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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council, on May 18th, making use of the emergency powers granted by Parliament, issued a decree which came into effect on May 20th and has validity for two years.

This decree, which is a fundamental contradiction to the Swiss Constitution, can only be considered as a measure of wartime expediency. It gives the Federal Council the right to de-nationalise Swiss citizens who are living abroad and have committed grave offences either against the security of the Swiss Confederation or against its political independence. Such persons are considered as being no longer worthy of Swiss citizenship. The person affected or his (or her) home canton or home borough have the right to appeal against any decision of the Federal Council making use of this decree, moreover it is announced that any such decision does not affect any relatives or descendant of the culprit.

There have been some very isolated cases of Swiss citizens sympathising with Axis countries to such an extent that they either committed high treason or indulged in propagandist and fifth column activities against their own country. Those apprehended by Swiss courts have been dealt with, some having been shot for high treason, some serving long sentences of hard labour. The new decree is aimed at the very few who have committed such acts from without the boundaries of Switzerland posing as good Swiss and shielding their subversive activities behind their citizenship. One or two such cases are well known to the Swiss authorities and it is expected that the new decree will be made to operate against them in the near future.

* * *

The report for 1942 (just published) of the Political Department states that last year sixteen Swiss nationals lost their lives due to aerial action, i.e., four in Germany, three in Italy, four in France and five in North Africa; in addition four became victims of actions on the high seas. A number have suffered more or less serious injuries and the loss in worldly possessions is continually increasing especially in Germany and Italy. Our country was acting as a protecting power for no less than 26 different nations and the

staff employed at Berne in this connection exceeds 110 while those engaged in a similar capacity at the Swiss Legations abroad was about 800. For disbursements, the pay of the special staff and general administration expenses the Confederation had received from the Powers represented the sum of 56.5 million francs.

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Negotiations between representatives of the Swiss banks and German banking, commercial and industrial firms have led to an extension of the German Standstill Agreement of 1942 by one year.

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At the official opening on May 5th of the 27th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle, Prof. Brogle, the Director of the fair, emphasised the importance of the fourth war exhibition. He praised the Swiss workers of both sexes for the results obtained and pointed out the difficulties under which the economy of the country is labouring. He further stated that the number of exhibitors had again appreciably increased, from 1,365 in 1942 to 1,518 this year. Unfortunately through lack of space, although the area of the exhibition had been extended, hundreds of applications could not be considered. The fair this year did not only show results achieved, but also demonstrated the aims and directions of our war economy. The particular characteristic of the fair was that it brings into relief the economic possibilities of Switzerland, even under unfavourable conditions. The number of exhibitors proved conclusively, even to the foreigner, that the initiative and the inventiveness of the Swiss is not dead, and that our industries are ready to collaborate in the economic reconstruction of Europe and the world. He also pointed out that Swiss products can hold their own against similar products from abroad and he draws the conclusion that this fair is a demon-

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi, le 1er Juin au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, le dîner commencera à 6h. précises.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Une conférence nous sera donnée par M. Wickham-Stead au sujet "On Switzerland."

Les Membres sont priés de s'inscrire par écrit pas plus tard que le 31 mai auprès de M. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Secr., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2.. Prière de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

LE COMITE.