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personalities took part, such as the former member of the Government, Dr. Petitpierre, Federal Judge Favre and National Councillors Dürrenmatt, Hofer and Tschäppät. All these speakers representing the main Parties were against parliamentary elections of the Government, mainly on the ground that the present cumbersome method would be replaced by "massive bargaining behind the scenes" (Dürrenmatt) and Party-political considerations. There would be no practical advantages, and it would open the door to political agitation. At that meeting the only speaker in favour was *Redaktor* Pfister (Zurich) who supports the planned Motion by the "Landesring der Unabhängigen", which is to be put forward in the March session of Parliament, asking that, in future, Parliament would have to give consent to the distribution of Departments as suggested by the Federal Council.

There seem to be few, if any advantages, if Parliament took away the whole responsibility from the Federal Council. What is needed is more consideration of political responsibility by the Parties when they propose members to the Government as well as prior to a re-shuffle. Again we quote Peter Dürrenmatt: "The responsibilities at the moment are not clear. The governmental Parties which have no contact with each other, are glad to leave the decisions to the Federal Council who, in turn, acts in order to keep the interior peace and to cause the least friction. And afterwards when the results are accordingly unsatisfactory, the Press of the same governmental Parties revolts against the system". The writer concludes by saying that it is at this point that the will to reform should start. It should at long last become possible for the leaders of the various Parties in the Government to sit together and discuss such important problems as the election of Federal Councillors and the distribution of Departments and to fix the responsibilities.

(Compiled by the Editor from news and information received by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse, "Basler Nachrichten" and "Echo".)

#### NEWLY FORMED AND FOUNDED

During the past few months, the following organisations have come into being in Switzerland:

Swiss Federation of Translators and Interpreters; President David Perret, Neuchâtel.

Foundation for Adult Education under the auspices of the Swiss UNESCO Commission.

The first planetarium of Switzerland at the Museum of Transport in Lucern.

"Centre d'Etudes et de Sports Subaquatiques" (diving) in Neuchâtel.

Federation of Swiss Museums, Berne, with Prof. Jean Gabus, Director of the Museum of Ethnography in Neuchâtel, as President.

"Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Agrarrecht", Lucerne.

A Committee to prepare Switzerland's entry into UNO, Olten.

Federation of European Address Book Publishers, Zurich, by delegates from twelve European countries.

Union of European Bank Personnel Federations, in Berne.

[A.T.S.]

#### THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION

For the first time since Switzerland's Constitution came into being in 1848, the President of the Confederation for 1967 hails from the Valais. It is, therefore, not surprising that Federal Councillor Roger Bonvin, Federal Finance Minister, received a tumultuous reception on his return to Sion. When the election results in Parliament became known, a twenty-two-gun salute was fired in Sion, and flags were hoisted. 20,000 people gave the new President an enthusiastic welcome, and the Commune of Nendaz (near Sion) accorded him Honorary Citizenship. "The Times" carried a front-page picture of the presentation of a tankard made to Monsieur Bonvin by Valais girls in costume. Congratulatory telegrams arrived from Heads of States from all over the world, including H.H. the Pope.

Federal Councillor Bonvin was born on 12th September 1907, at Icogne-Lens near Sion, son of a surveyor. He went to school at Sion and Einsiedeln and studied engineering at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. He qualified in 1932 and then worked for two years on special projects of the Dixence S.A. Next, he was employed by the Federal Office of Topography, followed by appointments in the Valais, amongst them six years as chief of the cantonal *Baudirektion* of the Valais. Amongst the projects he was concerned with, are the development of the Furka, the Mauvoisin and Mattmark Power Stations.

In 1955, Monsieur Bonvin was elected Municipal President of Sion, from which time onwards he was also in the National Council. On 27th September 1962, he was elected to the Government as successor to Dr. J. Bourgknecht.

He is a Colonel in the Swiss Army and in command of a Mountain Infantry Regiment (Upper Valais). He was in charge of training high Alpine patrols, holds a pilot's certificate — at one time he piloted Swissair machines on several European routes — he is a qualified mountain guide and ski-ing instructor.

Monsieur Bonvin is the second Valaisan ever to be in the Government, the first having been Federal Councillor Joseph Escher. He has the gift of speech and is one of the few men in Parliament who speak without manuscript. He is married and has seven children. Incidentally, he is a relative of Mr. Edgar Bonvin, President of the City Swiss Club in London.

On 1st January, the new President gave the traditional New Year's message over the Swiss radio and television networks. In a special TV programme, "Un' Ora per Voi", he addressed the Italian workers in Switzerland whom, he said, he was particularly happy to know from his own days as engineer on many construction sites in the mountains.

[A.T.S.]

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