

Parliamentary autumn session

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1964)**

Heft 1466

PDF erstellt am: **17.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696562>

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and Federal Councillor Schaffner commented on the undoubted success of the big national show. The Vaudois President expressed thanks to the Federal Council for the honour of having been host to the EXPO whose "spirit must go on and carry fruit". Federal Councillor Schaffner described it as a national event which would go down into the history of the country and become a spiritual heritage for future generations.

The ceremony ended with the "Cantique Suisse", and to the sound of the EXPO church bells, the crowd dispersed in a nostalgic mood to spend a last evening on the site of the 1964 National Exhibition.

The EXPO 64 is over. Born under difficulties, beset with teething troubles, fighting through a laborious though promising adolescence, it matured late, and its full greatness and brilliance were fully acknowledged only in its later life. People, patterns, principles — the EXPO had to be literally conquered by the visitor — but how worthwhile it was!

(Figures from A.T.S.)

PARLIAMENTARY AUTUMN SESSION

In our issue of 9th October, we reported on the main issue the Swiss Parliament had to face in the first week of the session, the "Mirage" affair. More will be published in the next number. In our last issue we informed readers of the latest progress regarding the Swiss Centre in London. Parliament was asked to grant the Swiss National Tourist Office an extraordinary subsidy of 3.8 million francs to extend their New York and London agencies. In addition, an interest-free loan of 5.3 million francs was proposed. It was accepted unanimously.

In his opening address, the President of the National Council referred to the disgraceful happenings at Les Rangiers, and later the report on economic measures *vis-à-vis* foreign countries was received from the Federal Council.

The second week began with a motion that the Confederation should no longer have to give consent for the establishment of bishoprics on Swiss territory. Business of great importance for the mountain farmers concerned increased subsidies for cattle holders. It will cost the Confederation between 36 and 41 million francs.

The next big issue was housing, which is very much tied up with the measures taken to stop the excessive economic boom in order to curb inflation. Several speakers stressed the importance that the construction of reasonably priced flats and houses must on no account be stopped. The present regulations come to a close at the end of the year, and a new proposal for increased social housing facilities was accepted by Parliament.

The debate on the Bill for the continuation of limited measures for price control took up three meetings. Price control covers rents, milk and dairy products and other goods vital for use inside Switzerland. Twenty speakers took part in the debate in which the crucial point was a possible easing of rent control. The electorate will have to vote on the new building proposals, and in the meantime Parliament has agreed to the proposed price control measures. In the debate on measures to curb the increased cost of living, both Federal Councillor Schaffner as Minister for Economic Affairs, and Federal Councillor Bonvin as Minister of Finance, made a speech of 75 minutes' duration each. The gist of their statements is that the increase has slowed down but is still going on, the danger of inflation is not yet over, discussions are still going on with the interested parties regarding lowering of customs tariffs, increase of savings, salaries and wages structure. A decrease in the demand for building land and houses has been registered.

The last week of the autumn session began with the final item still to be dealt with from the business report by the Federal Council for 1963. It concerns the former leader of the section "Heer und Haus", Dr. Vögeli who had been removed from his post. The National Council, seeing that the Federal Council has no "Verwaltungsgerichtsbarkeit", now had to consider an individual case. The punitive character of Dr. Vögeli's dismissal was removed, and thus the Federal Council's report for 1963 could be put aside.

The EXPO finances were discussed, and the loan of 18 million francs which the Confederation made in March, has now been changed into an interest-free advance. In July another such advance was made. Parliament has agreed without opposition — nobody is under the illusion that these sums will ever flow back into the federal treasury!

The revision of the law regarding the provisioning of the country with cereals was accepted after prolonged deliberations. Many were the motions, postulates and interpellations which were received and dealt with. They covered questions of defence, sport, supervision of banks, building of old age homes and flats, family allowances in agriculture, refuse disposal, tax defraudation, water, roads and railways, Nazi criminals and Egyptian arms dealers, compulsory paying-off of mortgages, ownership of flats and extension of aid in catastrophes.

In the final voting the following proposals were dismissed: Continued limited measures of price control (119:10), Increase of subsidies to cattle keepers in the mountain districts (148:0), Revision of military exception duty to include "Landsturmalter" (137:0).

The winter session will begin on 20th September.

(Based on news from A.T.S. and "Schweizerisches Kaufmännisches Zentralblatt".)

SPORT

A mural at the National Exhibition in Lausanne reminded the visitor that one Swiss in ten is a marksman, one in sixteen a gymnast; one in thirty plays football, and one in fifty-four is a mountaineer. Much later come tennis and hockey, as well as other sports. It is interesting, therefore, that the medals brought back by the Swiss from Tokyo are in sports which don't figure in the table, equestrianism, rowing and judo. Sixty-nine strong the Swiss team went to Tokyo to compete in twenty-three events, and although there were some disappointments, particularly in gymnastics, shooting and athletics, one gold, two silver and a bronze medal are a very handsome return.

In the Grand Prix de Dressage, Sergeant-Major Henri Chammartin, riding a 13-year-old bay gelding "Woermann", born in Sweden, had, as "The Times" put it, "so smooth a test that they seemed to be floating from movement to movement. The pirouettes, piaffes and the passage of this pair were magnificent and would be hard to beat". The silver medal for the team was presented to Miss Marianne Gossweiler on "Stephan", Fw Henri Chammartin on "Woermann" and Wm Gustav Fischer on "Wald".

The second silver medal surprisingly went to the 25-year-old Eric Haenni from Delsberg in the very sport which originated in Japan and which figured for the first time at an Olympiad: judo (light weight).

The Zurich policeman Göpf Kottmann received the first medal for Switzerland in the Tokyo Games on his thirty-second birthday, a bronze for rowing (skiff).