

Federal mosaic

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FEDERAL MOSAIC

Parliamentary Reform has been discussed in Switzerland, and many are the serious suggestions and proposals to achieve it. The "Mirage" affair has had its repercussions, too, and has brought about a good deal of stock-taking. Another problem is that of the overworked Federal Councillors — should the number be increased? So far, the Federal Council itself is against this, but has suggested a possible addition in the person of a *Chef de Cabinet*. The whole question will come before the parliamentary summer session.

The total number of federal personnel at the end of 1964 was 117,694, 2,505 more than in the previous year, an increase of 2.2%. The largest part are employed by the Swiss Federal Railways (42,446) and the Swiss Postal and Telecommunications Service (43,073). The total figure includes nearly four thousand apprentices. At the end of 1964, the four-year period of employment was at an end, and the 17,000 federal officials (without PTT) had to be re-appointed. Nine were excluded for other reasons than sickness and old age, and sixty-three were re-appointed conditionally only.

After a 2.5% pay increase had been granted to federal employees last October, the Federal Council has recently increased subsistence and travelling allowances for federal commission members and experts.

In 1964, a total of 2,883 applications were received by the federal office for export risk guarantees, of the Federal Department for Public Economy, much the same as in 1963. The total sum involved was nearly 670 million francs. In eleven cases, compensation was paid (Fr.815,396.—), concerning business deals with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Syria.

The federal equalisation funds (*Ausgleichskassen*) celebrated their Silver Jubilee a few months ago. Recently, figures were published regarding their payments in the twenty-five years: 12,992 million francs, including expenditure on AHV, invalidity, family allowances in agriculture, etc.

The British Chancellor of the Exchequer stated in the House in mid-May that Britain had accepted an offer of a loan equivalent to £14,300,000 from Switzerland who is not a member of the International Monetary Fund.

Irak has asked Switzerland to represent her interests in the German Federal Republic, the sixteenth mandate of this kind that Switzerland has been given.

The trade agreement between Switzerland and France has been extended by a further year, a trade agreement with Malta has been arrived at, and a double taxation agreement has been signed with Sweden.

Charges of carrying out "political and military espionage" on behalf of East Germany have been brought against an East German and a former Zurich taxi driver. The two men operated a spy centre under a registered press agency cover.

(Mainly by courtesy of Agence
Télégraphique Suisse.)

FEDERAL DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENTS

In 1964, Switzerland had diplomatic relations with 107 countries: 68 Embassies, 2 Delegations (Berlin and OECD), 1 Observer (UNO), 1 Mission (EEC), 40 Consulates General, 58 Consulates and 1 Vice-Consulate. In charge of the 68 Embassies were 56 Ambassadors and 12 *Chargés d'Affaires*. Of the 99 consular posts, 35 were

filled by Honorary Consuls. In addition, the Federal Political Department has 71 Consular Agents. In 1964, the remaining Legations were made into Embassies.

Recent changes made in diplomatic representation include the transfer of Ambassador F. Gygax from Australia and New Zealand to Sweden, and of Ambassador E. von Graffenried from Sweden to Australia and New Zealand with residence in Canberra.

The Swiss Consul General G. Piffaretti in Montreal is retiring, and his successor will be Consul General R. Thiébaud, at present in Marseilles. The latter will be succeeded by Counsellor of Embassy J.-A. Mallet, Ottawa. [A.T.S.]

LOOKING BACK

Twenty-five years ago, the Germans attacked France, Belgium and Holland, and the war approached the Swiss frontiers. In those days of the second General Mobilisation in Switzerland, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Great Britain. In gratitude for what Switzerland owes to the great man, the Swiss Winston Churchill Fund has been launched, and the Committee under the former Federal Councillor M. Petitpierre has appealed to the nation for funds to enable not only the creation of a granite monument, but also a special library.

The Red Cross has been looking back on its activities during the war until hostilities ceased twenty years ago and has reviewed the help which it was possible to give by sending goods and parcels to prisoners of war and civilians. Forty-three boats sailed under the Red Cross flag, and 165,256 metric tons of goods were transported (value of 314 million Swiss francs), and after the German railway network was destroyed, the IRCC used 474 lorries. During and immediately after the war, 76 delegations (340 members) made 11,175 visits to camps. The figures of letters, telegrams, files, lists, messages and photo-copies are astronomical. By the end of the war, nearly 4,000 members belonged to the Red Cross, and its activities were and still are of inestimable value. [A.T.S.]

