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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

**The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.**

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

The rolling of drums and couriers who rode from one remote mountain village to another called out every able-bodied Swiss to the defence of our country in reply to the war mobilisation order decreed by the Federal Council in the early hours of last Saturday. The order was expected and the response was instantaneous and complete. At the same time the control of foreigners has been intensified and the issue of visas by Swiss consulates abroad has been suspended.

\* \* \*

Not affected by the mobilisation order are those dispensed from active service and the Swiss residing abroad under army leave.

\* \* \*

A net surplus of 7.5 million francs is recorded by the Federal Railways for the twelve months to end of last year. This is the first time since 1930 that the accounts close with a balance on the right side. Revenue both from passenger and goods traffic have been favourably influenced by war conditions and compared with the previous period shows an increase of 11.8%. A saving of 5.6 million francs in working expenses has been secured and the total of 224 million is the lowest figure during the last 22 years. The surplus is to be applied to amortisation.

\* \* \*

A considerable number of heavy bombs — seventeen have so far been traced — were dropped early on Friday morning last week on the railway line between Delemont and Courrendlin. The actual track was not touched but large craters were formed in the farmland on both sides of the railway line. The overhead wiring was slightly damaged and the bombardment took place a few minutes before the first train was due to pass.

\* \* \*

Peaceful demonstrations of protest in front of the German Consulate and of sympathy in front of the Dutch Consulate were made last week-end by hundreds of students of the Zurich university.

\* \* \*

In order to safeguard production in the canton St. Gall agricultural workers are prohibited from

leaving or changing their existing employment without the consent of the cantonal labour exchange. Another decree published by the cantonal authorities compels landowners to plant a fixed portion of their ground, if suitable, with potatoes.

\* \* \*

Defalcations totalling about Frs.100,000 have been discovered in the accounts of the electricity supply department of Bulle.

\* \* \*

A gift of over 131,000 francs has been received from America by the commune of Greifensee (Zurich). It is said to emanate from an old will of a Miss Regula Walder who emigrated with her parents to California in 1850.

\* \* \*

The director of the Zoological Gardens in Geneva — a German — has now been returned to his flock as the tentative charge under which he has been arrested was found to be untenable.

\* \* \*

An official search at the apartments of the German students at the Geneva university has resulted in disquieting discoveries; in the meantime the special lectures arranged for their benefit have been discontinued. These lectures or course of lectures are based on a long standing reciprocal agreement with certain German universities which enables law students of both nations to spend some terms abroad without the loss of "semestres." There are about 180 German students in Geneva of whom thirty are known to be organised under their own Führer. According to later reports three have been arrested and are awaiting trial by the military authorities for espionage.

\* \* \*

The burdens or pleasures of a paterfamilias are to be specially catered for in Lugano where a new society or club is in course of formation exclusively for fathers of large families.

\* \* \*

A farcical exhibition of Kantönlicheist recently occupied the time of the Federal Tribunal. A burgher of a Berne commune residing permanently in Geneva had occasion to consult the local clinic on account of a troublesome foot; for necessitous people the treatment is gratis. The Geneva medical board asserted that as his was a Bernese foot the Bundesstadt was the only place where relief could be obtained but generously offered to pay the railway fare to Berne. In due course the foot was received and restored to its normal functions and the canton Berne rendered the usual doctor's bill to Geneva for the expenses incurred in the treatment. As payment of the charges was declined an inter-cantonal dispute ensued and after

impartial deliberations our highest court has given judgment in favour of Berne.

\* \* \*

Fifth column activities seem to receive compassionate consideration in some parts of our country. In Basle a first lieutenant named Leo Schmitt was communicating regularly to some agent on the other side of the Rhine, the names of local residents known to him as "anti-nazi." The intrigue was discovered through a mis-directed letter which was returned to the post-office. The informer appeared before the Basle courts on a charge of espionage and was sentenced to three months imprisonment; our quisling, however, felt no scruples over his unpatriotic action and appealed against the sentence to higher courts and the Federal Tribunal has now disposed of the matter by simply confirming this placid retribution.

### OUR ARMY AND ITS COMMANDERS.

General: HENRI GUIBAN.

Chief of Staff: JAKOB HUBER.

