

A Swiss medallist yesterday and today

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were less heavy in 1967. Last year, 3,076 (1966: 3,303) applications were granted. The value of the new guarantees provided by the Confederation totalled 1,070 (1966: 1,096.7) million. After deducting cancellations, the guarantees remaining amounted to 844.4 (1966: 909.8) million. At the end of the year, the Confederation's commitments totalled 2,084 (1966: 1,831) million francs. Deducting cancellations again, fees brought in 10.83 (1966: 13) million. Altogether, 485,423 francs (1966: 878,332) was paid out to cover twelve cases of loss occurring in different countries. Industry repaid a total of Fr.498,069 (1966: 295,924) on previous loans by the Confederation. The Confederation also received a total of 4.3 million, representing refunds and the payment of interest by various countries, mainly in Latin America. Receipts from insurance having exceeded expenditure, a sum of 14.9 million in round figures was paid into the reserve fund, which now totals 58.5 million francs in round figures. Since the creation of the guarantee fund against export risks in 1934, the losses made good by the Swiss Confederation amount, after deduction of all repayments, to some 22 million francs, which represents about 1.15% of the business transacted. (O.S.E.C.)

Following a request by the "Wirtschaftsrevue", the Swiss public have awarded marks to the seven members of the Government. 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = mediocre and 4 = bad. Results have shown that Federal Councillor Celio got by far the best marks, average 1.36. Next came Federal Councillor Gnaegi with 2.30, and Home Secretary Tschudi with 2.47. In fourth place was Federal President Spuehler with 2.60, followed by Federal Councillor von Moos with 2.80. Federal Councillor Schaffner managed a 2.88 only, and last came the previous Finance Minister Bonvin with 3.0.

(By courtesy of the Agence
Télégraphique Suisse.)

ANGLO-SWISS NEWS ITEMS

An historic collection of Meissen porcelain was sold in Geneva on 7th June, fetching £114,625. The auction was the first Christie's held in Switzerland since they opened a branch in Geneva last year. The members of the Swiss Antique Dealers had been asked to boycott the sale, but it was ignored.

The present Rector of Basle University, Prof. Dr. Oscar Cullmann (Church History and New Testament), has been appointed Corresponding Member of the British Academy. He had already been awarded the Burkitt Medal.

The Foseco Company Ltd., London, producers of special chemicals required by smelters, steelworkers and building industry, as well as for oil refineries and chemical works, took up a loan of 15 million francs in Switzerland (5½%) for financing their expansion in and out of Europe.

Great Britain is represented at the International Exhibition of Laboratory, Chemical Engineering, Measurement and Automation Techniques in Chemistry, known as ILMAC, which is held in Basle from 9th to 14th September.

We reported on 9th August that a group of Swiss Parliamentarians visited Great Britain at the invitation of the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Chancellor. We have since learnt that the group also met the Lord Mayor and the Dean of Westminster, and that the group spent the weekend in the country with various M.P.s. The leader of the delegation National Councillor Dr. H. Konzett was presented to the Queen at a Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party.

[A.T.S.]

SWISS NATIONAL DAY AT DUERRENAESCH AND IN SWEDEN

A good hundred Swiss took part in the 1st August outing to Central Switzerland, organised by the Home for Swiss Abroad at Duerrennaesch. They came from many parts of the world, and the celebration showed clearly that the Swiss abroad have still a great attachment to a patriotic celebration of the first of August. A former head of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. René Bovey, addressed the party in Lucerne, and he compared the problems of today with the uneasiness felt at various times in the history of Switzerland.

By boat and coach, the participants of the outing visited historic sites, and on the Ruetli Meadow, cradle of Switzerland, the National Anthem was sung in all four national languages.

The Swiss abroad, said Dr. E. Wiget, a Toggenburger resident in London, will adhere to a celebration of the Swiss National Day, even if inside Switzerland, such a celebration were to be dropped altogether. For them it is symbolic and for many the only tie which still connects them with their home country.

The Auslandschweizer-Home Celebration of the 1968 National Day ended with a folkloristic evening — a happy event from beginning to end.

* * *

A celebration of an unusual kind was arranged by the Swiss Club of Norrköping and Stockholm. "Swiss Weekend" it was called, and a large number of Swiss took part in this event at the Kolmarden Animal Park. It was opened by the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. R. Faessler, and the items on the programme included a shooting contest and balloon flight, rural music from Switzerland, Swiss food. Entertainment and dancing, as well as a patriotic ceremony formed part of the first day. On Sunday, there was an Ecumenical open-air Service and in the afternoon a football match between two Swiss teams from Stockholm and Norrköping. The Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. M. Ney, was in Sweden for the event.

A SWISS MEDALLIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY

If one particular firm can be said to have spread the fame of the small town of Le Locle far beyond the borders of Switzerland, that firm is Huguenin Médailleurs S.A. who celebrate their hundredth anniversary this year. The firm's founders, who had specialised in watch case decoration (niello process) soon saw the future metal stamping offered and begun turning out commemorative medals. Notwithstanding two world wars and resulting crises, the firm never stopped making medals. Honorific decorations, collectors' coins and insignia of every description were progressively added to the manufacturing programme. The Swiss Confederation awarding no military or civil decorations, medals soon became a highly appreciated export. In fact, ever since Georges Huguenin returned from Serbia in 1910 with an order for one-and-a-half million military medals, few major events have occurred without an original and artistically superior Huguenin design. What better proof that in the age of computers and nucleonics, the combination of superb craftsmanship, tradition and artistic creativity can survive? Of course, this unique production makes use of the most modern blanking and stamping processes such as ultrasonics and electro-erosion.

[O.S.E.C.]