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NEWS AT RANDOM

Following the example of other states the Federal Council has decided to suspend the publication of figures and statistics dealing with our foreign trade.

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Under a decree issued by the Federal Council and which took effect last Thursday the army command is empowered, in case of emergency, to order the evacuation of certain districts and transfer the civil population to a protected zone. The cantons and communes are compelled to make the requisite arrangements for reception though the central government will defray the cost of transport and also make a contribution towards victualling.

* * *

The next session of the Swiss Parliament will be opened on February 19th and will last about a week; one of the main items will be the election of a new Federal Councillor.

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The Swiss embroidery industry which has been badly hit by the loss of the English markets is stated to have found considerable compensation in increased exports to the United States.

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Last year's sale of 1st of August badges and stamps brought in the record sum of Frs. 763,719; compared with 1938 about 250,000 more stamps have been disposed of and 57,000 extra badges.

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The 1940 budget of Basle (town) forecasts a deficit of nearly 14 million francs.

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The German Minister in Berne has made representations to the Federal Council for the purpose of stopping the further sale of Dr. Rauschning's book "Hitler Speaks"; 4,000 copies are stated to have been sold already. A later report states that our authorities have confiscated the remaining stock of "Gespräche mit Hitler." The sale of a French edition has not been interfered with.

* * *

A slightly smaller net profit than for the previous year has been earned by the Cantonal Bank of St. Gall for the 12 months to December 1939; it amounts to

Frs. 1,451,000 to which a million francs reverts to the cantonal exchequer.

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Lausanne's population to the end of last year numbered 91,871, an increase of 2,239 during the last twelve months; over 10% of the total are foreigners.

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A fall of rock caused considerable damage to the Axenstrasse for a distance of about 50 metres; the dislocation to traffic has not been serious. During clearing operations a miner was crushed to death by falling boulders.

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The Russian under-secretary of the League of Nations whose office has become vacant and who preferred to continue residence in Geneva has been ordered to leave Swiss territory by the end of this month.

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Otto Hunziker, a former National Councillor and a leading and popular personality in political circles of the canton Aargau, died in Zofingen after a long illness at the age of 61.

* * *

Prof. Rudolf Hunziker, for over thirty years lecturer at the Winterthur Kantonsschule, celebrated his 70th anniversary on February 5th; apart from a large number of essays and biographies dealing with Swiss composers and writers he collected and published the entire works of Jeremias Gotthelf — a task of some twenty years.

* * *

A well-known exponent of the Stolze-Schrey shorthand system passed away in the person of Prof. Dr. Arnold Alge-Reber. He died after a short illness in St. Gall where for over thirty years he had been a popular teacher of languages at the public schools.

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A suspicious looking parcel received through the post by a German tailor in Lausanne was taken by the latter to the local police station. Before being examined the package exploded killing inspector Jaccoud and seriously wounding inspector Clot and the on-looking tailor. The original inference of a political crime has proved erroneous as it has been established that the murderous parcel was intended to dispatch the tailor whose wife pursued a guilty liaison with a commercial traveller.

* * *

Geneva seems to be the Eldorado for spies, smugglers and jewel thieves. A new somewhat original crime has come to light by the arrest of a "parfumeur" who scented a local "retardaire" and by posing as the official tax collector and presenting a fictitious demand note succeeded in relieving his victim of Frs. 1,300.