

Frist Swiss heart transplant

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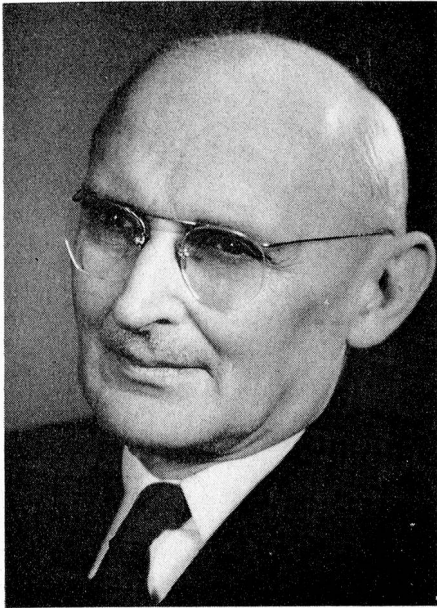
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“PLEGGED TO ONE’S CONSCIENCE”



FRIEDRICH TRAUGOTT
WAHLEN 70

Too late for our last issue, we heard that one of our most distinguished readers, one of our greatest living compatriots, Prof. Dr. F. T. Wahlen, celebrated his 70th birthday on 10th April. Retirement is the last word with which to describe Prof. Wahlen’s present life — he is engaged in so much useful work, not least in preparing the way to the total revision of the Federal Constitution. He is a member of the “Commission for Good Services for the Jura”, which was formed in July 1968, in order to study questions in connection with the Jura problem. He also deals with a number of agrarian problems, and he is leader of a special group of experts set up in 1966 by UN and FAO: “World Nutrition Programme”, which examines the settlement scheme in Lower Egypt.

Friedrich Traugott Wahlen was born at Mirchel (Berne) on 10th April 1899, son of an Emmental country teacher, and a citizen of Trimstein-Rubigen. He studied agronomy at the Federal Institute of Technology in Berne and acquired a Dr. sc. techn. He

went to Canada where he, a very young man indeed, was put in charge of all agricultural research stations. From 1929 to 1943, he was at the head of the Federal Agricultural Research Institute in Zurich-Oerlikon. Dr. Wahlen was on the Council of the Swiss National Exhibition 1939 in Zurich. During the second world war, he was appointed by the Federal Council to look after the country’s food production; he introduced his famous “Plan Wahlen”. From 1943, for six years, he was Professor for Plant Cultivation at the ETH. In 1942, he was elected Councillor of States for the Canton of Zurich (BBG Party), an office he filled for seven years. United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) called Prof. Wahlen to Washington as Director of its Agricultural Section, (in Rome since 1951). He became Deputy-Director General of FAO in 1958.

On 11th December 1958, he was elected onto the Government as successor of Dr. Markus Feldmann who had died suddenly. First, Federal Councillor Wahlen was in charge of Justice and Police and also, temporarily, the Department of Communications. For one year he was in charge of the *Volkswirtschaftsdepartement*, and in 1961, the year in which he was President of the Confederation, he became Switzerland’s Foreign Minister, a position he filled with great distinction for four years. He retired at the end of 1965.

Four universities have honoured him with a doctorate; Goettingen and Laval (Quebec) of agronomy, Zurich of medicine and Basle of Law. In 1934, he was awarded the Marcel-Benoist Prize; he is also a member of the Royal Swedish Academy.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, the “Agrarpolitische Revue” was published as a special issue on the fight against hunger in the world, a problem for whose solution Prof. Wahlen has worked all his life.

To understand the ideas behind the achievements of this statesman and expert on land and the food growing on it, we should read his book “*Dem*

Gewissen verpflichtet” (“Pledged to one’s Conscience”). Through its pages shine the great sagacity, the deep wisdom, the strong faith and exemplary humanity of this outstanding Bernese. We Swiss abroad owe him a particular debt of gratitude, for he has at all times been an outspoken champion and reliable friend.

And it is to him as a man and as a friend that we send our heartfelt wishes for many more years of the best of health and God’s rich blessings.

MM

FIRST SWISS HEART TRANSPLANT

On Monday, 14th April, the first Swiss heart transplant operation took place in Zurich’s Cantonal Hospital. The patient, a 54-year-old businessman was given the heart of a young man of 27 who had been killed in an accident. At a Press Conference given by the President of the Cantonal Government, Dr. med. Urs Buergi, it was stated that the patient had been suffering from coronary trouble for years and had been unable to work for six months. With a life expectancy of a few weeks, the man opted for the transplant, although his chances stood only at about 95:5.

The team of Zurich surgeons and various specialists was led by Dr. Ake Senning, 54, Swedish national, in Zurich since 1961. He and his team of five experts had gained considerable experience in over fifty kidney transplants. One of the doctors, Dr. Messmer, had witnessed sixteen heart-plant operations in Houston, U.S.A. The anaesthetist was a woman, Dr. Ruth Gattiker.

The operation lasted 56 minutes, and the patient was put into a completely sterile room where he was given artificial respiration. No complications had arisen by the time we went to press.

At the Press Conference, it was also explained that the legal question regarding the donor and his relatives was delicate. The heart of the dead man had been removed according to the the cantonal hospital regulations which allowed doctors to use the body of anyone who died in hospital, for autopsy and section in the interest of research.

(A.T.S.)