

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1964)
Heft: 1446

Artikel: The Federal budget for 1964
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686721>

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FEDERAL PLEBISCITE

The Swiss electorate went to the poll on 8th December. There were two proposals which the Swiss citizen had to approve or reject. One was the "Finanzordnung", a proposition to continue the present finance regime for another ten years, and the other was a scholarship article to the Federal Constitution. As had been expected, both were accepted, the former by 474,640 to 136,891 and the latter by 481,812 to 131,647. All the Cantons accepted, but the voting participation was a mere 40.3%. Now that the two proposals have been accepted, the way is clear for a number of important provisions. Several drafts concerning taxes are already on the parliamentary agenda, among them a reduction of the defence tax ("Wehrsteuer") and a revision of the withholding tax ("Verrechnungssteuer"). The latter will also affect the Swiss outside Switzerland, and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad has this matter in hand; it will be discussed at the next meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad on 1st February in Berne.

[A.T.S.]

THE FEDERAL BUDGET FOR 1964

The budget of the Confederation envisages expenditure of 4,434 million francs and revenue of 4,877 million francs for 1964. The surplus of 443 million francs would be much the same as in 1962 (432 million francs). There is anxiety in some quarters as to the increase in income and expenditure which is around 15 to 20% compared with the budget for 1963. Agriculture, military and civil defence and national road construction figure amongst the heaviest items.

The budget reckons with personnel in the service of the Confederation amounting to 26,517 people, about five hundred more than in 1963. The figures are made up of 16,200 civil servants, 5,030 employees, 4,600 workers and 687 professors at the Federal University of Technology (ETH), Ambassadors, Ministers and army unit commanders. The total cost is expected to be thirty-seven million francs higher than in the budget for 1963 and sixty-four million francs higher than the actual cost in 1962. Total expenditure for personnel is expected to amount to 463.4 million francs.

[A.T.S.]

FRIENDSHIP ACROSS THE CHANNEL

It was during the British Week organized 1963 in Zurich that British jewellery and silver was brought nearer to the Swiss public. The "Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths of London" had the smart idea of giving a dinner-party to their Swiss colleagues of the town of Zurich. The result was a very friendly contact with exchange of professional ideas and mutual understanding.

On the occasion of a recent visit to London by SWISSAIR, a delegation of Zurich Goldsmiths' Association had the generosity of offering to their English friends a beautiful Sterling Silver candlestick. This remarkable piece is engraved "Given 1963 to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths of London from the Zurich Goldsmiths united in the effort for art and craft". It is designed

and executed by the well-known Jewellers Meister in Zurich and shows highest standard of design and Swiss craftsmanship.

This candlestick was offered to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths of London on Wednesday, 4th December, at the monthly meeting of the wardens at Goldsmiths' Hall, Foster Lane.

RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Rudolf Schmutz (87), farmer, Oberbalm (Berne), former National Councillor.

Dr. Guido Mueller (88), Municipal President of Bienne for twenty-six years; former National Councillor; published a history of Bienne in 1962.

Giovanni Merlini (68), builder, Commune President of Minusio from 1932 to 1960.

Fritz Graedel (68), artisan craftsman, Huttwil, member of the Berne Grand Council since 1942.

Alfred Vouilloz (56), Martigny, lawyer and politician. Giovanni-Battista Nicola (76), Bellinzona, member of the Cantonal Court of Justice for twenty-five years.

Alfred Maret (80), Deputy Director of the Federal Alcohol Administration from 1928-1949.

Max Ratzenberg (83), Lausanne, former *Chargé d'Affaires* in Greece until 1943.

Brigadier Robert Ackermann (69), Saeriswil, pioneer of the Swiss Air Force.

Max Stahel (63), Professor of Rail and Road Construction at the ETH Zurich.

Dr. Ernst Gaeumann (70), Professor of Special Botany at the ETH Zurich.

Dr. Robert Flatt (66), Professor of Chemistry at the University of Lausanne.

Dominik Kenel-Erb, Arth, School Inspector and Head of the Cantonal Apprenticeship Board; member of the District Court of Schwyz.

Camille Dudan (74), well-known educationalist of the Suisse Romande.

Bruno Pedrazzini (50), teacher at the *Gymnasium* and Teachers' Training College of Locarno.

Dr. iur. Wilhelm Faessler (85), prominent lawyer in St. Gall.

Felix Paschoud (81), lawyer and Commune President of Lutry.

Emile Gardiol (74), engineer with the Montreux-Berner-Oberland-Bahn; builder of the Gardiol bridge near Les Avents.

Dr. h.c. Emil Scheitlin (87), well-known engineer in Winterthur.

Fritz Wachendorf (80), head of the firm L. Wachendorf & Co., in Basle.

Dr. Max A. Meier (53), Editor of the "Basler Nachrichten".

Americo Marazzi (84), Architect and Politician in Lugano.

William Arthur Thornton (84), English tailor in Basle since 1912; active member of the Anglo-Swiss Club.

Anne-Marie Vionnet (100), the oldest citizen of the Canton of Geneva.

[A.T.S.]