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SWISS NEWS

FEDERAL

A new P.T.T.

Swiss postal services are being reorganised into an independent state corporation which is to be run on the same lines as the Federal Railways. In the new organisation, the Federal Council will be entrusted with the supervision of the PTTs, the nomination of its managers and certain interventions in special cases (such as increasing the price of telephone calls). The chambers will have the prerogative of accepting the expenditure of the postal services on buildings, but not on their equipment (inscribed in the postal budget). The management of the PTTs are now given full freedom to run the enterprise profitably.

DEFENCE OF FRENCH IN THE FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION

The simultaneous translation of legislative and administrative texts into three national languages has always been a chief worry to the Federal Chancery. Owing to the constant shortage of qualified translators and the lack of necessary departments to cope with the increasing volume of legislative data, the personnel at the Chancery had to spend an undue amount of their time at translating documents, a task which was not their principal duty. As a result, the work of the department concerned with the final drafting and stylistic perfection of official texts has been overburdened. It has often proved necessary to use private translators. This inconvenient situation is outlined and reminded in the last federal management report and the remedies suggested are a reorganisation of federal translation services in accordance with the recommendations of the Hongler Commission. The same report states that just under 2,500 tons of paper were used last year in Federal offices. These offices were moreover equipped with some 24,000 machines.

A RECRUIT IS DROWNED

Each year, a number of Swiss citizens perish in army accidents. The most frequent of these accidents are road accidents, but sometimes a grenade explodes too soon, a gun is not bolted, a mine-thruster is not cleared, or a recruit gets blazed by a flame-thruster. The latest accident reported was a drowning incident in the course of a night exercise where a river had to be crossed. The canoe which was used held more than the maximum of twenty men stipulated by the regulations and tipped over. One of the soldiers (stationed at the Brugg training centre) never resurfaced alive.

PEASANTS CLAIM FOR MORE FEDERAL AID

A deputation of peasants went to see Mr. Brugger, successor to Mr. Schaffner as head of the Department of Public Economy, to persuade him to in-

crease the Federal support to agriculture. As in Great Britain, Swiss agriculture must necessarily be subsidised by the State and farmers have been feeling the rise in cost of living and the more stringent conditions of survival. Mr. Brugger has deferred their grievances to a special commission. The farmers want 150 million francs more a year and they have been suggesting an increase in the price of milk and meat.

A SOCIALIST INITIATIVE

During its last congress (2nd November of last year) the Swiss Socialist Party decided to launch two new welfare initiatives, one on improving state and private pension schemes and one on social insurance. Swiss Socialists want a compulsory social insurance (as it exists in France), a free treatment for serious illnesses, a pension worth 80 per cent of normal salary in the case of incapacity due to prolonged illness and a system whereby insurance benefits will not take the form of premiums but be awarded in proportion to income. The 88,527 signatures collected in favour of this new legislation have been deposited at the Federal Chancery by the president of the Swiss Socialist Party, the President and Secretary of the Swiss Syndical Union and the General Secretary of the Union of Postal Employees.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Recently, the National Council resolved that students should not be allowed to elect their professors. This roused the predictable answer by the union of Swiss students, which said that the National Council had shown a "hostile attitude towards them". They would use all available legal means to press for the election of professors by students and defend the rights that they had already acquired. Should those rights not be respected, then there would be sit-ins and strikes, the students warned. They would vote for the re-election of the National Council next year and reward the councillors who had shown understanding for their cause.

(ATS)

Petrol under the Alps

The Department of Transport and Communications, headed by Federal Councillor Bonvin, still thinks there may be petrol hidden somewhere in the Swiss subsoil. The "Swisspetrol Holding S.A." founded in 1959 and furnished with 60 million francs by various interests in the Swiss industry is now running out of funds and its extensive search in the Canton of Berne have produced no results whatever. Now that the Plateau has been thoroughly investigated, there remains the Alps. The experts at the Department of Transport would like 16 million francs to pay for a geological survey of the northern fringe of the Alps, where petrol could still be found. Drillings, which cost far more, would not be undertaken until the results of this preliminary survey

were known. Now that funds available for petrol prospecting have dried up and that Swiss industry is not prepared to stake any more money, the Federal Council will have to decide whether to stop looking for petrol in Switzerland altogether, whether to allow foreign companies to take over the search or whether to devote considerable Federal funds to the project.

