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Books

Paul Hugger (ed.) **Handbuch der Schweizer Volkskultur (Handbook of Swiss Folk Culture)**, Zürich 1992, Verlag Offizin Zürich, Edition Payot Lausanne, Edizioni Casagrande Bellinzona, p. 1,552, Sfr. 196.– (plus postage). Since Richard Weiss' "Swiss Folklore" was published in 1946, there have been profound changes in Swiss everyday life. The subject of folklore has had to come to terms with this, particularly because the amount of research subjects has grown enormously. The present three-volume work, available in German, French and Italian, attempts a new synthesis.

With the help of 78 contributors an overview has been provided which shows the impressive diversity of Swiss everyday life. The social development of our country is described according to subject; family relationships, village life, urban life, cantonal and federal responsibilities. Account is taken of subjects like traditional peasant economy, modern office culture, mobility and tourism, as well as the development of

the original fairy story into modern times through the medium of popular magazines. The new handbook shows the enormous range of cultural differences which are taken for granted throughout the relatively small area of multicultural Switzerland.

Pierre Gruber, **Mémoires et Réflexions (Memories and Reflections)**, Lausanne 1992, Edition 24 Heures, p. 270, Sfr. 39.– (plus postage). The autobiography of former Federal Councillor Pierre Gruber, which is at present available in French, consists not only of memories but also reflections on the present and future problems of Switzerland and its politicians. Gruber's descriptions of the ups and downs in his own Social Democratic Party are particularly juicy.

Born in Neuchâtel, Pierre Gruber spent most of his life in Vaud and started his political career as a town councillor and mayor of Lausanne, through the Vaud Grand Council and Council of State, on to parliament and finally the Federal Council, to which he was elected in 1970 at the age of 62. With a pleasant and refreshing openness of spirit, Gruber not only gives us his opinions on

all sorts of subjects but also freely admits how he revelled in the exercise of power.

These books may be obtained from the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16.

Telegrams

• FDP National Councillor and Mayor of Soleure Urs Scheidegger, aged 49, has been appointed by the Federal Council as Director of the Federal Office for Refugees in succession to Peter Arbenz. He takes office in July.

• CVP National Councillor Joseph Deiss, aged 47, economics professor at Fribourg University, takes over as federal price controller from Mr Odilo Guntern, who becomes the first federal data protection supervisor as of April 1, 1993.

Diary

Music – Theatre – Films

May 21–23

Soleure: Soleure Literature Festival

June 15 – September 9

Interlaken: "William Tell", play by Friedrich Schiller (open-air performances in German)

July 2–17

Montreux: International Jazz Festival

Folklore – Public festivals

May 1–3

Vitznau, Canton Lucerne: Sennenchilbi, Alpine Fair

June 18–20

Sarnen, Canton Obwald: Swiss Yodelling Festival

July 25

Brünig, Canton Berne: "Brünig-Schwinget", the biggest wrestling festival in Switzerland

Trade fairs

June 16–21

Basle: Muba: "Art 24 '93", International 20th Century Art Fair

Sport

May 4–9

Cycling, "Tour de Romandie"

May 31 (Whit monday)

Berne: Soccer, Swiss Cup Final

June 15–24

Cycling, "Tour de Suisse"

Texts: René Lenzin

Two Swiss world champions



More holes than cheese? Or the ideal recipe to combat the treacherous winds in Morioka? Hermann Schmutz on slicing up the Swiss delegation sponsored by the cheesemakers at this year's world ski championships.

The Swiss record in the alpine ski championships at Morioka, Japan, was not impressive. The only medal winner was downhill skier Urs Lehmann from Aargau whose excellent result was well above his earlier form results – but not totally unexpected in view of his training performance and the rather eccentric championship piste.

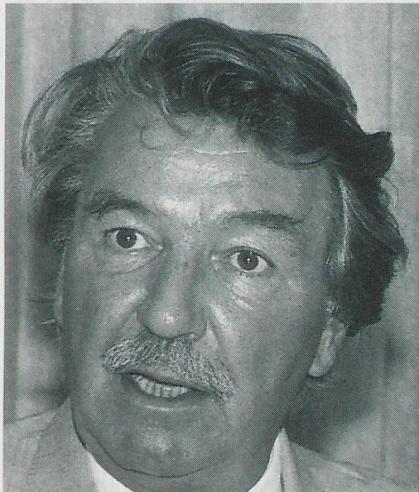
A world championship gold medal also went to Swiss bob leader Gustav Weder, who won the four-seater race in Igls (Austria) together with Donat Acklin, Kurt Meier and Domenico Semeraro. This was Weder's tenth championship medal – of which five were golds.

