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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Federal Councillor Jean Bourgnknecht, head of the Department of Finance and Customs, has officially tendered his resignation on account of ill health. The Federal Council greatly regrets losing such a valuable member and has expressed its best wishes for the improvement of the Councillor's health.

Jean Bourgnknecht was born in 1902, a citizen of Fribourg. He went to school there and at Altdorf and studied Law in Fribourg, Vienna and Berne. He practised as a lawyer for a number of years and lectured at the university of Fribourg. He entered politics comparatively late. In 1950 he was elected "Stadtammann" of Fribourg and was very successful in looking after the town's finances. From 1951 to 1955 he was a member of the National Council and in 1956 he became Councillor of State.

At the memorable meeting of the Federal Assembly on 17th December 1959, when four new Federal Councillors had to be elected, Dr. J. Bourgnknecht was chosen as one of them, and in 1962 he was elected Vice-President. In an appreciation on the Swiss radio former Federal Councillor Dr. Ph. Etter said that 2½ years of fruitful work as Federal Councillor, were hardly enough to leave a substantial impression on the country, but Dr. Bourgnknecht had shown himself as a statesman of great calibre in the deliberations concerning the weighty problems which our country has been facing. His promising career as Federal Councillor has been cut short suddenly and tragically by a collapse in health a few months ago. The whole country is grateful to Dr. Bourgnknecht for his services and extends sincere wishes for a recovery.

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Federal Councillor Chaudet, President of the Confederation, has sent a telegram of good wishes to Trinidad and Tobago on the occasion of their proclamation of independence. This is equal to recognition.

The Federal Council has appointed the Swiss Ambassador to Mexico and Minister to the Dominican Republic Monsieur Fernand Bernoulli to act as Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Haiti. He will continue to reside in Mexico.

The Federal Council has appointed Colonel of Division Fred Kuenzy as the new head of the "Kriegstechnische Abteilung" (KTA). He was born in 1904, studied science at the University of Basle and spent several years abroad. Another appointment the Federal Council made is that of a new leader of the Swiss Delegation in the Neutral Commission in Korea, Counsellor of Legation Marcel Luy, who was at the Embassy in London a few years ago.

Two new agreements have been ratified, one between Belgium and Switzerland concerning legal decisions and sentences; the other between France and Switzerland regarding the position of Swiss users of French ground under the law of family allowances.

The agreement between Denmark and Switzerland relating to double taxation has been extended to the Faroe Islands.

A new agreement on trade and customs, as well as on technical and economic assistance to Senegal has been arrived at.

The annual meeting of Swiss Ambassadors and Ministers abroad took place in Berne at the beginning of the month. Some thirty diplomats had come to Switzerland for the conference. The Federal Political Department arranged a reception at which many higher civil servants and members of the press took part. The traditional outing into the Canton of the President of the Confederation took the party into Vaud this year, Monsieur Chaudet being a Vaudois.

The Federal Council together with the Geneva authorities gave a reception to the delegates of the Laos Conference in Geneva. Apart from the fourteen heads of delegations, representatives of UN and leaders of permanent missions were present. The Confederation was represented by Federal Councillor Wahlen.

The Federal authorities have ordered that Georges Bidault and Jacques Soustelle are not to be allowed immigration into Switzerland.

*(News items supplied by
Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)*

ESTABLISHING A BRITISH CENTRE AT THE "HOME" AT DÜRRENAESCH, SWITZERLAND

Aims

To set up in the "Home" a British centre which will be open all the year round, where conferences, summer schools, seminars, language courses, etc., may be held and where students studying in Switzerland can be accommodated.

The emphasis on the activities at the "Centre" will be educational but will also include recreational and sporting activities.

The "Centre" being within easy reach of several universities could also be used for accommodation by students.

In the "Home" at present there prevails the atmosphere of the different sections of Switzerland, French and German, and it is the intention of the committee of the "Home" to introduce an "English" atmosphere so as to maintain the firm and friendly bonds that exist between the two countries.

The committee feels that though these bonds are strong it desires to make it stronger by enlarging the amount of contacts. It feels that there are still many ordinary folk who are not aware of these ties or do not know how to make or renew contacts with the Swiss folk and, to develop this interest the "Centre" in the "Home" could be used.

To facilitate the exchange of students and other educational personnel, the "Home" is prepared to accept such persons, who, instead of being accommodated in a family prefer to live in a community.

The "Home" is ideally situated in quiet, beautiful surroundings and easy reach of both summer and winter resorts and therefore an ideal place to hold conferences, summer schools and other vacation courses.

(Anyone interested should apply to the "Home", Dürrenesch, Aargau, Switzerland.)