A systematic compilation of federal law

According to a law passed in October 1966, the Federal Council has ordered the compilation of the complete body of federal law, with their national and international applications. The total work will be completed in 1974. It will have 26,000 pages and appear in 33 binders which will conveniently be able to receive new legal data. Subscription to the complete work is 980 francs. Six binders with approximately 3,650 pages have just come out. They give a complete presentation of public, private and penal law with pertaining procedures. This monumental task is being undertaken by the Federal Chancery.

Increase in old age pensions

The Federal Assembly (the two councils meeting in joint session) have accepted the 10 per cent increase in old age and disability pensions. This will take effect on January 1st, 1971, together with the revision of the complementary allowances from the cantons. The minimum pension for people living alone will be 200 to 220 francs a month. The minimum for couples will lie between 320 and 352 francs.

Has the Swiss Army been used by a playboy?

According to the German magazine "Stern", Gunter Sachs, the international playboy and short-lived husband of Brigitte Bardot, used a Swiss Air Force helicopter to carry personal furniture into his apartment in the "Grand Hotel Palace" of St. Moritz. This, naturally enough, troubled a Socialist national councillor, Mr. Renschler from Zurich, who asked the Federal Council for explanations.

The answer was that Army helicopters were only used in rescue operations or in the exceptional cases where civilian machines were unavailable. On 4th December 1968, the contractor who was renovating the hotel called on the Army to lift a heavy glass door on the roof of the hotel. There was, it was explained, no other means of bringing this object to its place otherwise than from the roof. The Army took on the job and charged a fee proportioned to the time the helicopter had been used. It had not been concerned with finding out who owned the glass door.

The truncheon is a weapon

In the course of the clash between police and students in front of the "Globus" in the summer of 1968 in Zurich, an overheated policeman hit a photographer and ripped away his camera. The photographer lodged a complaint following which the policeman was sentenced to seven days of de-



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ferred imprisonment by the district court of Zurich. He appealed to the supreme court of the Canton, which found that he had been judged too leniently in the first instance. The court had however no right to alter the original sentence. The photographer had withdrawn his complaint and this encouraged the policeman to appeal to the country's highest instance, the Federal Court in Lausanne. It confirmed the former judgments and ruled that the policeman had actually assaulted the photographer. An assault is an indictable offence whether or not there is a complaint. The Federal Tribunal recalled that the police may exercise constraint only within condition defined by law and in accordance with the principle that every intervention must be in measure with the situation. When duty calls for the use of weapons, and when their use is well founded, the policeman will always have the judge's support. Should he slightly overstep the limits imposed to the police, he may benefit from understanding. But the bludgeoning of persons not opposing the police in the accomplishment of its duties cannot be condoned in the interest of the police itself.

CRIMES AND ACCIDENTS

Helicopters used to defeat smugglers

Smuggling of coffee and cigarettes between Switzerland and Italy has been increasing from week to week. The average weekly catch by Italian custom officials is over 3.5 tons of goods, and this is estimated to lie far below a quarter of what is actually smuggled into Italy. To increase their efficiency, they have turned to the helicopter. Three days after having begun to use them, customs men had already discovered 15 cars used in contraband and confiscated 2,400 kilograms of cigarettes.

He gets six years for assaulting prostitutes

A 20-year-old farm labourer was sentenced to six years imprisonment for assaulting and robbing three prostitutes (on three different occasions). He was caught in September of 1968, after having found a prostitute at the Niederdorfstrasse in Zurich, accompanied her to a park, and taken the opportunity to stab her grievously and make away with 200 francs. Two months beforehand, he had blinded another prostitute with tear gas and stolen 400 francs from her.

Two Englishmen sentenced for circulating forged notes

In May 1969, a 43-year-old British-born restaurant owner bought 325 forged 100 franc notes a £2 each from English forgers and brought them to Zurich, where he sold 258 of them to a 22-year-old youth. The two men managed to get rid of a few notes at Kloten airport, at Interlaken, at Lausanne and Geneva. But their trip didn't last for long because a sales girl at a perfume shop discovered the forgery and they were caught soon after. The older man

was a well-known criminal and had already been convicted ten times. He was sentenced to five years of imprisonment and prohibited from entering Switzerland for life. The younger man who had only had one previous conviction at a juvenile court, got one year of imprisonment, a 500-franc fine and ten years of prohibited entry into Switzerland. He had accepted to deal with the forged notes because he was penniless and didn't have the means of returning back to England.

