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NEWS AT RANDOM

The Federal Council has signed a new Roumanian—Swiss Transfer Agreement replacing the Agreement of 1937 and all later alterations thereto, and which comes into force immediately. The value and counter-value of all goods purchased from Roumania has to be paid into the Swiss National Bank in Zurich. One hopes that as a consequence of the new agreement the importation of liquid fuel will now be possible in greater quantities. The agreement is valid until the end of March 1941.

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The German-Swiss Economic Discussions were terminated successfully on the 9th August, in Berlin. A new financial agreement was signed by Ministerial Director Wild, and Ministerial Councillor Boehne on behalf of Germany and Minister Froelicher and Dr. Hotz on behalf of Switzerland. The agreement is to be valid until the 31st March, 1941, and dates retrospectively from March 31st, 1940. As regards transfers of gold mortgages and travelling facilities, the position remains unchanged. Higher deliveries of coal are to be expected from Germany and Swiss exports to Germany are to be increased. Switzerland will, if necessary, be granted facilities in the clearing whereby the Swiss Labour Market will be eased. The mutual exchange of goods will include the exchange of goods with Poland, which will work on the basis of compensation. A special account will be opened for the General Government. In addition to Dr. Hotz the following were members of the Swiss Delegation at these conferences — Prof. Laur, Director Homberger, Director Schwab, Dr. R. Kohli and Director Hunziker.

* * *

Dr. Gadien has been elected Vice-President of the Government Council of Graubünden.

* * *

Professor Dr. Ernst Guhl, who held the Chair for Archeology and Classics at the University of Bâle, died at the age of 64 on the 8th of August.

* * *

Dr. Hermann Brand, representative of the Social Democratic party on the National Council, died in Berne at the age of 72 on the 9th August.

Miss Hedwig Scherrer, the well-known painter and patron of the movement for reviving Swiss Costumes, who died recently, bequeathed her home in the Rheintal to the State. She expressed a wish that it might be used as a home for young painters, sculptors and writers.

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With regard to the closing of certain frontiers by Germany, it has been agreed that the exchange of tourists between Germany and Switzerland can still take place through St. Margarethen.

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The P.T.T. announces that a Japanese steamer will go from Lisbon to East Asia on the 18th August and will also take the mail to British territory in the Near and Far East. From August 8th onwards letters from Switzerland will come four times a week by airmail via Lisbon to England. The additional fee per letter is 30 centimes.

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It is no longer possible to send money in any form to either Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania.

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The Swiss Clearing Office draws attention to the fact that all payments still due to France and its Colonies should be sent to the Swiss National Bank in Zurich.

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The Swiss Trade Unions met last week-end in Geneva and adopted a resolution offering their full co-operation in all endeavours to maintain the independence of Switzerland and expressing the hope that the authorities would do all they could to that end.

* * *

A Refresher Course for Women ambulance drivers is now taking place. Those who pass the test will be given the most responsible positions in the Ambulance Driver's Corps.

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The offices occupied by the Organisation for the Assistance of Prisoners of War have proved to be too small. The Executive of the Canton Geneva have therefore decided to move the Department for War Economics to other quarters, thereby freeing two large rooms to house the Agence des prisonniers de guerre. A daily average of 35,000 letters is received, and as many as 70,000 enquiries have been received in one day recently. During one month alone 300,000 answers to enquiries concerning French and Belgian nationals were dealt with.

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The Political Department announces that all those refugees who left Alsace and the upper regions of the Moselle Valley during the German offensive can