News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

The short four-days session of the Swiss Parliament came to an end on September 21st. The deliberations dealt mainly with the many economic questions arising out of the present emergency. No new financial measures have so far been enacted to meet the heavy expenses incurred for national defence; the cost of maintaining the army is said to be in the neighbourhood of five million francs per day.

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The requests for dispensations from military service are stated to be exceptionally numerous; the system of "reserved occupations" applied in this country is unknown in Switzerland. In view of the urgent demand for seasonable labour a considerable number of dragoons with their horses have been temporarily released for work in agricultural districts.

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The Swiss authorities have placed all the foreigners under a very strict control. There is no intention of expelling deserters and similar fugitives who have been resident in our country before the war as long as their behaviour does not make such a course desirable. There is, however, an extremely rigid check on — and prevention of — spying activities and spurious newsagencies which vegetated so profusely during the last war.

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Something like 10,000 foreigners have left Geneva with their families since the outbreak of war.

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A former clerk of the court in Vevey and local solicitor has received a sentence of six years hard labour for defalcations.

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Films shown in Swiss cinemas are now subject to a censorship by the respective army department.

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The maintenance of our regular supplies is now assured again thanks to a provisional arrangement with France which allows the transit of all goods destined for Switzerland. Italy has also given facilities for the entry of Swiss goods through her ports.

The Baselland council is applying for a credit of Frs. 860,000 to erect a new building for the cantonal administration; the new structure will contain about thirty offices and an air raid shelter for 160 persons.

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Jakob Birrol, a former National Councillor, died in Alstätten at the age of 85; for forty years he was a member of the St. Gall government and took a particular interest in education.

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The price of petrol (Benzine) has been increased from 42 cts. to 50 cts. per litre.

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The General Staff announces that fortifications are being built in the interior of Switzerland. These works are not a consequence of present events, but are being constructed according to plans prepared some time ago for strengthening the national defences. Troops now mobilized are working on these fortifications.

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Two Gestapo agents have been arrested in Basle; both were convicted of spying and sentenced to periods of imprisonment.

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Freiherr Johann Wettstein has been appointed Hungarian Minister in Berne; he stayed some time in Switzerland in 1938 when he investigated his ancestral connection with the well-known Basle family of the same name. He is said to be a descendant of the historic Basle burgomaster who was the Swiss delegate at the peace negotiations of Munster and Osnabrück after the Thirty Years War when Swiss Neutrality was proclaimed for the first time.

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Aviation, both cross-country and inland, having come to a complete standstill it has been found necessary to close the Basle airport for the duration of the war.

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The sale of all horses, mules, carrier-pigeons, war dogs and motor cars is prohibited unless a permit from the military authorities has been obtained.

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Pfarrer Sigmund Büchi died in Zofingen at the age of 72. A pioneer of the labour movement in the canton Aargau and extremely active wherever his talents seemed to find an outlet he was for some years editor of the "Freie Aargauer," member of the "Grosse Rat" and in his younger days one of the Federal shorthand reporters of the National Council.

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We extend our sincere sympathy to Mr. J. C. Wetter and Mr. J. Wetter, their father having passed away in Switzerland at the age of 78.