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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

During the 39th congress of the Swiss people abroad, which was presided over by Mr. G. Schuerch, of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr. Ludwig von Moos, Chief of the Police and Justice Department, delivered a long speech. Among the subjects raised, he pointed out that to confer the right of vote in federal matters on Swiss people living abroad would necessitate a revision of the Constitution, which the Federal Council is not yet ready to accept. He also expressed the opinion that the view adopted by the federal chambers regarding the sale of land to Swiss people abroad was a right one. However, the congress itself approved a resolution, presented by a delegation of Swiss in Italy, asking to put an end to the discrimination which classes compatriots abroad as foreigners when it comes to the buying of land in Switzerland.

The military budget of the Confederation has risen incredibly during the last twenty-five years. In 1937 it was 168 million francs. This year Switzerland's military expenditure is expected to be well over a billion francs.

The Federal Council has appointed Mr. Charles-Albert Dubois, born in Vevey in 1910, as Swiss Ambassador to Colombia. Mr. Dubois formerly held diplomatic posts in Tokyo, Berne, Ottawa, Cairo and Karachi.

A new Swiss ship named the "Rhône" has been built by a Polish company, Stocznia Gdanska in Danzig. The "Rhône", ordered by the Bernina Society and registered at 10,320 tons, is equipped with a 7,800 h.p. Sulzer-Winterthur engine. Her crew of forty men will be mainly of Swiss nationality.

Cantonal

A large dahlia and garden show is now taking place daily, including Sundays, in Unterenstringen, Zurich. The display will continue until the middle of October. More than 50,000 dahlia plants in full bloom are in the exhibit, as well as an extensive display of cacti and house-plants.

The Sumatra rhinoceros nicknamed "Bertina", which was brought to the Basle Zoo in 1959, has died from a kidney inflammation.

Archæologists in the canton of Valais have discovered a family tomb that is estimated to be over 4,000 years old. The Bronze Age tomb, which has paintings decorating its walls, was found near Sion and represents a most important discovery.

Mrs. Rosette Lanz-Jordi, the oldest inhabitant of Huttwil, who is still very bright and very alive intellectually, has celebrated her 102nd anniversary.

Zug, both the town and the canton, now has 240 foreign firms within its borders. With these latest statistics, inland Zug now outranks Basle. Its central location, ideal transport facilities and attractive tax rates bring Zug into the top five Swiss cantons favoured by foreign concerns — after Geneva, Zurich, Graubunden and Glarus, in that order.

Foot-and-mouth disease has broken out in the canton of Graubunden. In Val de Campo, near Poschiavo, 28 head of cattle had to be destroyed. They had been brought to summer pasture at Puschlav from Sirnach.

Minister Carl Jacob Burckhardt, who has held many diplomatic posts and high positions with the International Red Cross, and is the author of several historical books, has just celebrated his 70th anniversary in Berne.

The former restaurant and pension, "La Vaudoise", on Montreux's lake-shore, near the Casino, is undergoing a most exotic transformation, from a typical little Swiss inn into a colonnaded and turreted Moorish restaurant, with couscous and spit-roasted lamb the specialities of the house.

Thun, in the canton of Berne, which had only 8,500 inhabitants fifty years ago, now has a population of 30,000.

Police are trying to identify the body of a middle-aged woman recently recovered from the Lake of Geneva. A fisherman spotted the body floating near Geneva's Botanic Gardens.

One hundred and fifty years ago, on 3rd August 1811, the Jungfrau was climbed for the first time by the Meyer brothers, of Aarau, who were accompanied by two deer hunters from Loetschental. This sensational climb started the vogue of alpinism which now exists in our country.

Zurich voters approved of six proposals in recent elections that will involve the cash expenditure of nearly 27 million francs. The most closely contested proposal concerned an addition to the Zurich girls' high school, the Töchterschule. The addition will provide twenty-four classrooms and two gymnasiums on the Hohe Promenade adjacent to the present school building. The estimated cost is 11,280,000 francs. The proposal was passed by a vote of 25,957 to 18,819. Other proposals, concerned with the construction of a home for the aged, a first-aid station and an emergency hospital to accommodate 190 patients, in Anstalt Balgrist, were passed with substantially larger majorities.

The well-known painter and writer, of Geneva, Mr. François Fosca, is 80 years of age.

An epidemic of blindness among Alpine chamois has broken out again, this time in the Eastern cantons of Glarus and Graubunden. The epidemic, which was thought to have been stopped, is spreading anew among the herds of the Alpstein mountain chain.

A classical art will be revived in the great Limmat city with the opening of an academy of ballet in Zurich.

Switzerland's long-awaited new pediatric clinic has just opened its doors on the Boulevard de la Cluse in Geneva. The clinic, with a capacity of 200 beds, is among the most modern children's hospitals in Europe.

(Most of the above items were received from the A.T.S. News Service.)