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Official Communications

1st January 1975

Address by Mr Pierre Graber, President of the Confederation

Dear Fellow-Citizens;

In bringing you the traditional greetings of the Federal Council, may I suggest that together we ask ourselves some questions about what is awaiting us in 1975.

The year that has just ended will be remembered as the one in which our most profound assumptions were called in question. Many illusions have been dispelled, many habits of life disturbed and even seemingly established certainties have been shaken. Many Swiss, on peering into the future, can hardly escape a feeling of anxiety. But what is the use of seeing things as they really are if we remain passive spectators? That is why the self-examination to which I am inviting you must result in the will to face up to things.

Let us not deceive ourselves: what is being put to the test today is our very sense of social responsibility; the equilibrium of our economy

and of our finances; the ability of our institutions to master the situation; in short, our image in the world.

A year ago, in similar circumstances, my predecessor reminds us that «twenty years of economic boom have scarcely developed our community spirit». Alas, how right he was! Throughout the prosperous period of expansion that we have just experienced the unequal distribution of profit in fact gave rise to competition too often marked by private interest or lack of thought for the future. But today it is sacrifices that we are going to have to share. Everyone – and I want to stress this – will have to play his part. To get out while the going is good, to rely on others, to cling to outdated corporate privileges, is not only to display blind selfishness, it is to aim a blow at the public well-being and, indeed, at the interests of all. Every time social justice is impaired it is the

democratic ideal itself that is attacked, for liberty without justice is, of course, an empty word. It is no bad thing, I believe, to remember this on the threshold of a year in which many fateful decisions will have to be made.

In economic matters we are faced, above all, with a choice of priorities. In this connexion some people see the struggle against inflation as conflicting with the maintenance of full employment. This is a false dilemma. For if we do not succeed in stifling inflationary forces, or at the very least in containing them within tolerable limits, we expose to certain danger our whole economy and thereby the stability of employment. It is the countries with galloping inflation that in the long run show the highest unemployment rates. In other words, inflation, very far from favouring full employment durably, on the contrary jeopardizes it sooner or later. That is why efforts to maintain a high degree of employment cannot mean relaxing in the fight against inflation. Besides all this, there is the human dimension: profoundly demoralizing, unjust and brutal in itself, this same inflation threatens to ruin, if we are not careful, the whole edifice of our social welfare. For all these reasons the struggle against inflation must remain the overriding priority. But this, of course, presupposes that all concerned realize that their own interest require them to moderate their demands, since the sacrifices must be in proportion to everyone's means.

It is not only our economic and social equilibrium that is at stake, but also – and I cannot emphasize this too strongly – the normal functioning of our institutions of direct democracy. This practice, of which we have always been so

The federal authorities in 1975:

President of the National Council:	Simon Kohler
President of the Council of States:	Heinrich Oechsli
President of the Confederation:	Pierre Graber
Vice-President of the Federal Council:	Rudolf Gnägi
Chancellor of the Confederation:	Karl Huber
President of the Federal Court:	Pierre Cavin
President of the Federal Insurance Court:	Theodor Bratschi

Composition of the Federal Council and allocation of departments:

Political Department:	Pierre Graber
Department of the Interior:	Hans Hürlimann
Department of Justice and Police:	Kurt Furgler
Military Department:	Rudolf Gnägi
Department of Finance and Customs:	Georges-André Chevallaz
Department of Public Economy:	Ernst Brugger
Department of Transport, Communications and Energy:	Willi Ritschard

proud, is based on the sense of responsibility and civic maturity of us all, as well as on the spirit of federal solidarity. You proved this on 20th October last, even if the 8th December came to cast a certain shadow on the picture. If tomorrow, by misfortune, our popular consultations should degenerate into settlements of accounts and become the battlefield of selfish conflicts, this would soon mean the end of a system which has given our political life its unique character.

Assuredly, our image in the world would suffer. That would also happen if we did not play our part in efforts for solidarity at world level. Indeed, no one would accept that our internal difficulties might excuse us from such efforts: the effort of understanding, first of all, and then of participation in the major undertaking of our time, which consists in giving support to – that is to say, guiding towards development – between one and two thousand million people deprived of the things we have in abundance. First of all, it is of course a matter of our bounden duty of human solidarity, but it is not that only, it is also a question of promoting universal prosperity which, in the end, is essential to our own. It means, finally, working for world peace. Neither of these

is reconcilable with enormous differences in living standards. Like progress, prosperity and peace are indivisible. We assess their chances and their risks without illusions, but also without defeatism or resignation. The essential thing is that, true to our permanent neutrality, we should remain prepared to assume our international responsibilities in the spirit of open-mindedness and impartiality in spite of all the upheavals and all the vicissitudes.

Dear fellow-citizens, justice in the social sphere, reciprocal moderation in the economic sphere, responsibility in the political sphere, clear-sighted generosity in the external sphere – it is these I have in mind in wishing each and every one of you a very happy New Year.

Important notice to Swiss nationals residing abroad affiliated with the Voluntary Old-Age / Survivors' and Disability Insurance Scheme (AHV/IV in German and AVS/AI in French)

The Swiss Compensation Office, CH 1211 Geneva 14, herewith informs Swiss nationals enrolled in the Voluntary AVS/AI Insurance Scheme that, due to particular

circumstances, there will be some delay before Swiss diplomatic and consular missions will be in a position to indicate the amount of contributions due for 1975.

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