

# Dominus providebit

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### DOMINUS PROVIDEBIT

The Lord provides. Every man, woman and child in Switzerland should know these two words. But how many do, although they could see them many times a day. How? These two words work in secret as it were, yet every Swiss bank handles them a thousand times a day. Look at a Swiss five-franc silver piece, no, not where you might expect to find them, neither on the face nor on the reverse side, but along the edge in slightly raised letters, so tiny that one can only just decipher them. By accident almost was I made aware of them when I read an article by Hermann Wahlen in the monthly magazine of the Swiss Country Women's Association. And curiously enough, a few days later in the "Echo", monthly review of the Swiss abroad, Oskar Reck, President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, mentioned them too in an article on political matters. And now, every time I handle a *Fünfliber*, I feel for the words.

*Dominus providebit.* The fishermen on our picture patiently wait for their catch, sure in the knowledge that their endurance will sooner or later be rewarded. Few of them are conscious of why the fish may bite at all. We don't readily admit that our earthly goods are given us by the grace of God. If the fish bite, it is no doubt the excellence of the fly, the clever choice of the water, the super quality of the line, the expert handling of the rod. We consider our clever hands and astute brain responsible for our success and forget that they, too, are ours by the grace of God.

We complain and criticize and blame others if things go badly and overlook that we may have made the wrong use of what we have been endowed with.

On Sunday we celebrate the Federal Day of Thanksgiving, Atonement and Prayer. *Dominus providebit* — yes, we have much to be thankful for, not least for the strength the Lord provides to cope with adversity. Let us pray for faith and clarity of mind to realise our responsibilities, for the more we are provided with, the greater is our personal responsibility.

The recent events in another small country have made us realise once more how rich we are in having freedom. The Lord provided it, but it put an obligation on us. Heinz Kreis in the "Basler Nachrichten" said that the episode of long speeches, of patriotic exhortations, of pride and conceit has come to an end. We have been sobered up and realise that not all is well in the model democracy called Switzerland. Not all is well with our Swiss communities abroad; some of the young *Auslandschweizer* who spoke up at Schaffhausen put their fingers on more than one spot. Nor is all well in our own personal lives.

*Dominus providebit* — that is what we thank for, and that we may be granted guidance, humility and wisdom to see what this implies is what we pray for on Sunday.

MM

### FEDERAL MOSAIC

At the end of last year, the Federal Council decided to redistribute the Federal Departments as from 1st July. Accordingly, Federal Councillor Bonvin changed over from Finance and Customs to Communications and Energy production, and Federal Councillor Gnaegi moved from the latter to the Military Department, whereas the former head of the *Militärdepartement*, Federal Councillor Celio, took over Finance and Customs. This is the first time since 1920 that the Federal Council has made a redistribution of Departments without being forced by personal events.

The draft for a new Constitutional Article regarding radio and television has been passed on to the Cantonal Governments, the political Parties and a large number of organisations interested in radio and TV. This has been done according to the right of consultation, the *Vernehmlassungsverfahren*. The new Article would put radio and television into the hands of the Confederation who would appoint various institutions to run the services according to the principles of freedom of communication and with due regard to the spiritual and cultural needs of the Cantons, the various regions and languages.

Among international agreements Switzerland has signed in recent months, are the international wheat and the coffee agreement, the UNO agreement regarding the safety and getting back of astronauts and reclaiming of spacecraft. Regarding the international atomic proliferation treaty, the Federal Council has asked for more details, re-affirming its conviction that the use of nuclear arms should be limited. With Brazil and Sweden, agreements regarding the peaceful use of atomic energy have been signed, and the agreement with Germany facilitating air rescue and repatriation of aircraft has been ratified.

Double taxation agreements with South Africa and Ireland have been made or already ratified, and one on legal matters with Liechtenstein. With Ecuador, agreement has been reached regarding protection of investments and compensation. Social security has been covered in agreements with Luxembourg, Spain and Austria, and negotiations are going on in Moscow concerning co-operation in the watch industry.

In recent months quite a few important foreign statesmen have paid a visit to Switzerland. After the Tunisian Head of State Bourguiba and the President of the Finnish Assembly Dr. Virolainen, the Austrian Minister of Defence Dr. G. Prader paid an official visit to Berne, followed by the Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. K. Waldheim. In July, U Thant, United Nations Organisation's Secretary-General went to Berne.

In the first six months of the year, federal revenue reached 2,961 million francs or 198m. more than in the same period last year. This is much as expected. All revenue from taxes has gone up, except the withholding tax (*Verrechnungssteuer*). Revenue from customs duties has also gone up.

Switzerland's contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO) is about 2 million francs this year. In addition, Switzerland is contributing in the ten-year programme to eliminate smallpox and has donated a voluntary consignment of frozen vaccine to the value of Fr.100,000.—. On the other hand, Switzerland has been allocated scholarships by WHO.

Switzerland recognises 132 countries at the moment, of which 116 have Swiss Embassies and/or Consulates.

The "Mirage" orders will finally cost 1.2 milliard francs for 58 aircraft only.

Compared with 1966, which was the year with the highest figures ever recorded, guarantees against export risks