the French battle-field³⁶. He was entrusted with the same mission, during 1926-1927, when Prince Carol abdicated for the second time, meetings that, again, did not have the wished result³⁷. We ought to mention that, after the death of King Ferdinand, Ernest Ballif was one of the supporters of Carol's return on the throne of Romania, who he saw as the solution for *solving the internal political crisis*.

There were also tensioned moments between the King Carol II and Ernest Ballif. On the 2nd of March 1938, E. Ballif was confessing to Radu Rosetti that the King was humiliating him continuously, taking away some of his attributions³⁸. Nonetheless, the King did not hesitate to ask for his opinion, on addressing the request of Antonescu to leave the Throne. "His attitude is a curious one" – said the King – "He said neither yes, nor no, but today he was more energetic than ever, deciding to fight against the violence and, without the violence, there cannot be expressed a refuse"³⁹.

For the posterity, the portrait made by the closest people in his life, General Radu Rosetti and Queen Mary, remained to remind of him. Radu Rosetti, who had been the friend of Ernest Ballif for many years, was describing him as: "A medium-height man, with strong bones, slightly stooping. Receding hair, an average nose, a full moustache, always neat, as his entire self. Some big and full of expressivity eyes were lighting his kind face. He was a tempered man, his speech was calm and he did not gesticulate when speaking, his general attitude was a sombre one, yet, not affective. He was a heavy smoker, a serious dependence, which he quit in his last years of life"⁴⁰. Another relevant fragment for his moral behaviour of the general, is the following: "He wanted to obtain perfection, and he struggled to attain it. He was straightforward in his appreciations. He was strict when accomplishing his job duties, he was a very kind man, and he helped anyone in need"⁴¹. "He was harsh with himself, and he was requesting everyone to fulfil their duties, the same as he was fulfilling his, yet, he proved kindness and he was always ready to help the others. Faithful as a friend, he was forgetful and forgiving, regardless the bad deed"⁴².

Queen Mary was always talking about him as being: "a priceless collaborator who would sometimes give me difficult to consider pieces of advice", but,

³⁶ Mircea Gelu Buta, Adrian Onofreiu, *Bistrișenii și problemele Prințului Carol*, in "Dacia Literară", Revistă de reconstituiri culturale, Year XXIV (New Series from 1900), no. 120-121 (9-10/2013), p. 131, available at www.dacialiterara.ro.

³⁷ Gheorghe I. Florescu, *Jurnalul Reginei Maria (1925) (I)*, available at <http://convorbiri-literare.dntis.ro/FLORESCUsep12.htm>.

³⁸ Radu R. Rosetti, *Pagini de jurnal*, p. 43.

³⁹ Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 302.

⁴⁰ Radu Rosetti, *General adjutant Ernest O. Ballif*, p. 7.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11.

⁴² Idem, *art. cit.*, in "loc. cit.", p. 470.

nonetheless, she was grateful for the guidance: “good military advice, sometimes harsh and terrible, but always extremely useful”⁴³.

On the 15th of May 1920, the King appointed General Ernest Ballif administrator of the Crown Domain. The period in which he held this position was defined by: the necessity to reconstruct the country, which was showing the signs of the destruction generated by the war, on all the levels: social, economic, politic and demographic; the consolidation of the unite Romanian state through the agrarian and electoral reform, promised in 1917, but also by the world economic crisis (1929-1933/1934) that negatively left its mark on Romania too, and implicitly on the Crown Domain.

The agrarian reform from 1921 led to the reconfiguration of the Crown Domain map. Through the application of the agrarian reform, it was expropriated a total surface of 46,422 ha. The consequence was the reduction in the numbers of administration, from 12, when the Crown Domain was founded, in 1884, to 10, in 1921. Domnița Domain was entirely expropriated. It was necessary the administrative unification of Borca with Sabașa and Farcașa, and the Administration Cocioc with Gherghița. In 1921, the estate of Românești, from Orhei County, entered in the componence of the Crown Domain. The reduction of the farming surfaces also determined a diminishing of the agricultural inventory and livestock, already reduced due to the war. Taking into account this reality, a lot of farming machinery was on sale, keeping only what was necessary for the administration.

One of the priorities of the administrator Ballif was the revision of the forest planning and the modification of the agricultural exploitation plans. A special attention was given to the horse herds from the domains, especially those from Segarcea Administration, where he would frequently make inspections to check the condition of the animals and to give indications on addressing their keeping and the selling.

