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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Some details about the Swiss Mercantile Fleet have now been officially published by the Federal Council. Altogether 15 ships with a tonnage of 115,000 have been chartered for the duration of the war; eight of them are already in service whilst the remaining seven will be delivered before the end of the year. The belligerent powers have given an undertaking not to interfere with this seaborne traffic; the Swiss Cross and the name Switzerland will be painted on the sides of the ships which will, of course, carry goods solely for the provisioning of our country. Two London ship brokers will act as managers for the Swiss Government. Most of the unloading will probably be effected at Marseilles.

* * *

Foreign aircraft are flying over Swiss territory with impunity as the disinclination of the defence batteries to fire seems to be taken advantage of. One German plane penetrated as far inland as the canton of Zug, dropping leaflets which were addressed to recipients on the other side of the Rhine.

* * *

A national vote will be taken during the week-end on a legislative decree reorganising and placing on a sound footing the employment of the 54,000 civil servants of the Confederation. This new measure aims in particular to dispose of an amount of over one milliard francs — the accrued deficits of the pension fund — by increased contributions of the employees and by new taxation spread over the next sixty years. The referendum secured 40,500 signatures but the bill is supported by most of the political parties.

* * *

All Swiss of military age born in France will be considered French and become liable for military service unless within three months a formal declaration is made re-affirming Swiss nationality.

* * *

Copious rain has caused serious damage in many parts of our country. Some of the rivers are overflowing their banks, necessitating the evacuation of adjoining buildings. In the Muota valley (Schwyz) the inundations are said to be the worst since 1910. Near Brienz (Berne) some of the roads were temporarily closed to traffic on account of the accumulation of sand and boulders. In Wallenstadt, basements and the ground floors of houses were filled with water and the approach to the railway station was cut off. A catastrophe visited the little village of Fully in the canton Valais, half of which was covered ten to fifteen metres deep by an avalanche of stone deposited by the surging mountain streams; no lives were lost but a large number of cattle could not be extricated in time. The damage is said to exceed a million francs.

* * *

An exciting Saturday afternoon was spent by the Basle people when close to the frontier a French bomber was chased back by German anti-aircraft guns. The unwelcome intruder got away scot-free but two shop-girls in Kleinhüningen whose curiosity led them into the open road received serious injuries which made an immediate operation necessary. Buildings in the neighbourhood and in Riehen were slightly damaged.

* * *

Among the tractanda for the forthcoming Landsgemeinde in the canton Glarus is a proposal to levy a special tax from foreigners; it is pointed out by legal authorities that the imposition of such a tax can only be decreed by the Federal government.

* * *

Most of the communal electricity works in the Rheintal (St. Gall) are deriving considerable profits from their undertakings, thus Buchs has netted an amount of Frs.85,000; critics are of the opinion that such gains represent an indirect tax on the consumer who should obtain the electric current at cost price.

* * *

An interesting experiment was brought to a successful issue when 202 tons of wheat were drawn out

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi le 5 Décembre 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