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NEWS AT RANDOM

Switzerland's contribution for the "upkeep" of the League of Nations in 1940 has been fixed at Frs. 446,109.65.

A fourth army corps is being created of which Col. Labhart, at present Chief of Staff, will be the Commandant; his place on the general staff will be taken by Col. Huber.

In place of Fritz Gygax, the retiring secretary of our Parliament, Frederic Geissbühler has been nominated by the Federal Council; he is a citizen of both Berne and Neuchâtel and has held different positions in the political department at Berne since 1911.

Dr. Walter Rickenbach of Zurich has been appointed permanent delegate at the League of Nations to replace Councillor of Legation Gorgé who is going to Tokio as Swiss Minister.

The high esteem and admiration which is voiced in every part of Switzerland for the heroic fight of Finland has found tangible expression in a donation of Frs.100,000 which the Federal Council has placed at the disposal of the Finnish Red Cross.

A bill approved by the Federal Council provides for compulsory pre-military training of all young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty.

The two-year old decree for the protection of the Swiss watch industry has been extended till the end of 1942. Amongst other restrictions it forbids the establishment of new factories or the enlargement of existing ones and the export of machinery and tools is subject to a special licence.

When a large number of our compatriots were repatriated from this country on the outbreak of hostilities they were obliged to leave behind certain personal effects, such as books, photos, manuscripts, etc. It is now stated that arrangements have been made for a collective home transport; application should be made to the Eidgen. Kriegsfürsorgeamt at Berne.

A large textile store (Stephan) in St. Gall has been closed by order of the Federal Price Control Office for "profiteering;" a prosecution is pending.

In response to the universal appeal a cheque of 100,000 pesos has been handed to the Finnish Minister in Buenos Aires by two local Swiss industrialists, Carlos Grüneisen and Dr. Ricardo Grüneisen, father and son (from Basle).

To celebrate the completion of 25 years of business, Ad. Dätwyler, the director of the Schweiz. Draht- und Gummiwerke Altdorf (Uri), has presented a cheque for Frs.100,000 to the commune of Altdorf; the staff fund of his firm has also benefited to the tune of Frs.200,000.

At the request of the army command the publication of two Basle papers has been prohibited as their policy and contents endangered the independence and neutrality of Switzerland. One is the "Neue Basler Zeitung," edited by Dr. Rolf Henne, who received considerable monthly payments from a German publishing house: documents seized during a search at offices in Basle and Zurich furnished indisputable evidence. In the case of the "Freiheit" no trace of foreign finance has been discovered but this communist publication has excelled in glorifying the Russian aggression in Finland.

The death of Giuseppe Pagani at Torre (Blenio Valley) will be mourned in London by the older members of the Ticinese Colony. Born in 1869 he came to London while still in his teens and made himself a position in the catering and hotel trade. He was identified with the well-known restaurant in Great Portland Street bearing his name and managed in conjunction with Carlo Meschini, the father of the present proprietor, to make Pagani's the illustrious rendez-vous of the great leaders in the world of music and art. Soon after the outbreak of the last war he severed his connection with his adopted country and returned to Torre (Ticino) where he started manufacturing chocolate. In spite of the competition of the powerful combines the products of his firm, the "Cima Norma," enjoyed wide-spread popularity; he was president of the association of independent chocolate manufacturers.

A pretty story comes from Basle where some soldiers on leave conceived the idea of fixing a Xmas tree with lighted candles on a raft; they sent it down the Rhine where it is supposed to have floated merrily between the Maginot and Siegfried lines. It is not stated by what miracle the raft found its way through the pontoon bridge at Hüningen.