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The Swiss Observer

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NEWS AT RANDOM

The Federal Tribunal has rejected the appeal of Dr. Zander against the judgment of the Zurich high court sentencing him to 18 months imprisonment for conducting a secret news agency in favour of a foreign power. He was the leader of a national socialist group styling themselves "union of loyal confederates" (Bund treuer Eidgenossen). In another case our highest tribunal reversed an award by an ecclesiastical body in the canton of Zurich. In assessing the amount of the church tax (Kirchensteuer) the whole of the property of a married couple is taken into consideration though each one may have a separate estate. As it happened the husband was a protestant and the wife a catholic and they both appealed against the whole estate being taxed for the benefit of a particular denomination. The Federal Tribunal decided that under the Swiss Constitution nobody can be forced to subscribe to a religious community of which he is not a member.

* * *

In spite of the war the Swiss Federal Railways are recording over two million francs increase in their revenue for the month of September as compared with 1938. Unfortunately the budget figures for 1940 just published anticipate a net loss of over 25 million francs. Of the estimated 338 million revenues 110 million francs are earmarked for interest on loans. Considerable savings in working expenses have been effected and this policy is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that in July 1920 the staff employed numbered 40,498 while in July this year the figure was 27,448, and this with a constantly increasing railway net. By the end of next year the railways will operate 506 electric and 359 steam locomotives, 3,523 passenger coaches and 16,753 baggage and goods trucks.

* * *

Minister Charles L. E. Lardy died in a Bernese clinic at the age of 64; he was the son of the distinguished life-long minister in Paris. The deceased began his diplomatic career at the Swiss Legation in London in 1898. After spending four years in Tokio as our Minister he was appointed to Stockholm in 1924 from which post he recently retired.

The divisions in the socialist parties of Geneva and Vaud have led to the appearance of a new party paper "Le Peuple," which is financed and directed by Nicole's former associates. Surprise has been caused in the Swiss press in view of the official ban on new publications.

* * *

A further rise in the price of petrol (Benzine) which has recently been increased from 42 to 50 cts. per litre is expected on account of the heavy transport expenses. The bulk of the oil emanates from Rumania and is transhipped at Genoa for Switzerland.

* * *

What was once considered a precious trophy has come to an untimely end. At the international rifle competition in Finland in 1937 our compatriots won the "prix d'honneur" which consisted of an 18 months old brown bear. The latter was with appropriate stateliness, ushered into the famous bear pit of our capital to be a constant reminder of the achievement of our riflemen. However the new boarder showed little inclination to ingratiate itself with the existing family and soon manifested a ruthless dictatorship incompatible with the democratic spirit of the Bernese bruins. The prize bear has now been shot and peace and civility has been restored to the "Bärengraben."

* * *

The budget for 1940 of the canton Zurich anticipates a deficit of over 13 million francs; the extraordinary expenses due to the existing emergency are included in the estimate. A 120% increase of the basic "Staatssteuer" is proposed.

* * *

The president of the New York World Exhibition, Mr. Grover A. Whalen, paid an official visit to the National Exhibition in Zurich. Our good relations

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 7 Novembre à 5.30 h. précises au Restaurant PAGANI 42, Great Portland Street, W.1.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Le souper est facultatif et les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 2321/2).

Le Comité