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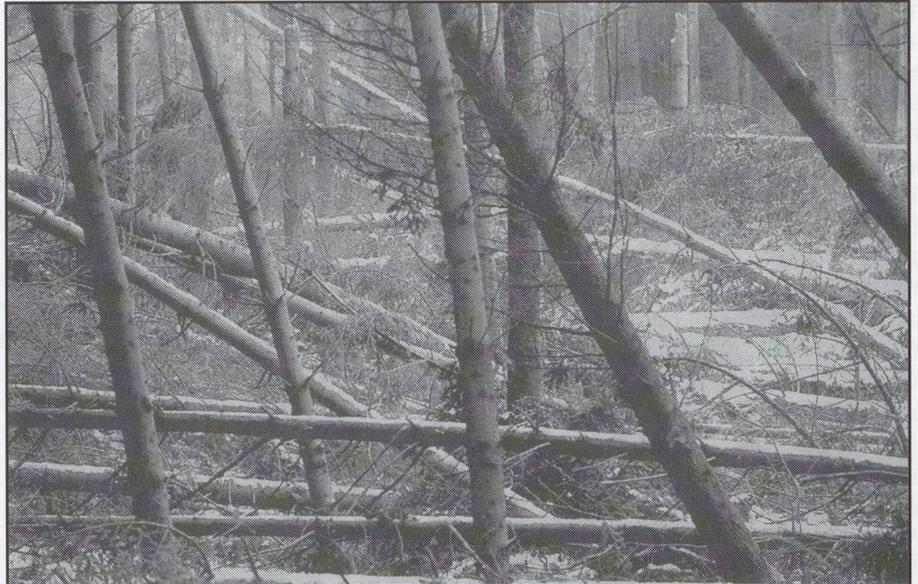
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**"Lothar" the storm of 26 Dec. 1999
in Switzerland could cost the
Federal Government
Sfr. 420 Million**

On the initiative of the Federal Office of the Environment, Forests and Agriculture (Buwal), a national leadership team was convened on 4 January 2000 to draft measures to deal with the widespread damage caused by the storm "Lothar" shortly before. The team made its proposals public. In the next four years, a total of Sfr. 420 million is to be appropriated for two main purposes: to prevent further ramifications of the storm damage, and to promote the sale of the large stretches of timber downed by the high winds. Among the possible consequent damages is an infestation of bark beetles in large stretches of Swiss forest. The pest could well multiply because of the



Forest near Berne, damaged by "Lothar" on Dec. 26.99

large quantities of storm-downed timber lying around, unless the dead wood is removed from the forests. Also damaged by the storm were stands of trees specifically planted for avalanche protection. That means measures will also have to be initiated to protect areas where the threat of avalanches is significant. As to the promotion of downed timber, it is proposed to provide financial support for regional "storm-wood centers" and to implement market measures aimed at improving the prospects for timber sales in general.

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