

Swiss news

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): - **(1969)**

Heft 1581

PDF erstellt am: **27.06.2024**

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

Ein Dienst der *ETH-Bibliothek*
ETH Zürich, Rämistrasse 101, 8092 Zürich, Schweiz, www.library.ethz.ch

<http://www.e-periodica.ch>

to be economic confusion in the country.

The Swiss Government is then fully aware of the real problem, which cannot be solved by adopting the Schwarzenbach initiative. Nothing concrete has yet been proposed, but it seems highly probable that the general economic climate of the Western World, forcing every firm to rationalize and rely on machines, will urge factories to automate and do away with imported labour as efficiently as any Federal decree.

Apart from being an "easy way out" of the necessity of investing in modern and sophisticated equipment, the overabundance of man-power has some other economic disadvantages. It means a strong load on the balance of payments. Some fear that the traditional "Swiss quality" has suffered and will suffer even more in future. In the event of a war and a general repatriation, the country's economy would be paralysed.

But the problems which foreign workers bring with them are primarily social. One finds among the Swiss working-class the same kind of reactions against Italians as those one might hear in Shepherd's Bush against Jamaicans. "They breed like rabbits, they never wash, they are lazy, they are retarded, they have disgusting eating habits . . ." This fortunately indicates that what one calls "racism" in this country is not provoked by a difference in pigmentation but just by cultural and social variances.

It is inevitable that such numbers of foreign and unknown people, called "guest workers" in German-speaking Switzerland, should create some difficulties. It is a happy circumstance that this alien population is not exclusively Italian and that innumerable Spaniards, Jugoslavs and Turks have followed. Whatever anti-foreign resentment the Swiss might entertain, it can no longer be so sharply focused on Italians as it was a few years ago.

Entire communities have seen their population double and their members found themselves alien in their own parish in the space of a few years. What used to be quiet country Sunday-mornings are disturbed by exuberant meridionals making noise on the village square. The local cinema-performance is often troubled by unruly lobbies of Italians. Life has changed.

Immigrant children have meant a great strain on the schools. The welfare of the imported population has required an extra effort in the way of social help on the part of the authorities. Although foreign workers are rather poorly lodged, they often occupy cheap flats to the detriment of the Swiss, who find more difficulties in finding accommodation. The foreigner then tends to become the one "who drives the Swiss out of his patrimony" and transforms a quiet and clean Swiss village into something noisy and drab that comes from Sicily.

There is really nothing that can prevent a latent xenophobia from persisting, humans being what they are. The foreign workers who have not obtained a resident's permit are not allowed to bring their families with them. This is an understandable provision, because if every seasonal worker were allowed to bring his wife and his numerous offspring, there would be three or four million foreigners permanently in the country. Hundreds of thousands of men must come into Switzerland with their wives left at home and naturally lead frustrated lives conducive to a bad reputation among Swiss girls, and especially their parents, — one more source of resentment against the "guest worker".

Few people oppose the Schwarzenbach initiative on humanitarian grounds. They oppose it only because it does not make sense economically. In England, Mr. Enoch Powell finds a great deal of support or opposition purely based on emotional grounds. The problem of immigration is inevitably an emotional question to the people who have to live in close contact with the immigrants. In Switzerland, little emotional uproar has been caused by the initiative because it also meant massive "repatriation" of the "honest immigrants" and Mr. Schwarzenbach has not been the target of any widespread vituperation. His moral reputation is relatively intact and he has not been accused of rousing the base feelings of the masses with the same intensity as has Mr. Powell.

Idealistically, there is no insuperable obstacle in absorbing the odd 900 thousand foreigners civically as well as economically if they so wished. The children of workers from Anatolia, Calabria and Andalusia would do their military service, become officers in the army eventually, national councillors. Switzerland would become a fraternal melting-pot.

Unfortunately, Switzerland is not America. Poles, Germans and Irishmen came into the land of America, where nothing existed, and built the American civilisation. Today, these Poles are still Poles, these Germans still Germans and these Irish still Irish and at the same time they are American. The foreign workers do not come to make Switzerland — she has existed for centuries — they come to serve her for a fair remuneration. Whatever they can do, they cannot change a Swiss way of life which is firmly established. In such great numbers, they will never really become part of Switzerland as it is now. The Swiss could never admit such a thing because they know that they could not stay one unified country while assimilating such vast numbers of foreigners; they would have to change themselves and redefine what is "Swiss".

