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LAST MINUTES INFORMATION

Flags were at half-mast over the Federal Palace in Berne in mourning for President Eisenhower. The Government sent the former Foreign Minister, Dr. Max Petitpierre, to represent Switzerland at the funeral. The Federal Council spoke of the great loss of a man who will never be forgotten in Switzerland "as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces which began the liberation of Europe from the yoke of Nazism and Fascism".

While the Buehrle affair of illegal arms exports has simmered down temporarily, an Initiative to get a national vote on increased control of arms production and a ban on exports is being launched. The committee preparing the draft amendment to the Federal Constitution, includes two National Councillors, cabaret artist Alfred Rasser (Independent) and Jean Ziegler of Geneva (Social Democrat). Accordingly, arms exports would only be possible to other neutral states, provided these did not pass them on.

Federal Councillor von Moos, in answer to a parliamentary question, has promised that the Government will study the possibility of creating a separate constituency for the Jura region of Berne. The question would, however, have to be discussed with representatives of the Cantons, as it would mean an amendment to the Constitution.

Another cut has been ordered by the Government in the number of foreign workers to be employed in Switzerland. The expected stabilisation was not reached last year; the number went up by 3% in 1968 (over 16,000), and by 4.3% in the number of foreigners, which reached 933,000 or 15.3% of the total foreign population. Firms are now to cut their foreign workers' quota by another 2% by the end of the year.

Two new appointments by the Federal Council: Fürsprecher Dr. iur. Kurt Locher (Oberegg, AI), as new Director of the Federal Tax Administration Office, in succession to Dr. P. Grossheintz; and Colonel of General Staff Jean-Charles Schmidt, from Ausserberg VS, as new Commander of Territorial Brigade X, promoting him to Brigadier, in succession to Brig. Guy de Weck.

The electorates of the Cantons of Zurich and St. Gall agreed to join in the project of the Technical College at Rapperswil (Zurich 85,607: 41,259 and St. Gall 28,293: 12,238). This means the green light for this new engineering school, to which project the Glarus *Landsgemeinde* and the Schwyz Cantonal Parliament had already said yes. The cost of 35 million francs will be carried by the four Cantons.

The Hottingen telephone catastrophe still means employment of over 400 people, 320 of whom PTT staff, who have so far re-connected 10,000 numbers out of 30,000 which were cut off by the fire over a month ago.

One of the worst explosions ever happened at the Swiss Explosives Factory at Dottikon, Aargau, at 7.15 a.m. on 8th April. According to first information, nine people were killed, some of them of the near-by Bally Shoe factory.

(By courtesy of Agence Télégraphique Suisse and "Weekly Tribune" Geneva.)

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