The world economic crisis (1929-1933/1934) left the mark, negatively, on the Crown Domain too, stopping the development and diminishing the standard of living, as regarding both the consumption and the production. At the administration from the mountainside, where the main activity was constituted by the forest exploitation, there was registered a standstill of the works and an increased reduction in the selling of wood products. Nonetheless, the administration from the field regions registered reduction in the sown surfaces and in production.

The measures imposed by the new administrator of the Crown Domain, in his attempt to bring the Administrations to an efficient economic state, severely affected by war, and the agrarian reform from 1921, whose result was the decreasing of the farming surface, followed by the effects of the economic crisis, are identified in the income made in the period 1921-1934, as resulting from the below presentation⁴⁴:

⁴³ Hannah Pakula, *op. cit.*, pp. 252-253.

⁴⁴ CHNA, Bucharest, fund Central Administration, file no. 72/1934, f. 1.

Tabelul 1
The effects of the crisis from 1921 to 1934 in serveral domains

Domains	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Mălini	1.626.726,55	2.045.853,20	2.657.742,10	2.978.258,40	2.345.532,25	3.576.645,35	11.767.689,65	10.037.063,80	7.487.342,64	4.403.177,15	4.825.412,95	1.292.716,90	1.192.582,05	6.421.056,50
Borca	123.476,35	918.010,95	96.680,20	4.069.102,70	6.915.815,35	9.848.025,25	8.648.752,55	8.790.694,90	9.041.888,60	7.866.372,05	1.041.187,65	493.284,40	1.229.703,15	3.860.800,85
Bicaz	3.003.549,30	2.949.001,75	3.714.930,45	4.187.798,60	4.246.769,45	5.737.185,40	1.463.217,20	7.083.190,70	7.059.573,35	7.477.182,87	702.693,60	1.013.404,12	58.864,45	1.840.121,25
Bușteni	232.943,50	608.676,60	1.728.117,90	1.039.966,30	3.149.348	2.809.525,45	2.385.321,41	1.974.768,65	501.028,01	1.624.132,35	243.901,75	1.215.538	989.395,10	955.611,36
Segarcea	2.627.398,65	1.830.106,75	2.160.169,30	3.553.351,50	2.974.567,60	1.468.272,90	777.439,08	2.990.904,19	2.726.800,32	1.885.485,45	3.432.214,27	2.896.087,60	3.589.170,63	3.617.557,42
Sadova	1.563.733,20	1.148.052,10	2.839.912,55	3.228.795	3.835.580,35	4.771.565,75	2.546.488,15	1.944.094,18	2.198.519	2.640.030,50	1.754.641	2.115.388	810.049	1.639.250,45
Cococ	1.261.720,60	2.497.764,85	2.010.401,66	2.807.585,75	4.910.905,35	4.732.083,75	6.897.419,10	1.925.060,35	3.340,50	2.023.400,85	2.510.036,15	3.719.323,05	3.201.569,45	3.005.369,25
Dobrovăț	1.075.583,70	1.360.291,15	2.825.394,95	3.245.699,80	3.770.146,22	3.348.565,05	3.696.692,80	3.278.245,05	3.667.608,55	3.392.645,95	2.801.370,45	2.564.512,65	2.749.782,25	2.780.198
Ruşetu	1.620.603,10	273.307,45	558.794,15	234.010,20	1.683.703,40	1.041.128,2	119.213,88	1.153.701,75	210.853,70	412.991	84.222,85	111.463,05	18.965,40	
Românești		380.214,10	156.901,15				7.601.422,90	240.802,40	353.355,25	668.499,40	2.762.733,95	2.733.471,45	1.209.635,27	
Workshop				40.916,10	42.308,80									
Ceramic workshop „Dochia”				351.463,50	356.546,25	594.596,30	145.783,15							
Selling Products				212.345,65	142.084,90	88.837,50		138.430,45	211.817,05	250.125,25	232.929	231.401,25	214.257,68	248.474,05
Central Administration	613.542,75	2.255.912,19	6.366.836,62	7.069.474,19	4.693.069,67	6.557.409,22	5.842.916,52	2.071.970,13	3.212.698,10	4.092.154,99	4.079.487,13	3.788.177,13	3.669.745,62	2.818.129,77
Beneficies Reserves from Borca and Bicaz									2.000.000					
Total	13.749.277,70	14.960.147,99	25.115.881,03	33.018.967,69	39.066.377,59	44.579.840,12	37.101.948,06	38.840.518,25	34.674.825,07	34.573.217,01	12.080.935,01	16.484.898,60	16.514.449,48	27.186.569,80

The situation changed starting from 1934, when it was registered a general activity of the agricultural branch. The effect of the crisis were diminished and, gradually, removed by the growing request for agricultural and forest products, due to the war preparations, strategic internal and external storage, and the increase of prices, on the internal and external market.

