

Business in parliament

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amongst them two dozen highly qualified scientists work there. The official inauguration took place in May.

ART

Several art exhibitions have been arranged in Zurich and Winterthur, amongst them far eastern artists as well as Swiss painters and sculptors. 250 drawings by Hodler were exhibited at the Helmhaus, there was a puppet show with special plays, and an exhibition of the culture and art of the Indians of North America was shown at the Feldstrasse School.

Basle composer Rudolf Kelterborn's first opera, "The Liberation of Thebes", had its first performance in Zurich at the end of June, and Armin Schibler's symphonic oratorio, "Media in Vita", on poems by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, also had its premiere in Zurich.

After Friedrich Duerrenmatt's great success of "The Physicists" in Zurich last year, he produced a comedy in March, "Herkules und der Stall des Augias", based on a play for radio which he wrote in 1954. Whilst it was a success, "The Times" in its extensive review on 1st April considered that "despite the alterations and additions, the stage machinery, the ingenious production and the excellent acting, this comedy still displays the characteristics of a play for broadcasting". "The Times" also commented very favourably on the International June Festival, especially on "Tristan and Isolde" at the Stadttheater and Ostrovsky's comedy at the Schauspielhaus, "Eine Dummheit macht auch der Gescheiteste".

The Municipal Theatre went through a crisis last year, but the electorate accepted the increased subsidy proposals in November (Zurich youth had demonstrated in favour by a torch procession a few days earlier), and after Dr. Herbert Graf had resigned last year, a new director has now been engaged in the person of Dr. Hermann Juch. With Dr. Graf, the Chairman of the board, the well-known publisher, Dr. Martin Hürlimann, also resigned. There is also a new musical director, Christian Voechting from Basle. Rudolf Kempe is the new chief of the Thonhalle Orchestra and conducted a concert in the June Festival on the 25th of last month. Thus, the difficulties seem to have been overcome — last summer there was a conflict in the Municipal Theatre Orchestra when its members refused to play under Otto Klemperer — and Zurich music and theatre life is again taking its place amongst the foremost centres of art.

NEWS AT RANDOM

In 1962 health in the Canton of Zurich was satisfactory. Poliomyelitis has disappeared except for one patient who had not been immunised, and for the first time no Zurich child was treated for tuberculosis at Davos. The 26 deaths due to influenza were mostly people over 80 years old. Cancer, though, was on the increase, and nearly a million francs was asked for apparatus for radiotherapy and nuclear medicine. Special research is being made into the effects of motoring fumes, oil-fired heating deposits and noise. The salt now contains fluor as well as iodine to improve teeth.

A large chemical firm offers its employees half a litre of free milk during the daily break and nearly all the staff have taken advantage — over 30,000 bottles per annum.

Zurich's oldest transport firm has donated a small railway to the Zoo from which animals can be seen in comfort and which can also be used to transport animals and material. Several generous gifts have enabled the

purchase of new animals. Thus, there are now two gorillas at the Zoo and the jaguar couple which has been on loan has now been acquired.

1962 has been a catastrophic year for the municipal forests of Zurich. Not since 1885 has the weather caused such damage and there will be problems for many years to come.

(Based on reports received by courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

BUSINESS IN PARLIAMENT

The three-week session of the Swiss Parliament opened on the Tuesday after Whitsun. The first business on the agenda was the international monetary agreement, which Switzerland has decided to join. The accounts of the Confederation for 1962 were passed, and those of the Swiss Federal Railways. Finance was the main subject at the beginning of the second week, when the proposed increase in salaries and pensions of the Federal Councillors were accepted with only the few Communist members against. At the same time an increase of daily allowance for the M.P.s was asked for. When a rise was asked for last time the Referendum was used and the proposal was defeated. New suggestions will now be worked out. The important business of the week was the new Professional Training Bill, which according to the experts is an excellent piece of legislation. More will be said about it when it has been completely dealt with.

On the Thursday of the second week the Federal Assembly took place, when the National Council and the Council of States met jointly. There was only one item, five applications for pardon. These concerned fines and convictions on account of customs and tax frauds. The same afternoon the various political parties went on their traditional summer outings.

The third and last week began with a debate on the labour bill. The annual report of the Federal Council, which comprises several hundred pages, caused lively discussions. It would be impossible to mention all the individual comments and suggestions. But mention should be made that National Councillor Allemann referred to the Swiss abroad who had suffered through the war. National Councillor Schmid-Rudin, who has always been a staunch friend of the Swiss abroad, regretted that not more compatriots outside Switzerland had joined the Solidarity Fund. He expressed that more should be done so that the Swiss abroad could take a more active part in the happenings at home. At the same time he recommended to the Federal Council that they participate in the proposed Swiss Centre in London.

The afternoon session dealt with the typhoid epidemic of Zermatt and a number of smaller matters. The report of the Federal Council was accepted, again with the Communists opposing on account of the Military Department.

The Session came to a close on 20th June after the last few meetings had dealt with private bills, varying from the price of land to the question of how participation at the poll could be stimulated.

(Based on reports in "Schweizerisches Kaufmännisches Zentralblatt" and A.T.S.)

ERRATUM

In the issue of 14th June the article "Nuclear Weapons — the Swiss Electorate decides" contained an inaccuracy. It stated that there was a reactor research station at Wuerenlingen near Winterthur. This should have been "Wuerenlingen near Siggental, near Brugg, Canton of Aargau." We apologize for the mistake.