Point of view

"I believe that in order to succeed women have to make more of an effort than men – in their dress, in their appearance and in their behaviour. However, it is not only women federal councillors who have to grapple with this problem, but also every secretary". Urs Altermatt, historian, on the largely unjustified attacks on Christiane Brunner in the run-up to the Federal Council election.

Federal Council elections of March 3 and 10, 1993

Ruth Dreifuss succeeds René Felber



Retiring Federal Councillor René Felber ...



... and his successor, Ruth Dreifuss
(Photos: Keystone)

Ruth Dreifuss is the 100th member of the Federal Council and succeeds René Felber. She is the second-ever woman member of the federal executive and was chosen after Francis Matthey announced that he could not accept election.

René Felber was elected by the Federal Assembly to succeed Pierre Aubert on December 9, 1987, and this January he announced that he would retire at the end of March because of ill health. Last year the 60-year old Neuchâtelois underwent cancer surgery.

In his 30-year long political career, Social Democrat René Felber was successively mayor of Le Locle, member of the Neuchâtel cantonal executive, member of the National Council and finally member of the Federal Council. He was generally known as a loner, and he took great care to keep his family out of the limelight. But he quickly gained a reputation as a pragmatic politician ready to compromise and a convinced believer in collegial solidarity. This earned him admiration even outside his party.

René Felber's period as foreign minister coincided with the dramatic events in central and eastern Europe and the resulting geo-political changes. He was in favour of Switzerland playing a wider role in serving the international commun-

ity and encouraged Swiss citizens to take part in UN missions (see Swiss Review 6/92).

But his main interest was always European integration. He was equally in favour of Switzerland's membership of the European Economic Area and of starting negotiations to join the EC. His disappointment over the rejection of the EEA by Swiss voters on December 6 certainly contributed to his decision to retire. His succession as foreign minister is Flavio Cotti the out-going minister of the interior.

The social democrat parliamentary group originally had put forward

Geneva National Councillor Christiane Brunner, president of the Industry, Trades and Services Union, as its new Federal Council member; but parliament instead elected another social democrat, Francis Matthey from Neuchâtel. However the latter asked for a week's reflection before accepting office and finally – bowing to party pressure – refused. In order to prevent further upsets and to ensure that a woman joined the Federal Council, the social democrats then presented parliament with two candidates in the persons of Christiane Brunner and Ruth Dreifuss.

53-year old Ruth Dreifuss was finally elected in the third round of voting and became the second-ever woman federal councillor after Elizabeth Kopp. Mrs. Dreifuss was secretary of the Swiss Trade Union Federation and has no experience in either parliament or government. Although her political views are similar to those of Christiane Brunner, she seems to fit the popular image of a federal councillor better than the former. Ruth Dreifuss succeeds Flavio Cotti as minister of the interior.

Taken as a whole, members of parliament right across the political spectrum gave a poor showing, with far too much contradiction and rank-pulling. This was doubly bad during an economic recession and at a time when important decisions for the future will soon have to be taken.

RL

"The Sixth Continent"

This is the name of a documentary film about the Swiss Abroad. It is composed of five short stories about Swiss people who live at different ends of the earth – as foreigners on five continents: in Zimbabwe, in Italy, in Chile, in Tonga, and in Thailand. And in between, five other stories about nationals of these countries who live in Switzerland.

Swiss Review 4/89 contained an appeal to the Swiss Abroad to take part in this project. Many of the answers received by the producer were of great help in researching the film, and we hope you will be interested in seeing the result. It received its first showing at the 1992 Soleure Film Festival amid great acclaim. It has been shown at a number

of other festivals in Switzerland and Germany and has also been released publicly. It is now available on video cassette exclusively for the Swiss Abroad (length 85 minutes). It costs Sfr. 59.– for private individuals and Sfr. 190.– for institutions (plus postage at Sfr. 9.40 for Europe, Sfr. 14.30 for overseas). Orders in writing and including payment to:

Benno Maggi
Atelier Altes Stellwerk
Eichstrasse 1
CH-8045 Zurich
Switzerland
Fax: 41 1 451 14 64
(Please give details of video system required: PAL, SECAM, NTSC).