One may even venture to say that it would be harder for Switzerland to absorb a sizeable outside population

than for Great Britain, proportions being maintained. Becoming a Swiss is more difficult than becoming a Briton, it is not only administratively more tricky, but it involves so many more duties! The Swiss take nationality rather more seriously than the British and this aspect of their mentality is one more reason why Switzerland is humanly and psychologically not able to transform the alien thousands to whom she supplies daily bread and butter into full citizens. In these circumstances, the social climate brought about by immigration is bound to remain unhealthy and it is only wise that, in the long run, the number of aliens in Switzerland be reduced.

However desirable this may be, it must not be rushed. If the electorate had to decide on the Schwarzenbach initiative today, it is not impossible that, giving way to feelings, it would accept it. A further education of the public might be necessary for the initiative to be rejected outright when the Federal vote takes place next year so that the Government may be given more time to take the correct measures.

(PMB)

SWISS NEWS

A STATEMENT BY THE CHURCHES OF SWITZERLAND ON THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN WORKERS

The impressive number of foreign workers in Switzerland puts the churches in front of new responsibilities. For this reason, the Rev. Lavanchy, president of the Council of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, Bishop Vonderach, president of the Swiss Episcopal Conference and Bishop Kury, of the Christian Catholic Church, have launched a common appeal to the churches of the country.

"The rapid increase in foreign population of the last 20 years has become for the Swiss people and its leaders a problem of primordial importance. The churches can and must bring an essential contribution to the solution of this problem by informing public opinion, by improving the human relations between ourselves and the foreigners who live with us and by helping to solve the practical problems borne of the upheavals in the structures of our society.

This is an ecumenical task and an alien presence should not be a pretext for confessional controversy. On the local plane, efforts will have to be redoubled in multiplying contacts between families. We should have all the more understanding for the foreign workers in realising that economic circumstances have forced them to leave their countries and their families.



TRAVELLERS NEED RANKIN KUHN

FOR EVERY TRAVELLER NEEDS A GOOD TRAVEL AGENT

WE CAN ARRANGE

- * Tickets & Reservations For Travel By Air, Sea, Rail or Coach.
- * Hotel & Theatre Bookings World Wide.
- * Travel Insurance, Foreign Currency, Passports & Visas.
- * Car Hire, Self Drive or Chauffeur Driven.

WE SPECIALISE IN

- * Industrial & Business House Travel.
- * Overseas Holidays.
- * Conferences, Conventions, Courses & Seminars.
- * Company Travel Incentives.
- * Freight Arrangements World Wide By RANKIN KUHN (FREIGHT) LTD.

**YOU MATTER TO RANKIN KUHN, AND SO DOES
YOUR BUSINESS, THAT'S WHY WE WILL GO TO
GREAT LENGTHS TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.**

If we can help you personally or your company by providing a "top-class" travel agency service, allow one of our executives to contact you, by completing this coupon.

I am interested in your comprehensive travel service.

NAME.....

NAME OF COMPANY.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

CODE S01.

HEAD OFFICE:

RANKIN, KUHN & CO LTD

19 Queen Street, Mayfair, London W1X 8AL. Tel: 01-499 4070.

For a number of reasons, they do not have a living link with their own churches. If they find with us, in our churches, a kind welcome, they may learn to experience a Christian community in an evangelical spirit. The first thing necessary to bring them efficient pastoral support is to give them a chance of attending divine service in their own language. For this, it is necessary to supply them with a clergy speaking in their language and understanding them.

Foreign workers contribute to the actual economic standard of Switzerland and therefore to the well-being of each citizen. They have a right to our gratitude and our respect. This is not a case for the Swiss of benefitting unscrupulously from foreigners because they find themselves in need and are not always officially protected.

As Christians, we must fight with utmost energy against the mentality which appreciates foreign workers only in virtue of the economic use they are to us.

We must never expel foreigners without sufficient reasons and without hesitating when we no longer have need of them or when we find them inconvenient. The churches should see to it that the faithful of foreign origin do not remain outside members, deprived of their rights. The legal situation of foreign workers in our church parishes must be re-examined and in many cases revised".

(A.T.S.)

NEW WINTER PROMOTION OF SWISS GATEWAYS

A wide range of free attractions are offered to air travellers by the Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne tourist offices under a new scheme publicised by them and Swissair to promote Switzerland as a destination, stop-over or gateway to other European countries.

