News from the legation

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markets has grown in recent years, more particularly since 1950, and comparison with the progress achieved by other countries who have only very recently entered the international field shows that Switzerland has even lost ground in relation to certain of these competitors. If the general figures for world exports are compared with those of Switzerland, it will be found that Switzerland's share is approximately the same today (1.6%) as in 1938 (1.5%). The situation thus revealed must be regarded as a warning against an excess of optimism.

It also must be noted that imports have increased in recent years much more rapidly than exports, as is evidenced by the steadily increasing debit side of the trade balance. The need for Switzerland to maintain the positions she has won abroad and to find new markets is thus becoming ever more imperative.

This general survey of Switzerland's economic situation is not without its darker side and one phenomenon in particular is exercising the minds of those in charge of the country's affairs. This is the *cost of living,* more or less faithfully reflected by the index of consumer prices which reached 175.6 (1939 = 100) at the end of July. A year ago this index settled at about 172, a figure at which it latterly seemed to have become stabilized. The situation has, however, changed since the end of 1955 and for this reason a perceptible increase of 2% has been recorded in the space of a few months. Although this development is still on a very small scale and is in no way comparable with the rise in the cost of living in the other countries of the world, it nonetheless contrasts with the harmonious balance of preceding years and deserves thought. This is why the Swiss government has recently called a consultative conference in Berne attended by representatives of employers and employees, and the authorities and the economic circles directly interested in this important problem, for which a solution must be found in order to prevent further deterioration in the situation. *OSEC.*

NEWS FROM THE LEGATION.

We have much pleasure to announce, that Monsieur J. J. de Tribolet, has succeeded Monsieur le Ministre, Dr. E. Bernath, as 1st Counsellor, at the Swiss Legation in London, and we wish him a pleasant and happy stay in Great Britain.

Monsieur de Tribolet was born in 1911 in Neuchâtel where he received all his schooling. He left the university in 1934 with a " licence en droit " after having been called to the bar. Then followed four years of practical work in lawyers' offices and with the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Paris. He entered the services of the Confederation in May 1940 when he was sent to London. In July 1942 he went to Rome and returned to Berne in April 1944. Towards the end of that year he was appointed secretary of the Swiss delegation to the international commission dealing with Shipping on the Rhine, and in September 1946 he became attached to our Legation in Vienna, first as Second and then as First Secretary. After a further three years in Berné at Division du Commerce and the Political Department, he went, in 1953, as Chargé d'Affaires en pied to our Legation in Sofia when he was nominated Counsellor of Legation. In his military career he reached the rank of First Lieutenant with a mitrailleur company.

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