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Samuel Schmid swearing an oath of allegiance inside the chamber of the Swiss House of Parliament, immediately following his election on 6.12.2000.

**Samuel Schmid wins cabinet seat after parliamentary ballot**

The Swiss parliament on Wednesday, 6th of December 2000, elected Samuel Schmid of the right-wing Swiss People's Party to the cabinet post being vacated by the defence minister, Adolf Ogi. His victory, however, represents a snub for his party's leaders.

In the sixth and final round of balloting, Schmid secured the support of the majority of parliament with 121 votes. He was followed by two other members of the People's Party, Ulrich Siegrist (83 votes), and Rita Fuhrer (28 votes). Schmid, a member of the Senate from canton Bern, is a moderate member of the party, and his elec-

tion is seen as a slap in the face for the hardline leaders of the People's Party, particularly the populist figurehead, Christoph Blocher. Schmid stood as an unofficial candidate in the election. The two official People's Party candidates, Roland Eberle and Fuhrer, found only limited support in the joint session of both houses of parliament.

**Schmid: A bridge-builder**

In contrast to some of his opponents in Wednesday's election, Samuel Schmid is well known figure in national politics. Although a member of the right-wing Swiss People's Party, he often takes a more liberal stance on key issues.