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peace will come to Europe and the world within the limit of this present legislature; but the peace will bring a multitude of problems.

The first two meetings were taken up by validation formalities. These were somewhat longer this time than generally, because of an appeal for an investigation of the elections in the Cantons of Vaud and Geneva. In each of these districts one list was rejected, because it carried the names of candidates who were not eligible by virtue of the Federal decree prohibiting all political activity on the part of the Communist Party or analogous organizations, but the representatives from both Vaud and Geneva were declared elected.

The chambers have elected their various officers.

National Council:

President: Dr. oec. publ. Paul Gysler von Obfelden, born 1893  
(Präsident und Geschäftsführer verschiedener  
gewerblicher und industrieller Organisationen.  
Mitglied der Bauern-Gewerbe -und Bürgerpartei)  
Vice-President: Dr. Pierre Aebly, von Fribourg, born 1884 (Catholic)  
State Council:  
President: Dr. jur. Adolf Suter, von Muotathal, born 1882  
(Gerichtspräsident in Schwyz) (Catholic-Conservative)  
Vice-President: Dr. Paul Altwegg, a Thurgovian, born 1884 (Radical)

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ELECTION OF THE SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL.

At the beginning of the week the different parliamentary groups held important meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to name a successor for Mr. Wetter, Federal Councillor, who has resigned for the end of the year. The three groups forming the governmental majority that is, the Radical-Democrats, the Catholic-Conservatives and the Agrarians, have decided to present for re-election the six remaining Federal Councillors who have accepted to stand again for election. They are: Dr. Marcel Pilet-Golaz, Dr. Philipp Etter, Dr. Walter Stampfli, Dr. Enrico Celio, Mr. Edward von Steiger, Dr. Karl Kobelt. These parties are not nominating a candidate for Mr. Wetter's succession. That means that they are leaving the door open for the election of a Socialist candidate. The Socialists are presenting two candidates, Mr. Ernst Nobs, 1886, Henri Perret, 1885, National Councillor and director of the Neuchâtel Cantonal Technicum of Le Locle.

On December 15th the two houses have re-elected the six Federal Councillors and elected one new one, Mr. Ernst Nobs, Socialist.

An imposing majority of 197 votes elected Dr. Stampfli president. (Vice president in 1943.) Dr. Pilet-Golaz was elected vice president by 147 votes with a required majority of 97.

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THE QUESTION OF DENATIONALISATION OF SWISS CITIZENS BEFORE THE SWISS PARLIAMENT.

During the first week the chief debate was on the Federal Council's Decree making it possible to withdraw the Swiss citizenship from Swiss citizens residing abroad who show themselves unworthy of their citizenship by activity directed against the independence of their country. Luckily they are not large in number. The few that can be found, however, do admit making themselves the champions of foreign ideologies that are entirely incompatible with our traditions and our institutions. Compatriots living in the countries where this activity was carried on have been the first to complain about this and to ask for measures against it. To be sure, the withdrawal of citizenship is an exceptional measure, little in harmony with our juridical conception of things, and our authorities have no desire to increase the number of people in the world who are without nationality.

In the course of the debate in the National Council, a number of representatives pointed out the unusual character of the decree, how much it was contrary to our deep sentiments on law and rights, but there must be some defense against such dangerous activities. The withdrawal of citizenship is one of the few effective arms that can be resorted to. This was the opinion of the National Council after hearing the explanation of the head of the Department of Justice and Police, and this opinion was approved with a very large majority.

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#### COST OF LIVING IN SWITZERLAND.

Price levels have been stable for some weeks. So far, the approach of every winter has made the increased cost of living a serious problem, and the authorities have done everything possible to stabilise prices. During the past year the cost of living index, now 48 points above that of August 1939, has risen only six points. On 1st September, the State-controlled milk price was raised by one centime per litre, the price of bread was lowered. The increase in wages has only slowly followed the increased cost of living; in all branches the wage-earner has to bear some half of the higher expense himself. The lowest wage-earners have been given the highest increase. State employees are granted a special bonus every autumn - a step imitated by most private businesses to cover the cost of winter fuel, potatoes, winter clothing and shoes. This autumn new shoe and textile cards have been issued after a marked drop in sales because of high prices. Since the outbreak of war, the price of beef has more than doubled, that of pork has trebled. Eggs cost three times as much as in 1939. Coal and wood prices have doubled. The tariff for public works, gas, electricity and railways, had remained practically stable. The worst strain on small incomes is the cost of clothes and shoes. A qualified mason earns about two francs per hour. In 1939 he earned only Frs. 1.70 and in 1914 Frs. 0.67. Between 1914 and 1939 mason's wages thus increased by 152 per cent. In the same period the cost of living only rose by 45 per cent., so that the masons' surplus buying power was large. Since the war, the cost of living has risen another 84 per cent., and wages only 20 per cent., which shows that if the war goes on long enough the whole improvement achieved in the workers' situation during the past 25 years might disappear. That is why stabilisation of prices, strict rationing and strong measures against the black market are so essential to the internal social peace of the country.

Rents, except in the new buildings, have remained as before. Taxes have enormously increased on a progressive scale which bears only lightly on the small pocket. The lowest wage classes especially in the towns, can buy potatoes, coal, clothes, shoes, etc. at prices kept artificially low by the Government. This is not charity, but an emergency Government measure to prevent hundreds of thousands of people having to fall back on public or private charity. Naturally, it is the farmers who profit most from the increased cost of food, and it needs a strong hand in the Government to prevent agricultural prices from rising still higher. On the whole, the price and wage discussion has become much milder this autumn than during the past two years, when the price curve was climbing steadily up.

The stability of the cost of living seems well maintained. The Index of Retail prices, calculated by the Swiss Co-operative Society, registers no noteworthy changes for the period 1st June - 1st September. On the whole prices are below those of the corresponding period of the first World war.

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