In the period 1934-1940, the Crown Domains were revitalised. There were registered more and more requests for exporting, especially the forest and alcohol products. In 1938, there were expedited from Segarcea Administration 14,000 bottles of Bordeaux wine in Switzerland, 55,300 bottles in the Indies and 7,500 in England. The requests for “the best quality wine” were also registered from Warsaw. In 1937, Ludwick Spiess i Lyn Company from Warsaw was requesting the Crown Domain Administration 15,000 litres of wine, for making vinegar⁴⁵.

Significant requests for export were also registered for the forest products too, especially for the ones from the mountainside administrations. Solely from the export to Palestine, in 1936 and 1937, the profit was of approximately 80,000 pounds⁴⁶.

The breaking out of World War II led to a new decrease of the activity. The situation was due to the massing of men of the battle field, the material and animal requisitions made for the war needs, along with the plundering and the destruction made by the Soviet, German, and even Romanian armies.

As concerning the relations with the employed staff, General Ballif did not accept any breach of duty, sanctioning with a fine all the people who would draw up a wrong report, or would show recklessness. Thus, he demanded seriousness and discipline in their duties, pretended from the employees to keep him well-informed on the daily activities from the Domain “in order to take the measures that I consider appropriate on time, and the monthly reports are not to include proposals, for them being drafted a special report”⁴⁷.

In the inter-war period, Ernest Ballif registered the Crown Domain to several national and international exhibitions, as following: at Chişinău (15th of August 1925); at Segarcea (2nd-3rd of October 1927) organized by Dolj Agricultural Department, where the Crown Domain was awarded 5 gold medals, by Dolj Agricultural Department; at Bucharest, (May 1934, and 1938); at **Lvov**, Ukraine, (1925), at **Warsaw** (1929), at Brussels (1935) and New York (1939)⁴⁸.

A year before dying, on the 31st of July 1940, Ernest Ballif, while having a discussion with the King, suggested him to find a replacer. The King was confessing that he was extremely weak. “I think he was suffering from stomach cancer”⁴⁹. In the same period, Radu Rosetti remembers Ballif as looking “old, tired, in a bad physical

⁴⁵ See Narcisa Maria Mitu, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ CHNA, Bucharest, fund Segarcea Crown Domain, file no. 1275/1925, ff. 3, 5.

⁴⁸ See more Narcisa Maria Mitu, *The image of the Crown Domain through the National and the International Exhibitions (1884-1939)* in “Revista de Ştiinţe Politice”. *Rewes de sciences politiques*, no. 47/2015, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing House, pp. 293-303.

⁴⁹ Carol al II-lea, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 260.

health”⁵⁰. He passed away on the 13th of February 1941. The expenses with the transport and the funeral of the administrator Ernest Ballif were covered by the Crown Domain Administration⁵¹. At his death, in the house of the Crown Domain Administration, General Ernest Ballif left a surplus of 76,000,000 “that was wasted with meaningless expenses, by General Al. Manolescu”, as Dimitrie D. Negel, a future administrator of the Domain confessed⁵².

At the commemoration of General Ballif death, Petru Comarnescu, in his homage speech, mentioned his involvement in the management of the Crown Domain: “Observing the wish of the sovereigns, he administrated it exemplarily, promoting order, honesty and righteous working that would generate economic products and show results that would speak of his serious involvement. In this way, General Ernest Ballif served his country and his Court, a man of war, a counsellor and a good administrator, who managed to remain an example of a good-character person, honouring the trust that he was shown”⁵³. On this opportunity, Radu Rosetti was saying that: “Once with his departure, we lose from this world a rare feature: that of a complete man”.

For his entire activity, Ernest Ballif was decorated with high distinctions: *Legion of honour*, conferred on the 30th of January/12th of February 1918, by General Henri Berthelot himself, being considered the most important decoration⁵⁴, and, on the 25th of February/10th of March 1918, he was decorated by the Queen with *Queen Mary Cross* medal, who believed that “he will not be ashamed of wearing it”⁵⁵.

⁵⁰ Radu R. Rosetii, *Pagini de jurnal*, p. 133.

⁵¹ CHNA, Bucharest, fund Central Administration of the Crown Domain, file no. 113/1941, ff. 90, 93, 97.

⁵² Radu R. Rosetii, *Pagini de jurnal*, p. 217.

⁵³ Petru Comarnescu, *Despre generalul Ernest Ballif*, in “Revista Fundațiilor Regale”, Year VIII, No. 2/1941, p. 471.

⁵⁴ Regina Maria, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 317-318.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 334.