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NEWS AT RANDOM FROM THE FEDERAL PALACE

HOUSING OF CERTAIN FEDERAL OFFICES OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL

In 1959 a proposal was put forward by Councillor of States P. Torche (Fribourg) to investigate the possibility of housing some of the Federal Offices outside the Capital. The Central Federal Office on Organisation was asked in conjunction with the management of Federal buildings to study the problems and to find out which, if any, of the Federal administrations could be housed in other towns. In the report it was pointed out that apart from railways and postal services which were in any case working all over the country, three quarters of the Federal personnel were outside the Capital, and only a quarter, some 7,000 Federal employees were actually stationed in Berne.

In 1960 a questionnaire was sent out to find out whether communicating between the various departments in and out of Berne could be facilitated by moving some of them elsewhere, and it was found that any removal would be costly and create certain difficulties. There are however certain instances where decentralisation is possible and will be of advantage. So, for instance, a proposal will be put shortly to Parliament for a credit to buy land at Grangeneuve (Fribourg) as the present agricultural experimental station in the Liebefeld is no longer adequate. Another example is the Federal Military Insurance which will open a branch at Bellinzona in January 1964 so that all cases from Southern Switzerland can in future be dealt with more or less locally and will no longer have to be sent to Berne.

The Federal Council proposes therefore to Parliament to drop the original motion. Wherever a transfer seems advisable it will be made. It is also proposed to erect suitable new buildings in Berne where land already in the possession of the Confederation can be utilized and which will be cheaper than renting offices.

ITALIAN EDITION OF THE FEDERAL GAZETTE

So far the Federal Gazette (Bundesblatt) has been mainly in German and French, and only a small part has been translated into Italian. It has now been agreed that in future the Italian edition should be more detailed and also contain all messages from the Federal Council, drafts for new constitutional articles and Federal decrees.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR SPUHLER GUEST OF THE FOREIGN PRESS

The Foreign Press Association in Switzerland invited the President of the Confederation to the traditional dinner. The Swiss Foreign Minister, Federal Councillor Wahlen, and a number of personalities in politics, army, Swiss press and broadcasting were also present. This was the fifteenth time that this meeting had been arranged and the President of the foreign journalists had a great deal of praise for Switzerland. The occasion provided many valuable contacts.

SWISS MINISTER OF TRANSPORT IN PARIS

Federal Councillor L. von Moos, head of the Federal Department of Transport attended the meeting of European Ministers of Transport which was held early in April in Paris.

IS IT POSSIBLE?

Paper consumption in the Federal Administration has increased in 1962 from 1500 to 1750 metric tons. The inventory of office machinery showed that the number of machines had gone up from 21,960 to 22,992. One cannot help wondering how much time is spent on working it all out!

[A.T.S.]

SPECIAL OFFER

The Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne have informed us that the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will take place at St. Moritz from 16th to 18th August. The General Theme will be "Spiritual Defence of Switzerland in the World of Today and Tomorrow" (Selbstbehauptung der Schweiz in der Welt von heute und morgen). The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad invite us to give our opinion of what contribution we Swiss away from home can make towards this. It should include any constructive criticism we Swiss abroad have to make as well as what we specially appreciate. Personal experience and examples are welcome. Will anyone with anything weighty to say on the subject please send it to the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" not later than 1st June.

The Yearbook 1963 of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique is available in its *national* edition in three languages (192 pages with twelve articles in German, five in French and two in Italian). The special price is Fr.8.—.

The *International* edition, also at Fr.8.—, will be available in five languages. In English it is called "Switzerland present and future — a small country re-examines itself". It is illustrated and contains sixteen articles on 230 pages.

The Annual Report of the Secretariat of the Swiss

Abroad is also available to members of Swiss Societies (French or German).

Will anybody wishing to order any of the above-mentioned publications please write *immediately* to the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", who will pass on the requests to Berne.

The Secretariat would also like to know whether Swiss abroad receive the special transmissions by the Swiss shortwave station. It would help them to know whether reception is good, which is the best time to receive and on which wave length, if reception is sometimes or often disturbed and what causes interference. The Secretariat collects these reports in order to prove that a stronger transmitter is necessary.

Anybody wishing to attend the assembly of the Swiss Abroad at St. Moritz and interested in taking part in a special "Auslandschweizer Schützenfest" should inform the Editor *by return*.

If any Swiss abroad has any knowledge of difficulties in connection with acquiring land in Switzerland by a fellow-countryman living abroad he should inform the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" who, as a member of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, will take up the matter with the Secretariat.