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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION

To the Swiss abroad on the occasion of the National Day 1969

Dear compatriots living abroad,

Each year, the First of August is a lasting day of memory, reminding us of a political event, the birthday of the Confederation and the historical origins of our country. It unites all Swiss on whichever part of the terrestrial globe they may be. Our compatriots living abroad, as well as their families, sons and daughters of the same homeland, share these patriotic thoughts with us and this is why our thoughts linger with them.

On this occasion, the President of the Confederation is pleased to address all our compatriots living abroad. Those who still have family ties in Switzerland, know that these relations share in their successes and their joys, as well as their anxieties. In a similar way and throughout the whole year, the Swiss authorities dedicate their attention to the questions and problems confronting our compatriots abroad. The hours of patriotic festivities, however, should not let us forget them; we are conscious of them and very often, too, we find therein moving signs of attachment to Switzerland. Consequently, I would not like to miss this opportunity to address my greetings to our compatriots living abroad, and to thank them for their loyalty and activities, which honour the homeland.

I can well imagine that on this occasion of the First of August, many among you, perhaps unconsciously, wonder what it means to be Swiss. Our compatriots living at home are also facing this question. It has, however, a special significance for the Swiss living outside our borders, even though they may live among friendly people. We do not imagine ourselves to be better than the others. The history and structure of our country, the destiny which so far has given providence, the protection it has given against war, misery and major catastrophies, these are just some of the many reasons to be concerned about the fate of those compatriots who remain so strongly united to the country of which they are the children and citizens, and towards which they keep strong attachments even though they are living in foreign territory.

We do not intend to live outside of the community of nations, but we shall not be able to strengthen and promote Switzerland's contributions to the common work of understanding and peace unless our personal behaviour is really inspired by the individuality and virtue characterizing Switzerland: to mutually understand and help each other, wherever we are, and to give our best. We can then, with pride, say in the words of the famous historian, Jacob Burckhardt: "The small State is existing, so

that there is a spot on earth, where the largest possible number of inhabitants are citizens in the truest sense of the word".

Let us take to heart these thoughts in the festive hours dedicated to our homeland, on which occasion I send you, in every corner of the world, the hearty greetings of your country.

**Ludwig von Moos**

President of the Confederation.

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## **BUSY SWISS ELECTORATE**

### **"Landsgemeinden"**

Springtime usually brings the voters to the poll, and in the last remaining Cantons where the "Landsgemeinde", the Open-air Parliament, still takes place, the end of April is the time when they are held. The "Landsgemeinde" is a venerable political institution, constituting the purest form of democratic life — an open show of hands! Sometimes it is not only interesting, but also amusing to hear how some of the quaint mountain farmers talk to their Government, how they make proposals and criticize public affairs.

On the 27th April, a fine spring day, the people of Obwalden met on the "Landenberg" near Sarnen where Federal Councillor von Moos was a guest. In an hour and a quarter, elections took place — the new **Landammann** is Arnold Durrer (Giswil), a Liberal for the first time after 23 years.

The Nidwalden citizens assembled at Wil near Stans, in an open circle. For three hours, business was debated after the procession had made its way from Stans. Walter Vokinger (Stans) is the new **Landammann**, for the third time. Labour law, a change in the administrative account system, a new law for the cantonal electricity works (a nuclear energy pump storage works will be erected at Emmetten), new tax regulations for boats — a total of nine proposals, and all accepted.

The voters of Appenzell-Innerrhoden met in the "Ring" at Appenzell. After Mass, the citizens walked to the assembly site, and business began once the large bell of the Mauritzenturm had stopped ringing. Leo Mittelhozer is the new "ruling" **Landammann**. The late Roman Koelbener was replaced by Josef Hersche as **Regierungsrat**. The law on the introduction of compulsory sickness and accident insurance was accepted, as well as various other legal proposals. But the women were not granted suffrage, but it was agreed that the distaff side should be consulted as to their wishes.

In Appenzell-Ausserrhoden, this years "Landsgemeinde" took place at Hundwil (at Trogen in years ending in an even number).