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NEWS AT RANDOM

After June 30th the cantonal bank notes will lose their legal tender. The National Bank founded in 1907 was given the monopoly for the issue of notes, but the existing notes of the cantonal banks continued to enjoy currency throughout the country.

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A strict control on the wearing of military uniforms and armlets is being exercised; it is stated that their misuse has facilitated spying facilities.

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Owing to bad visibility, a Swiss plane crossed into German territory last week to the neighbourhood of Waldshut; it was recognised but apart from a reference in the daily bulletin no further notice was taken of the incident by the German command.

Sensational revelations may be expected following the arrest of ex-colonel A. Fonjallaz; the news was released to the Swiss press on January 29th, though the arrest took place on the 25th at Schaffhausen when he was on the point of boarding in company with a German agent the express to Berlin. Col. Fonjallaz has been on the retired list for many years and he will be remembered as a prominent member of the "frontist" movement which sought to remodel our Constitution on fascist lines. By his activities he ostracised himself and amongst other callings he was dismissed from the lectureship which he held at the Federal Polytechnic High School at Zurich. Elsewhere he would be described as "Nuisance number one" in Switzerland. For some time he endeavoured to interest Italian political circles in a fascist organisation he intended to create in our country. He is now charged with espionage in favour of a belligerent power and it is stated that a considerable number of persons are implicated. Further arrests have been effected in Bellinzona and Geneva; it is also stated that a son, René Fonjallaz, a writer and former Olympic bobsleigh rider, has been detained in his chalet at St. Moritz together with a German woman staying at the same place.

Far-reaching efforts are being undertaken by the Geneva authorities to balance the 5½ million deficit which is anticipated in the 1940 budget. By increasing the existing cantonal taxes by 30% an amount of 3½ million will be secured and it is hoped to find the remaining two million by economies in the administration one of which is the withholding of the statutory salary increases of the whole of the civil servants. The difficulties are accentuated by the strong opposition on the part of the socialists.

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A welcome feature is revealed by statistics just published about the population of St. Gall. The number of inhabitants has been slowly dwindling since the last war, but the year 1939, with a figure of 63,571, shows an increase of 80 as compared with the previous year; 13% of the total are foreigners.

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Naturalisation in the canton Wallis will in future be granted only to those whose mother is of Swiss nationality or who have been educated at Swiss schools and have spent their youth in the country.

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The Neuchâtel Cantonal Bank has earned a net profit of over a million francs for the twelve months to end December last.

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In order to study ways and means by which Swiss help can be rendered to the best advantage, National Councillor Henri Vallotton has gone to Finland; he was also the bearer of what is thought is the last message of Federal Councillor Motta expressing sincere sympathy and admiration for the heroic fight for independence of the Finnish people.

* * *

A general warning has been issued to skiing enthusiasts on account of the great danger of avalanches caused by fresh snow and wind.

WE HEREWITH INFORM our friends and clients that our Mr. B. Apfelbaum has now returned from the Swiss Army, and is now with pleasure at their disposal to discuss any Insurance proposition.

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