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LAST MINUTE INFORMATION

The diplomatic differences between Great Britain and France have been closely watched in Switzerland. It was stated in Berne that Switzerland had not been informed. It confirms the Swiss opinion that a gradual approach to integration problems is better than sensational proposals which, as in the latest case, will delay integration even longer.

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The Swiss Government has lifted the ban on hoarding silver, though exporting and melting down silver coins are still prohibited.

* * *

On Monday, 3rd March, the Swiss Parliament began their spring session. A report will be published later; we just mention that the National Council has accepted the proposals of the Commission that all foreign banks have to be granted permission. The ruling is a temporary one until the new banking law has been drafted and accepted — it is in the interest of the depositor. During the past year, one new foreign bank a month was set up in Switzerland.

* * *

The three Arab countries — Lebanon, Jordan and Syria — have rejected the protest note from Switzerland regarding the recent attack on an Israeli plane at Kloten Airport. It has not yet been established if the Israeli Rachamin who shot one of the attackers, acted in self-defence or "officially". He has admitted that he was a security agent.

Dr. August Lindt, Commissioner-General for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Nigeria, will not be returning to his post as Ambassador in Moscow. He had been given leave of absence when the Red Cross first required his services last summer, but the Federal Council have now decided to appoint a successor as Ambassador to Russia.

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The Government have given permission to the Buehrle Company involved in illegal arms exports, to resume foreign arms deliveries, but with certain new conditions imposed. A Federal Magistrate is carrying out investigations, and a People's Initiative is being launched to prohibit all arms exports.

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Another investigation is being carried out by a Fribourg Judge into the disturbance caused by Jura separatists in Parliament on 11th December.

* * *

The catastrophe at the Hottingen telephone Exchange when 30,000 subscribers were cut off because a caretaker had set fire to the exchange, did not only cause damage of several million francs (for which subscribers are unable to sue the PTT), but indescribable confusion and hardship — especially where doctors and hospitals were concerned. The Swiss Army communications services were used to help, and emergency lines were installed. Additional police were on duty, and radio communications were used for hospitals. 250 workmen, technicians and engineers, as well as volunteers were set to work immediately.

(A.T.S. and "Weekly Tribune".)



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