First Army Corps: RENZO LARDELLI.  
1st Division: GUSTAVE COMBE.  
2nd Division: JULES BOREL.  
3rd Division: RENÉ VON GRAFFENRIED.

Second Army Corps: FRIEDRICH PRISL.  
4th Division: WALTER SCHERZ.  
5th Division: EUGEN BIRCHER.  
9th Division: EDOUARD TISSOT.

Third Army Corps: RUDOLF MIESCHER.  
6th Division: HERBERT CONSTAM.  
7th Division: HERMANN FLÜCKIGER.  
8th Division: ALFRED GÜBELI.

Flying Corps: HANS BANDI.

### BELIEVE IN NUMBERS — SUPERSTITION.

At the present very dangerous times our greatest worry does not consist in the possibility that Switzerland may have too few soldiers or a less thorough instruction than her potential enemies, but whether the determined mind of each individual man is fully aware of what constitutes the value of freedom.

(Carl Hilty, 1833-1909.)

You want to know what's going in Switzerland?

Read the

### SCHWEIZERISCHE MONATSHEFTE (SWISS MONTHLY)

A periodical, informing along strictly national and neutral lines in things political, economical and cultural. Up-to-date and highly interesting. Carefully selected contributors. (Printed by Gebr. Leemann A.G., Zurich, Stockerstrasse 64.) Price Fr. 17.80 yearly.

### SWISS RADIO.

Le 8 mai 1940.

Monsieur le Rédacteur,

J'ai l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance que, suivant une communication du Service de la Radiodiffusion Suisse, un bulletin d'information, contenant un résumé des événements les plus importants de Suisse et de l'étranger, est radiodiffusé chaque soir depuis le 15 avril dernier. Puisqu'il a été constaté que, durant l'été, la réception n'est bonne que pendant la nuit, ces émissions auront lieu comme suit :

*Derniers bulletins d'information.*

Beromünster

longueur d'ondes 539,6 m — 667 kc. 22.00 H.E.C.

Sottens

longueur d'ondes 443,1 m — 677 kc. 22.20 H.E.C.

Monte Ceneri

longueur d'ondes 257,1 m — 1167 kc. 21.50 H.E.C.

Le Service de la Radiodiffusion Suisse espère, de cette manière, tenir ses auditeurs au courant des événements quotidiens, tels qu'ils sont jugés dans notre pays, et je vous serais obligé de rendre les lecteurs de votre Journal attentifs à cette innovation. En outre, je vous prie de me faire connaître votre opinion au sujet de l'accueil réservé à ces émissions et de bien vouloir m'envoyer une communication, en deux exemplaires, de toute suggestion relative à une amélioration éventuelle de celles-ci.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Rédacteur, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

W. THURNHEER,

*Ministre de Suisse.*

### VOLLMACHTENREGIME.

Von Dr. HERMANN BÜCHLI.

Durch Vollmachtenbeschluss hat der Bundesrat am 30. April die bekannte grosse *Finanzvorlage* in Kraft gesetzt, soweit sie der *Deckung der Mobilisationskosten* gilt. Das ist das eigenartige Ende der Finanzberatungen, denen eine ausserordentliche Februarsession und die Frühjahrstagung der eidgenössischen Räte gewidmet waren. Kaum war die Vorlage im heftigen parlamentarischen Kampf fertig geworden und für die bereits auf den 2. Juni geplante Volksabstimmung bereit, so wurde sie durch diesen Vollmachtenbeschluss auf die Seite gelegt. Es ist sehr fraglich, ob sie in der durchberatenen Form überhaupt je zur Volksabstimmung gelangt. Denn bis zu jenem Zeitpunkt dürften wesentlich veränderte Verhältnisse, politische wie namentlich wirtschaftlich-finanzielle vorliegen, und schon der Vollmachtenbeschluss des Bundesrates schafft sie. Wie kam das alles?

Die Beschaffung der Kriegsfinanzen durch einen bundsrätlichen Beschluss ist eine *Notmassnahme*. Sie drängte sich in dem Moment auf, wo die Ereignisse in Skandinavien den Ernst der internationalen Lage und noch besonders die prekäre Situation der Neutralen enthüllten. Man konnte schon im Januar, als der Bundesrat mit seinem Finanzprogramm vor die