Under the arrangements, available from November 1, 1969 to April 1, 1970, passengers living outside Switzerland and travelling on individual air tickets to Geneva or Zurich from outside Europe, or continuing from Geneva or Zurich to a point outside Europe, can obtain exchange vouchers entitling them to free facilities including a £1 meal, a day's self-drive car hire, secretarial or escort services, admission to a night club, opera house or concert hall, sightseeing tours, local transport, a souvenir gift parcel, and many others.

Passengers entitled to the above facilities can obtain the vouchers from their travel agent or Swissair offices at time of booking their flight. On arrival in Zurich or Geneva the passenger should present this voucher, together with his air ticket, to the tourist office representative at the airport (in Zurich at the AVIS car hire desk, in Geneva at the information desk) or to the tourist office in town. In exchange he will be given a coupon "cheque book" covering the individual free items. The "cheque book" will be valid for the duration of the visitor's stay, but not longer than one week.

As an incentive, travel agents issuing the exchange vouchers are offered by the tourist offices one free night's hotel accommodation with breakfast in the respective city for every three "cheque books" collected by passengers. This facility includes the travel agent's spouse and children.

It is expected that the scheme will operate for several winter seasons. Travel agents can therefore combine their free hotel entitlement for two winter seasons and use it up to June 30, 1971.

(SWISSAIR)

THE "FLORIDA" SCANDAL

The Swiss distant-early-warning radar system has been baptised the "Florida" system. "Florida" will one day be a sharp, watchful eye searching every horizon of the country and thwarting all attempts to surprise the Swiss off their guard. The system is delivered by the Americans and has already produced considerable controversy. One of the reasons the "Mirages" had to be modified was precisely to adapt the planes' electronics to this centralised radar watchdog.

On September 28th, a secret meeting between the Government and Army officials was held to discuss "Florida", whose cost had soared and whose efficiency had become problematical. Mr. Hubacher a Socialist National Councilor from Basle, raised the problem of "Florida's" deficiencies in the National Council and published

THESE VEHICLES



TRAVEL TWICE MONTHLY TO AND FROM SWITZERLAND AND ENGLAND

Providing DOOR TO DOOR SERVICES with vans specially equipped to carry

- Household Removals.
- Exhibition Goods.
- Works of Art.
- Machinery.

For full information contact

In Switzerland	In England
KEHRLI + OELER, Nachf. A. Oeler, 3001 Berne, Bubenberplatz 9.	NEALE & WILKINSON LTD., 1 and 2 Rangoon Street, London, E.C.3.
Tel. 031 22 00 22.	Tel. 01-480 6351, ext. 51 or 56.

INSURANCE AND MORTGAGE SERVICES

THE ANGLO-SWISS INSURANCE & REINSURANCE AGENCY LTD.

in conjunction with

WHITTON & CO. (Insurance Brokers) LTD.

offer members of the Swiss Community their services

All Insurance and Mortgage enquiries will be carefully considered and advice given without any obligation.

Please ring 01-242 8554 (5 lines)

or write to us at

**ELIZABETH HOUSE, FULWOOD PLACE
HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1**

for

Mortgages, Life Assurance, Motor, all forms of Commercial and Professional Insurances as well as Household, Houseowners and Personal Insurances.

his intervention in the paper of which he is chief editor, the "Abend Zeitung" of Basle.

Some days later he contacted an engineer who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel but with no direct military responsibilities to have a look at the minutes of the September meeting and give him his qualified opinion. Mr. Hubacher refused to indicate the name of the person who had given him the minutes. By asking the opinion of an engineer who was known for his opposition to the "Florida" system, he was only increasing his ammunition and supplying himself with more arguments for use in the controversy. As Mr. Hubacher's secretary was handing the documents to the lieutenant-colonel on the platform of Berne railway station, the officer was promptly arrested by civilian police who had been watching him.

It turned out that his conversation with Mr. Hubacher had been tapped by the police. The lieutenant-colonel was charged with receiving secret military documents and thus breaching the 106th article of the military penal code. Mr. Hubacher is theoretically covered by parliamentary immunity, but he has been summoned for publishing his intervention on "Florida". Both the telephone-tapping and impingement of the freedom of the press produced some vehement parliamentary complaints.

