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LAST MINUTE INFORMATION . . .

At their last meeting before the holidays, the Federal Council granted 2.85m. francs for the realisation of a new kind of agricultural project (Aid to Developing Countries) in Ecuador, where the surplus of banana crops is to be used for fodder. For improving waste water disposal in five Communes in the Canton of Neuchâtel, the Government granted 1.1m. and for "Joint Church Aid" (Biafra), a further million francs was granted, provided the campaign of assistance could be carried out at all.

60% of the fuel customs duty will be used on road construction, 374 million francs.

Federal Councillor Spuehler has gone to East Africa on a visit. He will visit Swiss projects in a number of countries and pay courtesy calls on the respective Governments.

The definite figures of the plebiscite on the E.T.H. Law, the Student's Referendum, have been published: Of 550,592 voting papers, 521,313 were valid; the ayes were 179,765 and the nays 341,548. Voting participation 33.9%. Thus it was not, as had previously been stated, the worst ever since 1848; the 32.8% recorded in a federal plebiscite in August 1919 were the lowest (temporary regulations for the elections to the National Council).

The first heart transplant patient has died after 3 months.

Emperor Haile Selassie visited one of his grand-daughters in hospital in Lausanne.

The Swiss Alpine Rescue Service published the accounts for 1968; a surplus of 15,200 francs. 90 more flights took place than in 1967, a total of 393. 462 injured persons and 50 bodies were transported.

(Agency Télégraphique Suisse)

Vth GYMNAESTRADA International Event in Basle

The World Gymnastic Event, the Gymnaestrada, was held in Basle from 2nd to 6th July. Delegates from 27 nations came to the old city on the Rhine, and this fifth festival was a tremendous success. 20,000 spectators attended the opening ceremony at the St. Jakob Stadium. Men and women from all parts of the globe took part in the march past, and their costumes and flags created an impressive picture. The flag of the Swiss Federal Gymnastic Society (ETV) headed the Swiss contingent; the applause given to the Czech gymnasts was endless. Mr. Arthur Gander, President of the International Gymnastic Federation, addressed the gathering. Federal Councillor Gnaegi followed him and referred to Switzerland as one of the oldest gymnastic nations and expressed gratitude and pride that

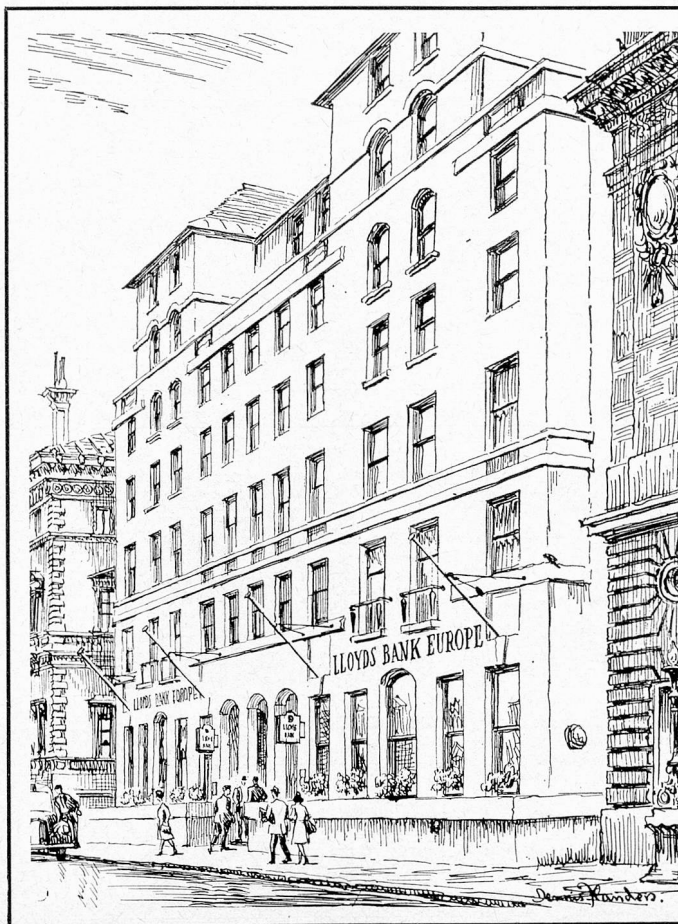
Basle had been chosen. Dancing and gymnastic demonstrations followed, crowned by a mass demonstration of 1,500 Swiss women gymnasts, accompanied by music.

The best weather was granted the five days, and performances were of a high standard in some events, of more charm and interesting interpretation in others. Women's events certainly dominated. Great Britain also had several participants in Basle. Although she has never been a gymnastic nation, the British performers left a good impression. A delightful demonstration was given by mothers and children from Germany. The Norwegians had as many as 550 participants, Switzerland an equally large number. 450 "Old-Age Gymnasts", all women, from Sweden, performed convincingly — the oldest was 76 years old.

Swiss Army Communications troops and several hundred journalists from many countries saw to it that everything was reported speedily. The "Blick" reporter was banned from officially reporting the Gymnaestrada, having "infamously and untruthfully offended thousands of foreign and inland gymnasts, thus injuring the ethical principles of such an event".

The verdict: No contest, only demonstrations of skill, grace and healthy exercise. An unqualified success.

(By Courtesy of A.T.S. and "Basler Nachrichten")



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