

# Opening of Swiss Parliament

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further development of her export trade. There are over 17,000 former students of the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology at work today not only in Switzerland but in every part of the world, and among them are to be found the most brilliant research workers and engineers of modern science.

A few facts suffice to illustrate the international reputation enjoyed by Swiss universities and colleges. About 3,000 foreign students are immatriculated yearly. Many Swiss professors have been called to foreign universities to occupy chairs in various faculties. The most prized awards of the scientific world have been accorded to Swiss scientists and men of letters. The Nobel Science prize has been granted to four Swiss: to the chemists Werner, Karrer and Ruzicka and to Dr. Kockler for medical research. Many international scientific congresses have been held in Switzerland. Neither is it incidental that the Institute for Higher International Studies and the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute - the only academy for pedagogy enjoying university status in the world - should have been located in Switzerland.

Among the people themselves Swiss universities are steadily gaining ground. The number of native students has tripled since the beginning of the century: one in 600 of the population has a college education - which means that there are about 6,500 native students each year. This intensified university life affects every class of the population and sons of peasants, tradesmen, civil servants and professional men mingle and fraternize in the lecture halls. The beneficial influence of such a penetration of academic life in all ranks of the nation is growing ever deeper, both in public and private life. Banks, insurance companies, chemical and machine works, municipal, cantonal and federal public service organizations, all have cultured university men on their pay-rolls. The international reputation of Swiss doctors is now as firmly established as is that of Swiss health resorts, sanatoriums and watering-places.

However, the universities would lack their essential foundation if their students had not previously received a thorough secondary school grounding. Every canton has one or more official high schools. Besides these public secondary schools are many private schools situated mostly in healthy mountain resorts where children can enjoy both an excellent tuition and health giving air; the certificates and diplomas given by these private institutions have often the same status as those delivered by cantonal high schools. Knowledge and sports are taught side by side.

High school and university education in Switzerland is founded on the principle of the freedom of learning and teaching. It is indeed a condition of Swiss college life. The budding personality of the student is allowed to develop freely and to follow the career for which it is best fitted. Student life is characterized by societies and clubs officially recognized by the academic authorities which have of late years done much to foster a healthy patriotic spirit among the people.

It is clear that the future of Switzerland will owe much to her universities. Not only do they follow and encourage the progress of our civilization, but they also guard the spiritual and cultural independence of the country which, in view of the catastrophe which has overwhelmed Europe today, is after all the most important task of the present hour. The living tradition of Swiss Democracy and the toil of nationally conscious personalities are the best defense of the freedom of the spirit and the independence of the nation.

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#### OPENING OF SWISS PARLIAMENT.

The 32nd legislature opened its first session on Monday, December 6th. As usual, the meeting of the National Council was presided over by the oldest member of the house, Mr. Jules-Ed. Ferd. Gottret, 1865, (Catholic-Conservative, Geneva). In his speech for the occasion he stressed in particular the many tasks which await the Swiss Parliament during the next four years. Everyone hopes that

peace will come to Europe and the world within the limit of this present legislature; but the peace will bring a multitude of problems.

The first two meetings were taken up by validation formalities. These were somewhat longer this time than generally, because of an appeal for an investigation of the elections in the Cantons of Vaud and Geneva. In each of these districts one list was rejected, because it carried the names of candidates who were not eligible by virtue of the Federal decree prohibiting all political activity on the part of the Communist Party or analogous organizations, but the representatives from both Vaud and Geneva were declared elected.

The chambers have elected their various officers.

National Council:

President: Dr. oec. publ. Paul Gysler von Obfelden, born 1893  
(Präsident und Geschäftsführer verschiedener  
gewerblicher und industrieller Organisationen.  
Mitglied der Bauern-Gewerbe -und Bürgerpartei)  
Vice-President: Dr. Pierre Aebly, von Fribourg, born 1884 (Catholic)  
State Council:  
President: Dr. jur. Adolf Suter, von Muotathal, born 1882  
(Gerichtspräsident in Schwyz) (Catholic-Conservative)  
Vice-President: Dr. Paul Altwegg, a Thurgovian, born 1884 (Radical)  
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ELECTION OF THE SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL.

At the beginning of the week the different parliamentary groups held important meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to name a successor for Mr. Wetter, Federal Councillor, who has resigned for the end of the year. The three groups forming the governmental majority that is, the Radical-Democrats, the Catholic-Conservatives and the Agrarians, have decided to present for re-election the six remaining Federal Councillors who have accepted to stand again for election. They are: Dr. Marcel Pilet-Golaz, Dr. Philipp Etter, Dr. Walter Stampfli, Dr. Enrico Celio, Mr. Edward von Steiger, Dr. Karl Kobelt. These parties are not nominating a candidate for Mr. Wetter's succession. That means that they are leaving the door open for the election of a Socialist candidate. The Socialists are presenting two candidates, Mr. Ernst Nobs, 1886, Henri Perret, 1885, National Councillor and director of the Neuchâtel Cantonal Technicum of Le Locle.

On December 15th the two houses have re-elected the six Federal Councillors and elected one new one, Mr. Ernst Nobs, Socialist.

An imposing majority of 197 votes elected Dr. Stampfli president. (Vice president in 1943.) Dr. Pilet-Golaz was elected vice president by 147 votes with a required majority of 97.  
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THE QUESTION OF DENATIONALISATION OF SWISS CITIZENS BEFORE THE SWISS PARLIAMENT.

During the first week the chief debate was on the Federal Council's Decree making it possible to withdraw the Swiss citizenship from Swiss citizens residing abroad who show themselves unworthy of their citizenship by activity directed against the independence of their country. Luckily they are not large in number. The few that can be found, however, do admit making themselves the champions of foreign ideologies that are entirely incompatible with our traditions and our institutions. Compatriots living in the countries where this activity was carried on have been the first to complain about this and to ask for measures against it. To be sure, the withdrawal of citizenship is an exceptional measure, little in harmony with our juridical conception of things, and our authorities have no desire to increase the number of people in the world who are without nationality.