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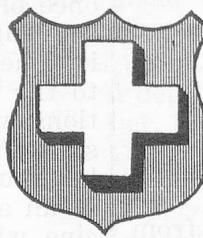
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# HELVETIA

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19th YEAR.

JANUARY, 1955.

AUCKLAND.

## Mr. Escher, Federal Councillor, Dies at his Post

The state of health of Mr. Escher, Federal Councillor and head of the Federal Postal and Railways Department, was compelling him to retire from the post to which he had been elected four years ago and to decline the honour of being Switzerland's next President; the members of the Council of States and the National Council which together form the Federal Assembly would have been only too happy to elect him in token of their deep respect and the great esteem in which he was held.

Before taking leave of his department, which deals with problems concerning transport, communications and tourism, Mr. Escher insisted on bringing his files up to date and it was for this reason—dictated by that innate sense of responsibility so characteristic of him—that he went on the morning of Thursday, December 7th, to the hall of the National Council where Mr. Moritz Kaempfen, a deputy from the same district in the Valais, and president of the town of Brigue, was putting forward a motion in favour of granting extra credits for tourist propaganda in the United States; in the middle of the speech, Mr. Escher, who was seated near the speaker, suddenly collapsed and had to be carried into an adjoining room where it was not long before he breathed his last, the victim of a heart attack.

The Swiss press unanimously voiced the deep feelings of sorrow and affliction felt by the Swiss people, feelings which were echoed in the tribute that members of the Cantonal and Federal legislative and executive powers rendered to the deceased at the funeral ceremony on December 14th, at Brigue.

Mr. Joseph Escher was very attached to his home canton. As Mr. Jean Seitz, parliamentary correspondent of the "Gazette de Lausanne" in Berne, said: "It was difficult to be more typically 'Haut-Valaisan' than Joseph Escher. He was a citizen of Brigue-Glis, and, as if to strengthen still further these roots, he was born

at Simplon Village. One may become a brilliant lawyer, be capped as an honorary doctor, preside over the destiny of a great national party, possess great tactical resources as a political leader, be the first in one's canton to attain to the rank of Federal Councillor, but one cannot, even if one wished to, deny one's origins. They leave their mark on a man for ever."

## Three New Federal Councillors

On the morning of December 16th, the Federal Assembly—which is a combined assembly of members of the National Council and the Council of States summoned whenever it is necessary to proceed to the election of members of the Government, a new chancellor or the judges of the Federal Law Courts, or the examination of appeals—elected three new members of the Federal Council: Mr. Thomas Holenstein, born at St. Gallen in 1896, Doctor of Laws and member of the National Council since 1937; Mr. Paul Chaudet, born at Rivaz (canton of Vaud) in 1904, a national councillor since 1943 and a member of the Government of the canton of Vaud since 1946; and Mr. Giuseppe Lepori, Doctor of Laws and a member of the Government of the Ticino since 1940.

Mr. Holenstein and Mr. Lepori were put forward by the Catholic Conservative Party, which, as from January 1st, 1955, will thus have three seats in the Federal Government as opposed to the two it has at present. Mr. Paul Chaudet was a candidate of the Radical Democrat Party which will now have three seats instead of four. The seventh seat in the Government is occupied by Mr. Feldmann, of Berne, a member of the Agrarian Party.

The Federal Assembly then elected the new Swiss President, Mr. Max Petitpierre, who has been Foreign Minister at Berne since 1944; the new Vice-President of the Federal Council will be Mr. Feldman.

Finally, the members of the two Chambers elected as President of the Federal Law Courts Mr. Robert Petitmermet, of Lausanne, who has

been a member of the High Court for twenty years.

## Switzerland's Mission

The following lines written at the beginning of the year by Mr. G. Lepori, who has just been elected a Federal Councillor, are taken from the "Journal de Geneve": "The concept of the Helvetic community, while preserving intact the spirit history has imprinted on it, has been enriched with a new element: the knowledge that dissimilar cultures can live together in peace and friendship. Not only are there twenty-five cantons, but also—and this perhaps even more important—three or rather four different races. The evolution of European political thought has attached ever-increasing importance to this element defining Switzerland's mission in the concert of nations: our country plays the role of mediator between the cultures that have made the West great; it shows that peoples of different races, origins and languages can live together in perfect harmony."

## Death of a Great Scientist—Professor Auguste Rollier, of Leysin

From the "Feuille d'Avis de Lausanne" we take a few passages from an article paying tribute to this famous professor's methods and the benefits that may be expected from a carefully supervised cure in the mountains of Switzerland:

"It is worth while devoting a few paragraphs of this article to explaining the principle of the therapeutic methods used during the last fifty years by Professor Rollier, who has just died, admired and respected by a whole host of people, former patients he has cured, doctors, in short the whole population. He was, strangely enough for the twentieth century, an uncompromising advocate of the so-called naturalist school of medicine. Rollier the surgeon achieved the exceptional miracle of systematically refusing the resources of drugs and even surgery, to use for the patients under his care only the sun's rays, rest (although only comparative at that), fresh air and the invigorating properties of the mountain air. Until the advent of this Swiss specialist, doctors treated tuberculosis of the bones, the joints and glands by drugs, surgery, and long months and even years of imprisonment for the affected limbs in a plaster apparatus. The articular surfaces eaten away with tuberculosis were cut away, limbs considered incurable were amputated; use was made of iodoform, ointments and ichthylol. Success was rare; ankyloses and deviations, muscular atrophy were more often than not the heavy price to be paid for mediocre 'cures.'

"Rollier turned his back resolutely and at once on these deplorable practices. He reduced the length and rigours of the periods of immobility; he exposed the wounds and affected joints to the air and perfected the use of solar radiations with the greatest care, so as to avoid sun-stroke and heat-stroke; 'in the smallest doses' he would say, for the mountain sun (Leysin is at an altitude of 4760 feet) is a powerful medicine which wrongly used may be perilous. No surgery; for years, Rollier refused to use even forceps to remove the fragments of rotten bone. He only agreed to the use of needles for puncturing deep abscesses. This eminently conservative treatment, slowly perfected, resulted in thousands and thousands of cures, real cures, with recovery of the muscular and articular functions, and complete restoration of the general state of health."

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### Lausanne's New Theatre

An entirely modern new theatre capable of being used for symphony concerts, opera, ballet and musical shows has just been completed at Lausanne in the main building of the Swiss Comptoir. Possessing a large, very deep, operatic stage, and seating 1900, it is the work of a Lausanne architect, Marcel Maillard, who took as his inspiration the classical French conception with a central dome and semi-circular balcony. The stage is 85 feet wide and 43 feet deep. It is closed by a sliding partition which when opened makes it possible to extend the stage a further 69 feet. The acoustics are perfect, thanks to the walnut panelling which forms an elegant and warm setting. Lausanne will now be able to welcome the greatest orchestras as well as the largest opera companies, ballets and musical shows.

### Civil Liability Insurance for Motorists

On arrival at the Swiss frontier, foreign motorists and motor-cyclists are handed a folder put out by the Swiss Automobile Club and Touring Club giving useful information concerning traffic regulations: on speed limits, priorities, respect of white lines, parking, unguarded level crossings, mountain roads and breakdown services.

Here is the information concerning civil liability insurance which is compulsory in Switzerland. Foreign motorists who cannot produce on entry into Switzerland an insurance valid for this country ("Green Card" or "Insurance Certificate") are obliged to pay a fee of 3 Sw. francs. This tax is not an insurance premium. It goes into a fund to help towards paying the damage caused by foreign vehicles in Switzerland. The parties at fault continue to be held entirely answerable to the insurance companies settling