

Swiss news

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on BBC 2 (Thursday, 19th January) discovered that for himself when he interviewed a good half-dozen women on the beach in Geneva and could not elicit one enthusiastic answer. A Swiss lady of my acquaintance, who watched the programme, was appalled by the lack of ambition of her compatriots. Although this may be arguable, it seems that Swiss women are more subdued and less open to the world at large than their French and English counterparts. For this reason, there's no saying that Swiss women would appreciate being vested with the moral obligation of going to the poll, they may even find it a little embarrassing! The majority of women are not ready in their minds to seize the right of vote, the majority of men are probably not much further ahead. After all, only five cantons have given their women the full right to vote, and, since the referendum must draw a "yes" not only from the majority of the people, but also from the majority of the cantons, the odds are that the time is not yet ripe for such a referendum.

(PMB)

SWISS NEWS

FEDERAL

The CERN

Switzerland has agreed to contribute to the construction of a new, gigantic 300 GeV particle-accelerator to be built either in Belgium, Germany or France. The project will be under way the day these three CERN-countries stop haggling on the location of the new machine. Germany has posed the erection of "super-CERN" (CERN standing for "Centre Européen de Recherches Nucléaires) on her soil as a condition to her financial participation.

(ATS)

Measures taken by the Government to cool down the economy

Switzerland has been having precisely the opposite problems to those of Great Britain in the past years. In Switzerland the economy is overheated, going too well and booming uncomfortably whereas it is depressed in Great Britain. The Federal Council has decided to install an "export deposit" of 5%—the exact opposite of the import deposit which still takes effect here.

The export deposit is in fact the most controversial of 13 foreign-exchange, home-demand-reducing, monetary and banking measures introduced by the Federal Council with the definite intention of putting a brake on the economy. These demands include: reduction of the export-risk guarantee by 5%, reduction of the engagement of federal civil servants, blocking of building licenses, lowering of customs duties and speeded up instalment of the complete Kennedy Round tariff reductions,

increased hire purchase down-payment (from 30% to 35%).

The exporter will now have to surrender to the custom authorities 5% of the purchase value of the exported goods. He will be able to recover this money either entirely or in instalments when the Federal Council decides that the economy allows it. Its main considerations will be the stability of supply and demand at home, and the situation of the export market.

An overheated economy has the advantage of making everybody wealthier and materially contented. In the case of Switzerland, it has a few disadvantages, such as excessive dependence on foreign manpower, speculation on the franc and increased cost of living. The overflow of the alien residents in the country has been partially due to the attraction of Swiss prosperity. The more the economy overheats and gets out of hand, the harder an eventual recession would strike. The present measures are designed as a hedge against the economic uncertainties of the future.

The export industries have naturally grumbled at the deposit scheme. They have considered it as an unfair treatment, but the Federal Council put forward the argument that the industries directed towards the home market had had to suffer more from past economic dampening—measures than the export industries. Moreover, the boom in exports had been partly responsible for the present agitated state of the economy. Some firms have been increasing their turnovers by 30% last year, a figure which has nothing to do with normal expansion.

Some industries, especially the watch industries, are determined to fight against the export deposit. Last year, Swiss exports rose by 15% and imports rose by 17%. The trade balance therefore deteriorated, although this was amply compensated by invisible exports such as tourism, banking, insurance and foreign investments.

(ATS)

Women's right of vote

"Each Swiss who has completed his 20th year and who is not deprived of his active rights of citizenship by the legislation of the canton wherein he has his domicile is entitled to vote" (1) "However, federal legislation may lay down uniform provisions on the exercise of this right" (2). This is how the right of vote of Swiss citizens is constitutionally laid down. In the closing session of last year, the Federal Council proposed the following amendment to the article: "All male and female Swiss have the same rights and duties in respect of federal votes". The second and third paragraphs remain the same as the two paragraphs written out above. The fourth paragraph will read: "The voting procedure in the case of communal and cantonal matters is governed by cantonal law". At the end of last month the Federal Council submitted a message strongly backing its proposal to Parliament. The chambers will now have to agree on the constitutional amendment which, like every alteration of the constitution, will have to be submitted to the people in a referendum. The date of this referendum has not yet been decided. The Government may well decide to wait for the psychologically-ripe moment.

(ATS)

THE FILM FAIR OF SOLOTHURN

During four January days from nine in the morning to midnight, cinema fans from all over the country could see some 56 Swiss films produced during the year. This was the fifth "Swiss Film Exhibition". Not a festival (which involves a prior selection and a final prize) but a showcase of practically all the output of the year. There was no jury, so that everybody could present his production. This inevitably meant that a lot of chaff was mixed with the good grain and that the four days were very trying for the cinema enthusiasts who lasted throughout the presentation.

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Switzerland has no film industry: no studios and no big companies. Nearly all the films which are produced on her soil are the work of loners with 16mm cameras, of amateurs with strong artistic ambitions. For these reasons most of the films presented were "shorts", with a few exceptions. The best film presented at the exhibition, "Charles mort ou vif" by the Genevese Alain Tanner was one of these exceptions. The film had obtained great success at the Cannes and Locarno film festivals but had been rejected by every cinema in Switzerland. It was actually showing very successfully in Paris.

The open discussions at the festival dwelt at length on the problems of film distribution in Switzerland. There could be no lasting Swiss cinema if home theatres were not ready to present films produced by Swiss cineasts. At the moment, cinema owners were very reluctant to show anything made at home.

