

News of prominent men

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1966)**

Heft 1502

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695033>

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in Switzerland totalled 25 milliard francs in 1965. As to dividends, no figures are available as yet for last year, but the figures for 1964 give a good picture.

The sectors of the economy which distributed the highest dividends during 1964 were insurance (20.24%), the chemical industry (17.12%) and holding companies (13.98%). The most interesting yields were attained in December 1964 in the transport sector (3.32%), in real estate companies (2.91%) and in electricity, gas and water companies (2.73%).

Such figures of big profits and excellent results could be misleading. There are many small (and some large) undertakings where things are not easy and where the necessity of having to reduce staff under the government's measures to curb the excessive boom cause hardship. There are parts in the country where the inhabitants have not yet felt any beneficial effect of the general prosperity. The still rising cost of living causes concern. The problem of inflation has not been solved, and whilst the Government's measures seem to have succeeded as judged by some of the figures, they have no doubt, contributed on the other hand towards some of the recent price rises.

The expansion of exports show that Switzerland is well able to compete with her products on the world's markets. It is to be hoped that restrictive measures will be lifted soon, otherwise Swiss products will become dearer and that may in turn create difficulties for the export trade.

The President of the Swiss Trade Federation (Schweizerischer Gewerbeverband), at the recent Trade Congress in Locarno, asked for an increased adjustment of Swiss economic policy to what is naturally possible and for a speedy return to "balanced prudence". This should remain the indispensable ingredients of Swiss statesmanship, and the State should revert to the duties which Constitution and legislation provide.

*(Apart from above-mentioned sources,
also based on news received by A.T.S.)*

SWITZERLAND A FULL MEMBER OF GATT

On 1st April, the member States of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) unanimously accepted Switzerland as a full member. The Federal Council empowered the leader of the Swiss GATT delegation, Minister Weitnauer, to sign the relevant documents subject to ratification. In this agreement, GATT granted Switzerland some special concessions which partly differ from GATT rulings, such as the continuation of her agricultural import restrictions which are anchored in legislation regarding alcohol and cereals and in the federal decree concerning economic measures *vis-à-vis* foreign countries.

Switzerland has been a provisional member of GATT since November 1958, without the right to vote, and has taken an active part in the work of the organisation, especially in the negotiations still in being in the "Kennedy Round". On 10th May the Federal Council decided to propose ratification of the agreement to the Federal Assembly in the June Session.

Switzerland has thus become the 69th member country of GATT and will now be able to make her voice heard in this important international body. The concessions made to Switzerland bearing regard to her special case, are an important pointer for the future and European integration. For years, member countries had either to be industrial or agricultural, and with Switzerland having been accepted as industrial country with an agricultural policy, this obstacle which seemed unsurmountable, has now been pushed out of the way.

[A.T.S.]

EUROPE DAY 1966

The Council of Europe was founded in May 1949. Switzerland has been a member for three years now and has been very active in the Council's work. So far she has signed seventeen European agreements, eleven of which have been ratified by Parliament. Apart from the Council, Switzerland is interested in a further twenty European organisations of economic, technical, scientific, or cultural character. In every member country, the anniversary of the founding of the Council is being celebrated as Europe Day. In Switzerland, this year's fifth of May was the second commemoration day, and the federal authorities published a special book suitable for young people. There were special programmes on radio and television, in schools and above all in the groups of the "Europa Union" which today has over 2,500 members in Switzerland. Federal Councillor Spuehler gave an address over the radio, and he reminded his audience that it was nearly twenty years since Sir Winston Churchill first expounded the idea of European unity in his famous speech at Zurich University.

In Zurich, the new Municipal President, Dr. Sigmund Widmer, made his maiden speech on European unity, and he said that Switzerland's path to a free Europe was leading across a "policy of small steps". Dr. Widmer also cited a famous quotation by the former Federal Councillor and great statesman F. T. Wahlen: "We must be Europeans in order to remain Swiss".

[A.T.S.]

NEWS OF PROMINENT MEN

The Hans-Reinhart-Ring for 1966 has been awarded to the actor **Max Knapp** who has been at the Basle Municipal Theatre since 1928. He is Swiss born and bred.

On 22nd April the resignation was announced of **Ernest Ansermet** as Conductor of the *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande* which the eminent Genevese founded in 1918.

Early in May, **Dr. Hans Münch** performed for the last time as resident Conductor of the *Abonnementskonzerte der Allgemeinen Musikgesellschaft*, in Basle. For his last concert, he chose the same works as in his first one in 1935, Schubert's Unfinished Symphony and Reger's "Hillervariationen". At a celebration, the well-known Conductor received the golden Medal of Honour of the Canton of Baselstadt.

On 10th May, the world-renowned Theologian **Prof. Karl Barth** celebrated his 80th birthday. Eminent personalities from home and abroad spoke at the official birthday celebration. The Rector of Bonn University whence Prof. Barth had been sent away by the Nazis in 1935, announced his University's award of the highest honour of *Ehrensator*. At the Luncheon following the celebration, the *Rector Magnificus* of Basle University was in the chair.

(by courtesy of "Basler Nachrichten")

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