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NEWS AT RANDOM

The Federal Council has promised to issue recommendations to the cantons to facilitate the naturalisation of what is described as "paper foreigners." They are nationals of other states who have abandoned all connection or sympathy with their country of origin or whose former nationality has been destroyed; they are all said to be sufficiently assimilated to deserve of Swiss citizenship. An effort is to be made to introduce some uniformity to take the place of the diversity of regulations which encouraged some of the communes to exploit the financial endowments of applicants. Most of the large towns favour a liberal policy in this connection but this desire is by no means general; in Zug, for instance, the local council refused to reduce the "fee" to Frs.1,500 for youngsters of the age of twenty who would have become liable for military service. From Liestal (Basel-Land) it is reported that over Frs.5,000 has been "quoted" to a German shoemaker who has lived there for a good many years.

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There seems to be some doubt that the Finance Bill which imposes heavy additional taxation to defray the cost of the present mobilisation will be submitted to the people on June 2nd as originally anticipated. The measure is likely to invite an animated controversy which under existing conditions is not desirable. The Federal Council may therefore make use of its emergency powers.

* * *

An association has been formed in Locarno called "Locarno-Venezia" to create a direct link with the Adriatic by making use of the river waters via Milan.

* * *

In spite of official warnings gas masks are not popular in Zurich. Out of a population of over 300,000 only 1,653 civilians have made the investment; the normal price of the official respirator is Frs.16.—.

* * *

Dr. Max Jenny, an assistant judge in Schaffhausen, who was exposed in a local newspaper for his share in the "frontist" movement, summoned the editor of the paper for defamation of character. The court has rejected his plaint inflicting on him the cost of the proceedings including an indemnity to the editor for defending the action.

In August 1941 it will be 650 years that the Swiss Confederation has been founded. Preparations to suitably commemorate this historic date are already far advanced. The festival play is written by Cäsar von Arx (Olten) and the music set by J. B. Hilber (Lucerne). The festivities and patriotic manifestations will be staged in Schwyz, Brunnen, the Rütliland possibly at the Tellssplatte and in the "Hohle Gasse."

* * *

Thanks to a subsidy of Frs.150,000 by the adjoining cantons navigation on the Lac Léman has been saved; the regular summer service will be resumed some time this month.

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A fire in the school building at Sarnen (Obwalden) destroyed the residential quarters of the caretaker and the teaching staff.

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Hot water is to be rationed in Geneva. The town council decreed that wherever coal is being used for heating the supply has to be discontinued for two days. Central heating in all apartment houses and offices is shut off on Monday night and restored on Thursday morning.

* * *

An avalanche, the course of which he was sent out to ascertain, buried an army patrol, Sergeant Grandchamp, from Montreux. His company was engaged in exercises near the Windstrubel and as the danger of avalanches attracted the attention of the commandant, the patrol was sent ahead to direct the safe descent of his comrades. Grandchamp was an expert ski runner and familiar with the locality.

* * *

The "Bolaui," the dreaded avalanche from the Riedergrat, descended with tremendous force over the tunnel of the railway, burying a large part of the road between Ebligen and Oberried and finally spending itself in the lake of Brienz.

* * *

Frau Elise Siegrist-Müller in Aarau, the oldest matron in our country, celebrated a few days ago her 105th anniversary in the best of health.

* * *

A spirited statement published in "Die Tat" over the name of National Councillor G. Duttweiler is reproduced in some of the English papers. The following version is taken from the "Sunday Times" (14.4.40):

"Obeying instructions to be 'neutral,' has not helped other neutral States. We know that the aggressor's promises are all scraps of paper. They mean nothing if so-called strategic considerations are at stake. The only question is; 'Does this or that attack pay?'

"In future the Swiss Press will no longer be cautious, but call things by their real names. A