Six months of prison for selling pornography in Basle-Country

A casual labourer, aged 22, was sentenced by the penal course of Basle Land to six months of gaol for dealing in obscene publications smuggled into the country from Scandinavia. His sentence was commuted to a stay at a workhouse. The man had also been involved in whisky contraband into Switzerland and into Sweden, where he had been gaoled for four months. An argument with another dealer in pornography led to a fight in which he received a bullet wound last year.

(ATS)

A hunger-strike which ended badly

Mr. Rodolfo Wirz, who owned a public establishment in Giubiasco, was refused a license by the cantonal authorities of Ticino to run a night-club. He began a hunger-strike in protest and, a week later, the police gave in and he won his case. Unfortunately, he died of a heart-attack on the evening of the last day of his fast. He was only 36 and leaves a wife and two small children.

(ATS)

Prolific burglars are caught

A successful trio comprising two young men and a woman was caught red-handed in Geneva. They were transferred to Vaud, where they had mainly operated. They have admitted to over a hundred thefts, thirty of which were committed in Vaud, in jewellers, chemist shops and factories. Their booty was worth thousands of francs.

UNREST AT THE ART SCHOOL OF ZURICH

The supervisory committee of the "Kunstgewerbeschule", or college of arts, of Zurich decided that the experimental class called "forms and colours" had to go. This incensed the students and four teachers who worked in that class and they staged an internal revolt which has broken out into the open. The director of the school, Mr. Mark Buchmann, assembled the students to speak to them, but he was shouted down with cries of "Buchmann out!" and the student committee organised a press conference on the spot. The students complained that their director had never taken the interests of students into consideration and had only acted out of political interest. They decided to boycott the classes until their various demands were satisfied. A manifesto claiming that Mr. Buchmann was incompetent and that he had to abandon his job was signed by a great number of

the Kunstgewerbeschule's students. They received the backing of the students union of Zurich and of the students of the school of commerce.

As for the teachers of the school, they met to condemn the "form and colour" class and its four teachers unanimously. Supporting the director, they agreed that the school had to be reformed, but democratically. The "form and colour" class had not only acted undemocratically, but actually contaminated the whole school. The teachers decided to present their case and the true situation of the school to the municipal Council.

(ATS)

CANTONAL

A way to relieve Kloten Airport

It would be difficult to find an important airport in Europe without a committee of local residents campaigning against the inconvenience its existence means to their private lives. The "Association for the protection of the population living near Kloten Airport" has published a report saying that the only site capable of receiving an inter-continental airport of really large dimensions was the "Grand Marais" area between the three lakes of Neuchatel, Biel and Morat. Such an airport would involve considerably less de-forestation than an enlargement of Kloten airport and would be within ideal reach of the main population centres of Switzerland. Its runway could be built on Lake Neuchatel and its proximity to the Cressier refinery would make it easy to supply with fuel.

Foundation of a new society

A new society called "Die Schweizerische Vereinigung für Zukunftsforschung" (or Swiss Society for Prospective Research) has seen the day in Zurich. It is politically and religiously neutral and seeks to co-ordinate Swiss efforts in "futurology". The members of the provisional committee represent industry and the numerous national and international institutions interested in prospective studies.

A cultural event in La Chaux-de-Fonds

La Chaux-de-Fonds has every reason to be proud of its cultural heritage. Her artists are the best-known in Switzerland, and more especially the protagonists of La Chaux-de-Fonds' twentieth-century school. Here are some of the great names: L'Eplattenier, Fred Perrin, Le Corbusier, Lucien Schwob, Goerges Froidevaux, Claude Loewer, Hubert Queloiz, Carlo Barattelli, and, further back, the famous romantic artist Leopold Robert. A catalogue of the works of art contained in the art museum of La Chaux-de-Fonds has just been produced for the first time. This publication is an important event which reflects the vitality of the museum.

How to reduce abstentionism

The town council of Geneva has sent a questionnaire to the political parties in the Canton asking them for

suggestions on how to reduce current abstentionism. The questionnaire also asks for advice on mail and punch-card voting. There is an urgent need to reduce the numbers of officers called among the voting population to attend the polls. Another question asked is whether the delay between legislative and executive elections should be altered.