A week later, Federal Councillor Gnägi held a press conference that clarified the situation. He revealed that the person responsible for sending the secret minutes of the September 1968 meeting to Mr. Hubacher had been discovered

and had immediately recognized his guilt. The man is an electronics technician, currently employed at Buhrle, Oerlikon, but formerly working at the air force base of Dübendorf. His action appears to have been inspired by revengeful feelings towards his superiors. It is not yet known how he managed to get hold of a report of the meeting, which had been held at Dübendorf, and whether he had benefitted from any complicities. He is guilty of espionage under three district articles of the military and penal code.

The position of National Councillor Hubacher was rather more delicate. The question was whether he could be considered as benefitting from parliamentary immunity when making an intervention in Parliament about "Florida" based on the secret facts held in his possession.

Mr. Gnägi shrugged at the outcry about the telephone-tapping, the matter being serious enough to justify such means. But he has had to acknowledge the deliberate lack of information published on the "Florida" system and its shortcomings.

THE PEOPLE OF BERNE AND ZURICH REFUSE TO SPEND MONEY ON THE WINTER OLYMPICS OF 1976

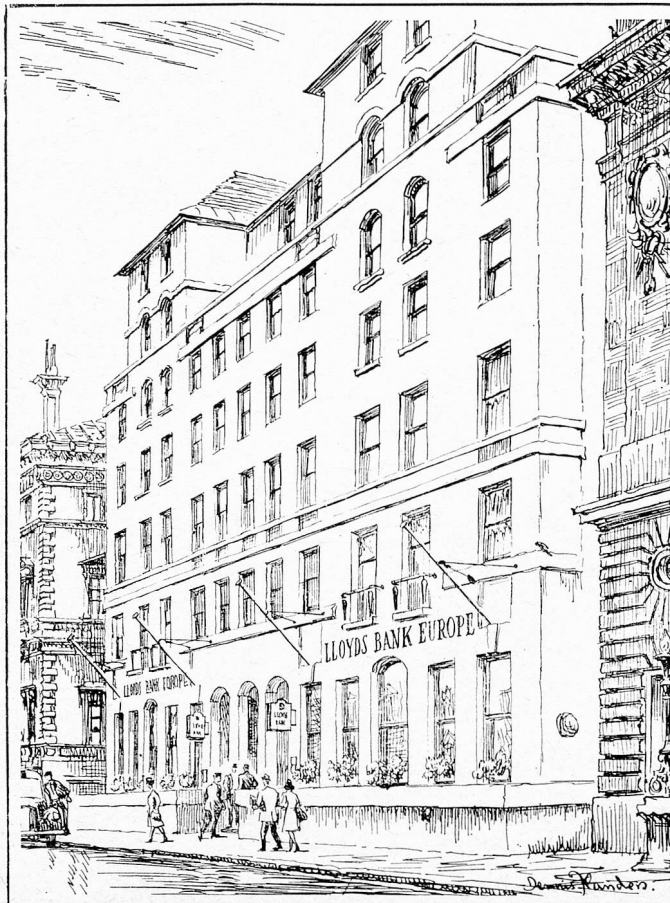
The electorate of Berne has refused to allocate 20 million francs for the preparation of the Winter Olympics of 1976 for which Interlaken was a candidate. 35% of the voting population took part in the vote; there were 46,601 "yes"

and 49,644 "no" votes, a "no" majority of 3,043. The Jurassians voted against the Olympics with an overwhelming majority and supplied a surplus of 3,926 negative votes, which means that the old Canton was in favour of the Games and that the negative result of the vote was due to Jurassian rejection.

Although the city of Berne voted against the Olympics, the Oberland voted very strongly in their favour. The districts most prominent in their support were Interlaken, Frutigen, Low and High Simmental and some others with lesser financial interest in the Games, such as Aarberg, Cerlier and Fraubrunnen.

The Oberland was very disappointed with the outcome of the vote. The Olympics would have been a great spur to its tourist industry. The anti-Bernese bias of the Jura was well expressed in the vote. According to the "Rassemblement Jurassien", the Bernese candidature to the Olympics had been rejected thanks to the bulk of Jurassian votes designed to express French-speaking solidarity by their backing of the candidature of Sion.

