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NEW FEDERAL COUNCILLOR

Tired after 12 years in charge of the Department of Finance, Otto Stich retired from his post last November. At the same time the hotel "Bernerohof" lost its best client. Since 1984, Otto Stich lived as a permanent guest at the hotel, never bothering to move into an apartment or a house in Berne. He has now returned to Dornach, his home town in the canton of Solothurn.

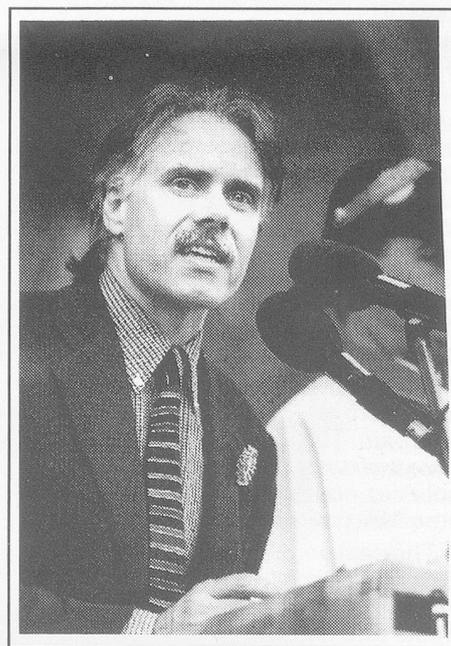
Otto Stich had spent 32 of his 68 years in politics.

To take Otto Stich's position, the joint Government Chambers have elected Moritz Leuenberger from Zurich. The news was received with great enthusiasm in Zurich which welcomed its newly elected Federal Councillor with a frenzy seldom conferred to politicians in Switzerland. Nicknamed "ami du peuple" (friend of the people), rather a curious nickname for a German speaking Swiss, Leuenberger is a well known and well loved public figure in Zurich. It is only to be hoped for his sake that this friendly



Otto Stich in a typical pensive mood.

attitude towards him will spread to other cantons as well and will stay with him during the whole duration of his stay at the top of the Swiss Government.



Leuenberger during his speech, thanking the crowd for its fantastic support.

← *Moritz Leuenberger during his march of triumph through the streets of Zurich. Puzzled observers from Berne commented that it looked almost like a "Sechseläuten" atmosphere.*

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Recently one of our readers, Peter Blattner, made a remark that many New Zealanders confuse the Swiss flag (white cross on red background) with the flag of the Red Cross (red cross on white background). For us Swiss it is hard to believe that anyone could get confused about these two flags, but for non-Swiss people, the situation is not as clear-cut as for us.

Peter also pointed out that the Helvetia magazine could well add a bit more confusion to the issue as it shows a white cross superimposed on a red one. To be quite honest, we never gave it any thought until Peter mentioned it. It would be interesting to learn what other readers think about this matter.

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