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NEWS AT RANDOM

A partial moratorium based on a decree of August 30th has come into operation in several industries where it can be shown that existing obligations cannot be met on account of the present emergency. This applies particularly to the hotel and embroidery industries; some of the funicular and mountain railways are also affected.

* * *

A welcome decree, though perhaps delicate in its application, has been enacted by the Federal Council. It forbids importers to submit to any foreign control or to declare the use for which goods purchased abroad are intended.

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In pursuance of a former order of the Army Command prohibiting the export of maps, some of the large booksellers have been compelled to surrender the whole of their stock; this confiscation has also been extended to the propaganda matter of touring offices and hotels where local topography is illustrated.

* * *

The export of watches from Switzerland has according to recent statistics experienced a considerable set-back; during the last nine months nearly four million less have found a market abroad.

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The Federal budget for 1940 balances with a deficit of 73 million francs; included is an amount of over 89 million francs for amortisation, adjustment of former deficits, depreciations (Railways) and extraordinary army credits. Not included is the cost of mobilisation and the expenditure incurred by the present emergency. The amount of over 134 million francs earmarked for the military department represents about 23% of the total expenditure.

* * *

Members of the consultative commission recently formed for supervising imports and exports are at present staying in London to confer with Board of Trade officials. They are Dr. Hans Sulzer (President), Prof. Paul Keller and Dr. A. Koch; the three were entertained at luncheon at the Savoy Hotel by Lord Luke, the British Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce.

The budgets of all the cantonal governments are badly affected by the present crisis, thus next year's deficit for St. Gall is over 1.7 million francs and for Thurgau just under half a million francs. Berne tops the list with 3.6 million francs.

* * *

Prof. Rud. Staehelin whose report on alleged cases of mustard gas poisoning in Poland was the subject of an interpellation in the Basle Grosse Rat has now been vindicated; the president stated that there was no reason to doubt the bona fides of the professor though his action did not altogether recommend itself. Prof. Staehelin further stated that at the time he happened to be in Berlin and could not very well decline the request made to him by the German officials.

* * *

The shortage of employees mainly due to mobilisation is being overcome by the Basle municipal tramways by the training of lady conductors (Billetteuses).

* * *

An appeal is made throughout Switzerland to register for blood transfusion so that particulars may be available to the army command in case of need.

* * *

The creation of a Swiss Legation in Ireland, which was decided upon by the Federal Assembly in June last, has now, on the expiry of the referendum delay, become effective. The Consular General in Dublin, which was set up in 1935, is thus raised to Legation status. Dr. C. F. Benzinger, the first Swiss Consul General to Ireland, is the Chargé d'Affaires; and in receiving his credentials Mr. de Valera expressed his great satisfaction at the appointment and the hope that the many ideals common to both countries would result in a happy and fruitful co-operation.

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