A case of antisemitism

The court of appeal of the Federal Tribunal has confirmed the sentence of Dr. James-Albert Matthez, of Vevey. He had been sentenced to 30 days of prison for slander, public provocation and disrespect of the freedom of belief by the penal court of Vevey. Dr. Matthez had published a book called "Le passe, les temps presents et la question juive", an outspoken antisemitic work. The court has ordered its complete destruction.

An unusual transport

An uncommon aircraft landed at Geneva Airport. It was an Antonov-22, a Russian machine capable of lifting 100 tons. It had come to pick up 40 tons of highly sophisticated equipment from the European Nuclear Research Centre in Geneva and fly it over to Moscow. It will eventually be transported by road to the Russian research centre of Serpukhov, which is working with the CERN on major nuclear experiments.

The youth of Obwald want to rejuvenate the executive

Following the renewal of the constitution of Obwald, all the members of the Canton's executive are to be re-elected. The members of the Obwald government have, with an average of sixty, a record age. The "Christliche Jungbürgerverband" of Obwald has decided to campaign for an alteration of this picture. They want leaders with the "physical and mental energy to cope with big problems of today". The youth is conservatively oriented and the chairman of the Conservative and ruling party of Obwald has agreed not to re-elect the two oldest Conservative members of the executive council. Other elderly conservatives have however been re-elected by the party and the generation gap has not narrowed.

Discovery of historical documents in Chur

Workers demolishing a building in Chur fell on twenty cases hidden in the masonry. They were stacked with documents belonging to a firm well known in the 18th century. These papers reveal the activities of the firm, which operated as a transport company across the Grisons and a bank. The innumerable business letters and dispatch orders which were found show that traffic was far greater in the Grisons valley during the years 1735-1780 than was formerly supposed. The cantonal archivist and the curator of the Rhaetian museum have begun sorting these documents.

A new system to double parking-space

A Zurich firm has found a way to

alleviate the town's acute parking problems by designing a hydraulic metal construction which lifts a car six feet high, so that a second car can park underneath. In this way the number of cars which can park on a given area is doubled. A public demonstration of the system has been made in Zurich and three installations are now in use.

The runway of the Basle-Mulhouse airport must be extended

According to the director of Basle Airport, Dr. Theodor Stauffer, the recent investments on the airport have given it a capacity of 2.5 to 3 million passengers a year. The runway, which is only 2.4 kilometres long, is sufficient for the aircraft used in European traffic. DC 9s can take off if their tanks are not completely full. But the larger inter-continental aircraft cannot use it and the runway must therefore urgently be extended to 4 km. A longer runway will also mean less noise for people living in the neighbourhood of the airport.

RECENT DEATHS

Henri de Ziegler, 84, in Geneva. He was a writer, a poet, a professor of Literature and a leading cultural figure in French-speaking Switzerland.

Mr. Hans Kramer, 77, in Basle. He was a lawyer and legal adviser to numerous companies. He was president of the former National Party of Basle and sat at the Grand Council. He held the rank of colonel and was head of the artillery of the 5th division in 1932.

Dr. Emilion Bianchi, 81, at Lugano. He was sent on the Balkan front in 1912 and was military doctor-in-chief of Ticino during the first world war. He was a member of the central committee of the Swiss Red Cross, chairman of the Ticino Society of Doctors, of the Alpine Club and of the Ticino League against cancer.

A YOUNG SWISS GIRL IS JUDGED IN BRAZIL

A Swiss student, Chantal Roussi and her companion Nemesio Gomes were arrested in a farm near Bahia in April 1969 and were charged with subversion. Arms were discovered in that farm and the Brazilian police have said that they belonged to the "Colina" revolutionary movement. Chantal Roussi's sister, Marie-Hélène Roussi, who was born in Berne, had been arrested even earlier and has been judged by a military tribunal. No detailed information is available. Swiss diplomatic services in Brazil are in constant touch with authorities in Berne so that the rights of the two detainees are respected. Their parents have been able to see them and reported that they have not been tortured.

A STRIKE IN GENEVA

A group of Spanish workmen employed by building firm Murer SA went on strike for a week in Geneva, a very rare occurrence in Switzerland. They were striking for better accommodation.