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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Minister of State, Mr. Richard Law, has conveyed the following message to the Swiss Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Pilet-Golaz:—

“ Now that the repatriation of our sick and wounded prisoners and of the protected personnel who came with them from Germany has been completed, I wish, on behalf of the Secretary of State, to express to you and, through you, to the Swiss representatives and their staffs, to whose unwearied efforts we owe so much, very sincere and grateful thanks. Without Swiss help, an operation which has been welcomed here and throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations with feelings of deep satisfaction and relief would have been impossible.”

The following are the results of the elections for our second chamber, the National Council, which took place throughout the country on October 30th-31st: Socialists 56 seats (11 gains), Radicals 47 (2 losses), Catholic-Conservatives 43, Farmers and Bourgeois 22, Liberals 8, Democrats 5 (one loss), Landesring 6 (four losses), Unattached 7. The new Council has been elected on the basis of the last census and will comprise 194 councillors, i.e., an increase of seven. Generally speaking our people have once more demonstrated their firm belief in the vitality of democracy and their determination to strengthen the forces ensuring social security. The outstanding fact is the ascendancy of the Socialists who are now the strongest party in the Chamber and will presumably insist on their old claim of having a direct representation in the Federal Council. In this connection the latest news item that Federal Councillor Ernest Wetter has resigned for reasons of health is interesting. Little surprise will be caused by the reduction of nearly half of the Landesring bloc as the questionable ramifications of their leader, Duttweiler, have been followed by the defection of numerous adherents notably Prof. William Rappard of Geneva who declined to stand again.

The 1944 budget of the Confederation is estimated to show a deficit of 123 million francs, roughly a quar-

ter of the total expenditure has risen enormously during war years and is 31 million more than the present period and 49 million more compared with 1942. Receipts are expected to be about 5 million up but the amount of 389 million francs compared with 1942 shows an additional income of about 50 million francs. The large adverse balance is of course mainly due to the steady drop in customs revenue which is the backbone of our fiscus; compared with the last pre-war year 1939 the loss to-day is about 37 million francs. Higher administration costs, the cost of living bonus to Federal employees, etc., are having a large share in the increased expenditure. The above are the items in the ordinary accounts but the extra-ordinary budget (mobilisation or national defence) impose an additional heavy burden of 1340 million francs which will have to be added to the 5,642 millions francs expended under this heading to the end of the present year; thus about seven thousand million francs will be the total cost of maintaining our neutrality unless the war takes a completely unexpected turn. The special taxes so far imposed (Deckungsmassnahmen) secure an annual income of 335 million francs which it is hoped will amortise the national defence expenditure in 25 years; so far, by the end of this year, 1,600 million francs will have been collected.

The Federal Council ratified the economic agreement with Hungary, signed in Budapest on 20th October. Concerning exchange of goods, both parties have agreed to continue the practice established as a result of past negotiations. As regards goods to be supplied to Switzerland, the following will be imported: grain, vegetables, seeds, cattle for slaughter, timber, silk remnants, willows for basket-making, various chemical

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les Membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLEE MENSUELLE

aura lieu mardi le 7 décembre au Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, le dîner commencera à 6h. précise.

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Divers.

Une conférence nous sera donnée par Mons. André Dupart, Directeur de Cabinet de Mons. André Philip, qui parlera " Sur quelques idées pour la reconstruction de la France."

Les Membres sont priés de s'inscrire par écrit pas plus tard que le 4 décembre auprès de Mons. P. A. Moehr, Hon. Sec., Imperial House, Kingsway, W.C.2. Prière de s'abstenir de téléphoner.

LE COMITE.