The question of Zurich (and Einsiedeln's) candidature has at last been answered by the people of Zurich in a local poll in which women were allowed to vote for the first time. The will of the people on this matter was expressed by an overwhelming "no" to the presence of the Winter Olympics of 1976 on the soil of Zurich and the expense implied. 40,912 voters were in favour of the Games, 145,347 against. Participation to the vote was of 69.2%.



LLOYDS BANK EUROPE
with Branches in Geneva and Zurich
offers a full banking service
at 100 Pall Mall, London, S.W.1.

Similar facilities are available
throughout England and Wales
at any of the 2100 Branches of
LLOYDS BANK LIMITED



THE SWISS FORUM IN LONDON

The Federal Council has decided to submit to the Parliament's approbation the grant of a single contribution and a maximum loan of 1.1 million francs each for the foundation of a "Forum of Switzerland" in London. This Federal Credit would be granted on the condition that what remains necessary to finance the project will be forthcoming from private sources. The "Forum of Switzerland" would be created in the already existing "Swiss Centre" and would serve for cultural, social and economical events in the heart of the British capital. (A.T.S.)

THE EQUILIBRIUM OF MILK

The Federal Council has decided to relax the policy of taxing milk producers on their output and fixing quotas for milk production. This policy had been found unavoidable because Switzerland was producing too much milk and its transformation into marketable dairy products was a loss-making operation relying heavily on Federal support.

Milk producers were asked to finance part of the loss of the dairy industry by paying a tax of 5 centimes per litre of milk produced. This tax is now decreased to 3 centimes, the situation in the milk and dairy product industry having somewhat improved.

The policy of reducing the number of dairy cows and encouraging peasants to fatten livestock for meat still stands and is implemented by selective subventions. In the present scheme, the Confederation will be encouraging home milk production with a yearly injection of 160 million francs. Producers will be contributing 27.5 million francs. In spite of this, milk and butter are still remarkably expensive (A.T.S.)

GENEVA CLAIMS A SEAT AT THE FEDERAL COURT

The Federal Court in Lausanne has 26 members; 31, if the five judges of the Federal Insurance Tribunal in Lucerne are included. None of these 31 judges come from Geneva, an anomalous situation. Neuchatel is represented by two members, so is Vaud. One of the judges from Vaud, Mr. Panchaud, has recently announced his resignation. A successor will have to be designated before the end of the year and it is desirable that the Geneva candidate, M. Robert Patry, who is an eminent jurist and professor in law, be designated. This would allow the Federal Court to remain a homogenous representation of the country's judiciary. The problem is similar to that of keeping the Federal Council's composition fairly representative of the French and German-speaking elements. M. Patry is a Genevese liberal and therefore suited to replace the retiring judge, who is a member of the liberal party of Vaud. Vaud has already proposed its own

candidate in replacement of Mr. Panchaud. The final choice will be made by Mr. Gaston Clottu, head of the liberal group in the Federal chambers.

(*Journal de Genève*)

17 MILLION FRANCS FOR THE SITE OF THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AT LAUSANNE

The State Council of Vaud has asked for a credit of 17 million francs for the acquisition of 190 hectares of ground at Dorigny for the future campus of Lausanne University. The site is shared by the Commune of Ecublens, the Commune of Chavannes-près-Renens and the city of Lausanne. The town's share, worth 15 million francs, has by far the greatest value. 6.5 million francs had been voted last year to buy a first portion of the site.

THE LITERATURE PRIZE OF BERNE GIVEN TO FRIEDERICH DURRENMATT

"Prizes always come when one has no more need of them". With this remark, Friederich Durrenmatt received the "Literature Prize of Canton Berne", awarded to him for the ensemble of his work. Surprising everyone, the author of "The Visit of the Old Lady" told the numerous audience present at the prize-giving ceremony that he would give away his prize-money (15,000 francs) to three worthy friends of his: Sergius Golowin, Bernese writer; Paul Ignaz Vogel, editor of the review "Neutralität" and Arthur Villard of Biel, delegate to the Great Council, well known for his resistance to war and considered by Durrenmatt as an "authentic revolutionary". He said that he was proud of receiving the prize. He praised the efforts of the German-speaking cantons, who contributed 30 million francs a year to the life of Swiss theatre.

ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS IN SCHAFFHAUSEN AND BERNE

The director of the Schaffhausen museum of archeology, Dr. W. Guyan has excavated an 8th century village at Berslingen, north of Schaffhausen. He has recently discovered the church of the locality, which was covered up by a metre of earth. It was large enough to contain 1,200 people. Dr. Guyan is now trying to retrace the contour of the altar and hopes to find the remains of the founder on the mortar ground of the church. By next spring, the site will be covered up by a national highway out of Schaffhausen actually under construction. A graveyard with 150 remains in which no arms were to be found, has been unearthed.

Workers embanking the river Thielle opposite to the castle of the same name fell on a neolithic settlement. It is the sixth time that works of the

correction of the waters from the Jura have lead to a similar find. The settlement is about four thousand years old. Two dwellings and their hearths have so far been excavated. The excavations are to continue. A number of students are now combing the site and have already found a number of flint blades and axe handles. (A.T.S.)

150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF GENERAL HERZOG

The first general of our Federal history was born 150 years ago. Colonel Herzog was elected head of the Army's artillery in 1860. On 16th July, 1870, the war raging between Prussia and France was getting dangerously close to the Swiss border and 37,000 men were called to arms to defend the country's neutrality. Three days later, the Federal Council elected Colonel Herzog as leader of this force and promoted him to the rank of General. The hostilities in France drifted north towards Lorraine and the Ardennes and the army was partially demobilised. But in January, 1871 the fighting approached the Swiss border once again and the Federal Council ordered a new mobilisation. On the 18th of the same month, General Herzog was ordered to resume his command. The French army of the East, under the command of General Bourbaki (who suicided following the disaster that befell his troops) was forced to retreat into Switzerland. General Herzog received the 90,000 famished and frost-bitten troops at les Verrières, on the Neuchatel frontier and set down the conditions under which the French could be interned in Switzerland.

The 1870-71 mobilisation was an opportunity for General Herzog of realising the shortcomings of the Army. They were mainly due to cantonal bad will and individualism. He produced a report which was the foundation of the new military organisation of 1874.

ZURICH DOES NOT WANT AN OVERSIZE UNIVERSITY

The State Council (or executive) of Zurich has estimated that the University should never be allowed to cater for more than 10,000 students, even after the present extensions have been completed. The present building was erected in 1914 and designed for 2,500 students. According to the 1964 estimate, there were 7,000 students registered at the University. Today, that figure must be passed by at least a thousand.

For these reasons, members of the Canton's Government are particularly interested in the idea of having higher education establishments at Lucerne, St. Gall and Aarau. One question which has been raised is to know whether Zurich University could not be relieved if all law studies were undertaken at the school of economic and social studies at St. Gall.

THE SALES OF CYCLAMATES PROVISIONALLY HALTED

Following the American findings that high doses of cyclamates produced cancer in animals and the subsequent interruption of sales of this artificial sweetener in the United States, the co-operative stores of Switzerland have stopped selling "Assugrine" and "Sucramid", pending an official declaration by the Federal service for public health. But "Ciba" and "Sandoz", who produce "Assugrine" and market it in common through "Hermes Edulcorants S.A." have stopped producing the product of their own accord. (A.T.S.)

THE OLDEST ACTIVE GUIDE OF SWITZERLAND CELEBRATES HIS 80th BIRTHDAY

The oldest active Swiss mountain guide, Mr. Ignace Zurbriggen of Saas-Fee has celebrated his 80th birthday. He made his first 4000 m ascension at 17. He was the keeper of the "Britannia" Alpine Hut for 21 years. Today, he still regularly climbs the 4000's around Saas-Fee.

A NATIONAL COUNCILLOR EXPELLED FROM PORTUGAL

A member of the Swiss Socialist Party, National Councillor Gilbert Baechtold, was politely told to return to his plane and fly back home on his arrival in Lisbon. He was to have joined a team of seven socialists from Italy, Ireland, Great Britain and Sweden to observe the Portuguese elections. The other men were almost simultaneously arrested and later sent back to their respective countries. The seven men had been sent by the Internationale Socialiste to see how, for the first time in modern Portuguese history, the voice of the opposition (in particular the voice of the Socialists and Christian Democrats) could be expressed. But the right-wing press of the Union Nationale had launched a heated campaign against foreign observers, accused of interfering with national affairs. (A.T.S.)

