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Very rarely has there been so much interest and even passionate concern regarding the elections of two new Federal Councillors to replace the recently deceased Mr Willi Ritschard (Social Democrat) and Mr Georges-André Chevallaz (Radical Liberal) who had retired at the end of the year. There were two reasons for this unusual excitement in the usually rather calm world of Swiss politics: for the first time in the history of the Swiss Federal State, a woman was an official candidate put up by one of the parties traditionally represented in the Government, the Social Democrat Mrs Lilian Uchtenhagen. In addition, the rivalry between the two Liberals from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, Mr Jean-Pascal Delamuraz (Vaud) and Mr Robert Ducret (Geneva) made a quick decision impossible; the candidature of the Genevois was in the foreground, as his Canton has not been represented on the Government since 1919.

At the meeting of 7th December 1983, the Federal Assembly disappointed the hopes of the people of Geneva as well as that of many women. For it elected the Social Democrat from Solothurn, Dr Otto Stich (124 votes) and the Liberal Mr Delamuraz (130 votes), both in the first round. The Zurich woman candidate scored only 96 votes; the Social Democrat Mr Hans Schmid, citizen of St. Gall and Aargau, retired before the voting, for the Federal Constitution allows only one citizen from any Canton (Mr Kurt Furgler also comes from St. Gall).

The failure of the two candidates whom the Social Democratic Party would have liked most to

see on the Federal Council, was felt as a bitter disappointment; it is by no means certain that the Socialists would not retire from the Coalition Government. This would mean the end of the so-called «Magic Formula» which ensures a seat on the Government of the most important political parties according to the share of electors (two Radical Liberals, two Christian Democrats, two Social Democrats and one member of the Democratic Center Union. The Social Democrats will take a decision at an extraordinary Party Conference in February 1984.

We present the two new Federal Councillors as they were introduced to the Press the day after the elections.

The Editor

### Otto Stich

*Parliament has elected into the Government a very experienced economist, a discreet but tenacious hard worker. He is 57, very introvert, rather shy and naturally modest, so that few files had to be consulted in order to gather some information about this quiet pipe-smoking man from Solothurn.*

He arrived in Parliament towards noon, quietly smiling, almost on tiptoe, practically apologetic for being there at all. When the cameras and the mass of journalists began to converge on him, the new Federal Councillor was almost apprehensive.

Does this mean that an unknown man has joined the Government? No, not really. He has 20 years of experience as National Councillor (1963 to 1983), and he has achieved a solid reputation as an

### Federal Rifle Shooting Festival in Chur

We should like to draw the attention of the Swiss abroad to the 52nd Federal Rifle Shooting Festival which will take place in Chur from 21st June to 14th July 1985.

The **1st July** will be reserved as the Contest Day of the Swiss Abroad.

For further information, please apply to the

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