Among the films shown, those most noted were "Sad-is-fiction", a "platonic portrait" of the Zurich painter Alex Sadkowsky by F. M. Murer (the film was praised by the *Basler Nachrichten* but knocked down by the *Journal de Genève*); "Krawall", a documentary on the fight between youth and police in Zurich in 1968 by Jürg Hassler; "Fano Hill" by Xavier Koller, depicting a game which degenerates into a fight and then in murder; "La Bataillière" by Frédéric Gonzeth, a film on the recalling of the past inspired by the French producer Alain Resnais; "Die Landschaftsgärtner" by Kurt Gloon, a study of the hard existence of the peasants in the higher valleys of Switzerland; "la Pomme", by Michel Sutter, the story of a wife who goes to Geneva for a few days to meet her first lover only to find that he has become another man and that it is no longer possible to re-experience her former feelings.

About two-thirds of the films came from German-speaking Switzerland. Critics were unanimous in discovering an encouraging upsurge in artistic creativity during these four days at Solothurn.

CANTONAL

Rent problems in Lausanne

The tenants living in the buildings of Lausanne erected with public aid had been notified of rent increases of 15% at the turn of the year. The cantonal office for housing has subsequently declared that the house-owners' demand was void because the law exempted flats created with public money from rent increases. Tenants of another kind of tenement (covered by special agreement between the Commune of Lausanne and the house-owners), were officially allowed to reject the increased rent demands of their landlords.

A new recuperation campaign in Zurich

The Swiss spend 10% of their income on clothing. They usually hesitate

to throw their used garments away since these could be profitably used by industry or by less prosperous people. The association of textile industries has launched a campaign to solve this problem. In a first action, teams of boy scouts and Catholic youths have managed to collect 300 tons of used clothes during two afternoons in Zurich last November. Similar actions will continue. 10 centimes will be paid for each kilogramme of old clothing collected. This money will go to the charities and welfare associations involved in the "harvest". The hundreds of tons of clothing thus collected will be sorted out and partially used by various industries, and, if they are still usable, sent off to third world countries. There will thus be a centralised depot of usable clothes for the benefit of those in need in Switzerland and abroad.

ANGLO-SWISS

The 10th Rose of Montreux contest will be held in April. This is a yearly variety-show competition in which the BBC came second last year with "Marty". This year it is entering a special edition of the "Morecambe and Wise Show" (which, needless to say, gives the Corporation pretty good chances). ITV is entering an all-comedy programme for the first time and has chosen "The Benny Hill Show" by Thames Television.

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After a number of hotel registers had been examined in the Valais, it was discovered that Winston Churchill had stayed in the Canton on more than one occasion during his youth. The illustrious statesman had even accomplished some difficult ascents, some of which were above 4,000 metres. All doubts on this score were dispelled when a proof of Churchill's alpine exploits was found in the records of a mountain guide, the late John Aufdenblatten from Zermatt, which mentions a 4,500-metre climb to the summit of Mount Rosa in 1893 and holds Churchill's signature. The future statesman was only 19 at the time.

(ATS)

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We learnt from the "Palette" section of the *Basler Nachrichten* that 200,000 people disappeared every year in Great Britain. Please draw the necessary personal conclusions. . . .

RECENT DEATHS

Bernard Barbey, 69, in a car accident in Paris. He was a well-known literary figure and has lived in Paris since 1923. His works include "Le coeur gros", "La maison d'illusion" and "Chevaux abandonnés sur le champ de bataille", a novel which earned him the literary prize of the City of Paris in 1951.

During the war he was stationed in the General Staff, first working under the direct orders of Lieutenant-Colonel Masson, then succeeding to the future divisionary Colonel Gonard as head of General Guisan's personal staff. He re-

lated his friendship with Guisan and his war-time experiences in a diary published under the title of "P.C. du Général".

Carl Kling-Bowald, 71, in Basle. Son of the owner of the first photography-shop of Basle, Carl King was well known for his portrait and theatre photography.

Ferdinand Scherrer, 70, former director of the primary and secondary school of Basle. A well-known local personality of Basle.

Hans Kneubühler, 76, former director of the *Kaufm. Berufsschule* in Thun. He had been the head teacher of that school uninterruptedly from 1920 to 1965 and had been a prominent member of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

René Ruchti, 73, former manager of watch factories in La Chaux de Fonds and of the balance-wheel factories of La Sagne. He was a well-known personality of the Neuchâtel Jura and was involved in the promotion of sports, being a founder-member of the "Club 44".

Edouard Lagnaz, 79, at Prilly. He had been sub-manager of the Lausanne branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation up to 1954, president of the liberal party, of the "Romanel circle", member of the communal council of Prilly and judge in the Lausanne circuit until 1960.

Prof. Frederic Kohler, 75, teacher in one of Lausanne's language institutes. He had lived in America for a long while and had presided the French Circle for Arts and Literature in Los Angeles.

Prof. William Boven, former dean of the medical faculty and rector of the University of Lausanne, at 83. His writings include such titles as "Anxiety", "Adam and Eve and the problem of the sexes", "The Science of Character" and an "Essay on the psychology of a hero: Major Davel".

(ATS)

FOREIGN WORKERS

The Italian daily "La Stampa" devoted a full page to the problems of Italian workers employed in Switzerland. The article reproduced the opinions of a panel of Swiss civil servants and politicians involved with the Italian question, including James Schwarzenbach, launcher of the anti-foreigner initiative. The latter reaffirmed the essentials of his plan, which consisted in reducing the number of foreign workers in Switzerland by a third. Another official expounded on the efforts made by the Federal Council to stabilise the imported population. According to "La Stampa", the overall majority of Swiss citizens reject the Schwarzenbach thesis but his action has revived a distinctly anti-foreign attitude. The Swiss fully acknowledged the contributions made by Italians to their economy, the paper said, and it was time for them to draw a balance sheet and re-examine their consciences.