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We also wish to point out to our readers in this country that no copies of the Swiss Observer can be sent abroad unless this is done from our office under the special licence.



NEWS AT RANDOM

The Army Command is exercising a rigid control on all activities in public and private life. An Order just issued emphasises that any opinions on foreign statesmen and countries publicly expressed may complicate the task of the authorities responsible for foreign relations. The attention of all officers and men is drawn to the absolute necessity of maintaining the greatest prudence and restraint in their utterances.

* * *

The political parties of most of the cantons have agreed to observe an election truce for the pending renewal of the Swiss Parliament. The former councillors in the absence of new nominations will therefore be declared elected. — Notable exceptions are Berne, Zurich, Aargau and Grisons.

* * *

One of the first casualties in our army is a Swiss from abroad: Hans Tinner, who returned from the north of Germany to join his regiment. He was knocked down by a motor-car in Niederwil and succumbed to his injuries the same night.

* * *

The new short-wave broadcasting station at Schwarzenburg which was destroyed by fire last July has now been rebuilt and is expected to operate early next year.

Sentences of from nine months to five years hard labour have been imposed by the St. Gall cantonal court on a number of shady financiers who were responsible for the collapse of the "Sparkasse Gams." Some of the seven accused have been in custody for over a year. Their own standing — one of them was the Austrian Consul — and the credit enjoyed by this small savings bank, enabled them to negotiate fraudulent transactions of considerable magnitude. The leader of this gang abstracted no less than Frs. 200,000 from the bank's funds.

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The secretary of the Italian Fascio in Bellinzona, Enrico Mariani, has been arrested by the Federal police and is charged with military espionage.

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The cost of living index figure to the end of September is stated to be 138.2 (June 1914=100) as compared with 137.2 for August and 137.3 for September 1938.

* * *

Minister Joseph Choffat died in Porrentruy at the age of 73; he was our representative in Vienna until 1914. Since his retirement he took a keen interest in institutions taking care of old people and poor children.

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The frontier districts round Basle have been declared out of bounds by the military authorities as the regular strolls of sightseers are to be discouraged.

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In order to further the construction of air-raid shelters in business and private houses a contribution of 15% of the cost is offered by the Zurich municipality and it is hoped that the canton and the Confederation will make a similar grant. The expense so incurred by the Zurich exchequer will be about Frs. 900,000.

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One of the three canal bridges between Widnau and Heerbrugg in the St. Gall Rheintal has been blown up; three soldiers were badly injured. So far the official inquiry has thrown no light on this mysterious affair.

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A partial moratorium has been enacted by the Federal Council; it only takes effect in cases where hardship has been caused through the mobilisation.

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As was to be expected, the import duties for the month of September show a considerable decline, viz. about 7½ million francs compared with the same month last year. For the whole of the nine months there is, however, still an improvement amounting to over 19 million over the previous period.