PATOIS STILL SPOKEN IN WESTERN SWITZERLAND

At the end of the last century, practically the whole of French-speaking Switzerland except Geneva had a local patois besides French. Today, patois has vanished in the plains and in the large cities but is still alive in the Valais Alps, in the Fribourg highlands, in Northern Jura and in some outer reaches of the Canton of Vaud. It is estimated that some hundred thousand *romands* still speak patois. Patois disappeared from Neuchatel and the south of the Jura at the turn of the century. There is a distinction between the patois from Fribourg, Valais, Vaud and Neuchatel, of Franco-Provencal origin and the Jurassian Patois, with strong Celtic and Germanic accents. The

former group of dialects come from the so-called *langue d'oc* and resemble the dialects of Savoy and Burgundy. Jurassian dialect is a descendent of the *langue d'oïl* and resembles ancient French, and the dialects of Normandy, Wallonia and Franche-Comté.

Some of the dialects of Switzerland have a literature. The Valais' is mainly spoken, but Fribourg and the Jura have produced abundant literature in patois. It is currently being resurrected, particularly in the villages of Northern Jura, where popular theatre in patois is in great vogue. Scholars find these ancient languages extremely rich in vocabulary and of great interest to the study of French. As in other countries, the preponderance of French in Western Switzerland was acquired through the translation of the Bible in that language. (A.T.S.)

EIGHT MILLION FOR THE CORRECTION OF THE RHONE

The Government of Valais has asked the Great Council of the Canton to allocate an important credit in view of correcting the course of the Rhone between Brigue and Loeche-Ville. The necessary works are estimated at eight million francs. Besides the State of Valais, the Federal Railways, the Lonza chemical company, Alusuisse S.A. and about fifteen communes will be asked to contribute to the expense. The communes include those of Brigue, Naters, Glis, Mund, Gamsen, Lalden, Viege, Ausserberg, Rarogne, Hohen, Steg, Gampel, Tourtemagne and Loeche. (A.T.S.)

WHY THE SWISS FRANC WILL NOT BE REVALUED

Position of the Swiss Association of Bankers

The Swiss franc has been left untroubled by the recent monetary crisis. Following the Federal law on money, the franc is worth 0.20322 grams of fine gold and the National Bank must cover at least 40% of the value of the notes in circulation with gold. This coverage has been about 100% for many years.

The stability of the franc is illustrated by the fact that since its creation in 1850 it has been devalued only once, on 26th September 1936, following the devaluations which were performed outside.

Backed by confidence and self-discipline, our economic structure makes a change of parity appear neither necessary nor desirable. The persisting high conjuncture of our economy, reflected by a 2.35 billion francs surplus in the balance of payments and an increase of 7.6% in our national product, which attains today 74.04 billion francs, is not without producing some apprehension.

But we must wait for the recent dampening measures such as the limita-

tion of loans, the increase in bankrate and savings in public expenses before we draw any new conclusions.

Although the margin in which the value of the franc may fluctuate without intervention is 3.5% (1.5% for other European currencies) many now talk of a possible revaluation of the Swiss franc to follow that of the German Mark because they fear a prolonged overheating of our economy, a rise in exports of goods and services and a reduction of imports.

We may not forget however that a higher rate of exchange for the franc would have negative repercussions on capital movements with the outside which are so important to our economy. Our economic structure may never be staked for a change of parity as long as the threat of imbalance can be avoided by ordinary conjunctural means.

THE 1970 BUDGET

The Federal Council has presented the 1970 Federal Budget. Approximating ten Sw.Fr. to a pound sterling we have a total expenditure of £758 million. In this sum, 180 million go to military defence, 17 to civil defence, 73 million for national motorways, 24 million on other roads, 230 million on help to the cantons, 32 million on science and education, 62 million on agriculture and 35 on social insurance.

The budget this year is well balanced and there is an excedent of approximately 30 million. This is due to the high conjuncture yielding increased receipts. Expenses have increased far more slowly than the national product.

How does the Confederation get its money? 189 million come from taxation of fortunes, 32 million from stamp duties, 230 from custom duties (the most important source of revenue) 210 from purchase tax (above all on petrol, alcohol and tobacco) and 24 million from other taxes.

The budget is well balanced and reflects a sane and expanding economy. Little Helvetia shall not want. . .

SWISS SPECIALITIES

SAUSAGES
CHEESE
CHOCOLATES
HERO CONSERVES
BISCUITS
ROCO CONSERVES

go to

BARTHOLDI'S

4 Charlotte Street, London W1

Telephone: MUS (636) 3762/3

ALSO FIRST CLASS MEAT