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abroad — the position of our Federal Authorities is very stable, nevertheless, when Parliament proceeds with a general re-election of the Federal Government, one may reckon on a change occurring in respect of about one-quarter of its members. At the same time, only insignificant variations take place in regard to the strength of the various Parties represented therein.

The retiring Parliament dealt with a large number of individual desires and questions on the part of the deputies, during the two weeks of its Autumn Session. Among these were questions relating to Switzerland's foreign policy, which gave the Federal Government the opportunity to sketch a rough outline of the international situation and, above all, to lay before Parliament, and thus also before the Swiss Public, the views held by the Federal Government in regard to the important problem of European integration.

Switzerland's participation in the union of seven countries for the purpose of forming a common Free Trade Area is intended as an answer and as a counterweight to the already effective union of the six countries which constitute the so-called Common Market. Both these groups comprise countries which belong to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, known as the O.E.E.C., which has established effective and appropriate practical conditions for the reconstruction of Europe after the war and has striven to overcome the lack of union, which threatened it.

With the setting up of the new European Common Market, of which three of Switzerland's neighbours, namely West Germany, France and Italy are members, as well as Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, a new cleavage is now threatening European economy, which may prove all the more prejudicial in that certain political aspirations are manifesting themselves, within it. If seven further countries which belong to the O.E.E.C. have now decided to unite into a group, this does not mean the achievement of a final solution to the problem, but rather an intermediary stage which it is hoped may facilitate a future union between the two communities. In this way it may prove possible to ban the danger which is now threatening, of a splitting up of Europe into separate economic blocs.

Even should such unions bring with them certain disadvantages and the surrendering of former liberties for the countries concerned, these are outweighed by the expected advantages. Switzerland has most carefully examined the question as to whether her neutrality, as well as the principles of free trade, allow her to participate in such a grouping with other countries. The Federal Government has, however, carefully marked out the limits which must not be over-stepped. The marching orders for the further development of this scheme are clear and explicit, as could be gathered from the statement made by Mr. Petitpierre, the Swiss Minister for Foreign Affairs, before Parliament. His remarks were both clear and convincing.

Latterly, the development of Swiss economy has proceeded smoothly along the even tenor of its way. The cost-of-living has become stabilised, to a very large extent, with only occasional fluctuations relating to the seasons. The results of our foreign trade serve as a graduator, among other things, for an estimate of our economic prosperity. They continue to be

characterised by an upward trend. Tourist traffic, also, favoured as it has been by the fine weather, has proved very satisfactory. The turnover in the domestic retail trade shows higher figures, in value, than those in the preceding months. The situation of employment continues to be good. According to the Labour Exchanges, they have fewer than a thousand workers who are looking for jobs. The number of foreign workers, imported in order to fill in those jobs for which the domestic labour was insufficient, is still very considerable. The building trade, fortunately, shows a revival in its activities, but, all the same, there is still a big dearth in housing accommodation.

SWISSAIR AND SAS CONSIDER CHANGE IN JET ORDER

Swissair and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) have stated that they are at present examining the question whether they should change their order for five Convair 880 medium range jets to the new Convair 600 "Coronado". The airlines said that since the joint order was placed in October 1958 it has become evident that the change to turbofan jet engines with which the Convair 600 will be equipped will result in essential improvements regarding payload, speed and specific fuel consumption. Furthermore, data now available have established that the turbofan engines have a lower noise level.

Although the Convair 880 has already successfully completed the major part of its test programme and in some respects exceeded the calculated performance, the improved "Coronado" version appears to promise advantages for the specific route requirements of Swissair and SAS, the airlines stated.

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