ladies and gentlemen,

To this evening inaugurate the "News of the Day" series, which I have the pleasure of giving you and in which we will treat, just as the case may be, the latest news, international questions, or questions of our policy, from the point of view of general interest, I would like to say a few words on the situation in which my country has to face at the present moment in face of the general political unrest in Europe and the world in general.

It has often happened to me, during the last few days, that foreignness—our foreign friends who otherwise sympathize fully with us, are astonished because of our apparent lack of readiness in pursuance with which we seemingly face international events.

They remark, for example, "You are the oldest democracy of the world; you have given an example how a constitution could be formed, better yours, "

And yet, when the great democracies united their efforts to maintain peace, you kept yourself away, in a suspicious isolation, comfortably sheltered by your mountains.

Then again, when Great Britain and France recently declared their interest in your independence, and even guaranteed it, you didn't even react.

You seem to be completely satisfied to just register that declaration as if it were a matter of course.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to assure that any reaction at all would be in disagreement with our international
Status, the part we must play in international politics, and the our idea of neutrality.

As a matter of fact, and this is unfortunately not generally known enough, our neutrality was not forced upon us, we have decided to declare to be neutral, because we believe in the mission which nature herself, natural and otherwise, has given us, namely to guard the Alpine passes, and to keep open in spite of all surrounding conflicts the essential communications between the neighbouring peoples, to carry out a task worthy of civilization, in order to preserve under all circumstances what humanity may happen in the centre of Europe, a territory protected from the ravages of war.

This neutrality is not therefore purely an advantage or a pledge of peace, it is something which we have pledged to defend under all circumstances and against all comers, with all our might.

In the course of the last ten years, we have spent two millionths of Swiss francs, about half a million dollars for national armament, this for a country with 4 million inhabitants, a very great sacrifice.

Without doubt, we are not strong enough to resist with our own means, the attack of an enormous foreign army.

But our arms are modern arms, combined with the bravery of our troops, will enable us to repel the first attack and to avert the help which those, who hope to resist us against whom the attack is most meant, will not refuse us.
Switzerland is readily prepared to defend herself and to carry all risks which might otherwise result therefrom her resistance.

Our neighbours are aware of this, and in 1815, they solemnly recognized our neutrality as being in the general interests of Europe and its value in the general interests of Europe.

Were the Alpine passes not neutral territory, they would, without doubt, be a source of constant trouble.

Should our people stand with their arms at rest, or "sous les cieux" as they say in the army, these passes would resemble a heap of inflammable material, which would be in danger of being set on fire by every stray spark.

This is a main reason why our neighbours respect our neutrality, but and do not cherish. Running any risks in a vain attempt to violate it.

The interests of Europe in general are thus so evident, that we have, as there is no necessity for any further guarantees, of facts of non-aggression. In addition, our idea of neutrality forbids us to enter any agreement with any collective agreements that might be faced to contrary to our idea of the Coalition. By regarding that is only the three better.

That is why we respect the three causes. Europe and peace better.

Moreover, as our Ministre for foreign affairs recently remarked, "we must not abuse the new ideologies and the life so infinitely complex of human society, which obeys in no such a measure the theoretical postulates"
I think it is now quite clear that we do not want to have taken from us certain modern privileges, and that we distrust certain formulas which fill the world with unrest. We do not pretend that their own attitude is wise, because it is realistic, or just because it forces us to look things in the face, but it enables us to work for, and to maintain peace according to our capability, and in the terms which we have set ourselves.