

Swiss news

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1971)**

Heft 1610-1611

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

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SWISS NEWS

SCHWARZENBACH: "SWITZERLAND SHOULD GRANT CREDITS TO SOUTHERN ITALY"

Mr. James Schwarzenbach, interviewed by an Italian Socialist paper, declared that part of the funds given by Switzerland to Africa should be reallocated to Southern Italy. Switzerland should help Italy in solving its unemployment problems and thereby prevent the massive emigration forced upon Italian workers seeking jobs in Switzerland and favouring her excessive economic expansion.

This most controversial of Swiss politicians added that he was on the side of the Italian immigrant worker. He said that the "spirit of exploitation" of certain industrialists was such that many Italian workers in Switzerland were effectively prevented from leading family lives. They were unable for example, to pay the kind of rents forced upon them. Mr. Schwarzenbach recognised that many Swiss employers actually bought houses to accommodate their imported labour, but maintained that these premises were usually old and acquired after the expulsion of the Swiss retired people occupying them previously. Such a situation was a ferment of hatred against foreigners in Switzerland. Asked about the legal and social status of alien workers, Mr. Schwarzenbach said that he approved all the current claims by Italian unions relating to equality of wages, freedom of movement, family life, housing, social security and education. "I agree", he said, "to modify the present status of seasonal workers. I believe that it is right for foreigners to participate in the life of the undertakings where they work without suffering discrimination. I believe that immigration countries should limit the disorganised influx of foreign workers in order to prevent a demographic inflation. I would add that, to my mind, foreign workers should not be involved in the political affairs of their host country".

(Tribune de Genève)

THE "MUSTERMESSE"

The range of products at this year's Swiss Industries Fair is covered by 27 trade groups. Over an exhibition area of 170,000 square metres, about 2,600 exhibitors will be showing in clearly arranged form products that are created for selling in the whole world. This comprehensive fair, which in 1971 will take place from 17th to 27th April and to which more than one million visitors are expected, represents a concentrated supply of Swiss production, especially in the field of export goods. Year by year, buyers from practically all countries of the world take advantage of this excellent opportunity of in-

forming themselves about the qualitatively high level of Swiss products and to do business accordingly.

Year by year buyers from as many as 120 countries and from all continents come to Basle for the Swiss Industries Fair (this year from 17th to 27th April) to inform themselves about the favourable offers of Swiss products. Against the total of more than one million visitors, the large number of foreign buyers can be taken as evidence of how much Swiss products are valued everywhere. The Swiss manufacturer does not relax his efforts to honour the "made in Switzerland" reputation and thus to reward the loyalty of the buyers at the fair. At the same time, he does everything possible to extend his circle of clients. That makes a visit to the Swiss Industries Fair worthwhile.

HISTORY VIEWED BY THE SEPARATISTS

Roland Béguelin, the fiery General Secretary of the Separatist Party in the Jura, renewed his wooing campaign in Western Switzerland by teaching the people of Vaud that they should be on the side of the Separatists. The canton of Vaud and the Jura share a common past of subjection to the "Bernese Bear". But by the time the Jura had come under Bernese domination Vaud had already become an independent canton. Invoking Swiss history in support of their cause, Roland Béguelin and fellow Separatists have been proclaiming a new thesis according to which the battle of Grandson against the forces of Charles the Bold in 1576 was not won by the Bernese. Vaudois commentators have retorted that it is still better for Jurassians to suffer Bernese co-existence than Burgundian domination.

The trial has begun in the Federal Court of Lausanne of a number of Separatists who had upset the proceedings of the National Council last year. The Separatists have made a great case of this affair and arrived in force in Lausanne for a demonstration on the opening day of the trial. It was organised by a small and stocky ex-physics student, Pierre Grimm, who has become head of the "Group Béliet", the Separatist militant youth movement.

The movement appears to be losing ground in its stronghold of Delémont. Following the cantonal elections of May 1st last, the Anti-Separatist minority has increased its representation in the District by 7 per cent to 20 per cent. A doctor in Bassecourt, Paul Gehler, has kindled a movement in his area to reject Separatist ideals. The Separatists are therefore more or less reduced to make their existence felt by organising demonstrations and by plenty of vocal action against Berne. They have sought support in France. Roland Béguelin went on a conference tour to Paris and Besançon and campaigned for his movement. He was interviewed

by "Le Monde" and said that the effectiveness of the Palestinians' act of aerial terrorism in letting them win their demands had been a source of inspiration to the Separatist youth of the Jura. This statement was duly qualified as a "piece of blackmail" by a Geneva daily. Since "*Quebec Libre*" rhymes with "*Jura Libre*" the Separatists will for ever remain admirers of General De Gaulle. They sent a reputed Jurasian terrorist to carry a letter of condolence to Madame De Gaulle. The letter said that the General had been a symbol of hope for the Jurassian people.

THE ARMED FORCES' SHOPPING LIST FOR 1971

Parliament has passed an expenditure of 646 million francs, a little less than half the defence budget, for the acquisition of new material in 1971. Such was the price of keeping the Swiss Army a modern fighting force. The expense will cover the purchase of extensive transport equipment and fit within a general plan of increasing the motorisation and overland manoeuvrability of the infantry. A much debated item was the 105 million-franc credit passed for the acquisition of second-hand "Hunter" jet fighters from their makers, Hawker Siddeley. These planes will serve to bridge the gap between the technically and tactically obsolete "Venoms" and the new generation of fighters which will equip the Air Force in the mid-seventies. The choice of a new model has not yet been made although the experts have been studying the performances of a number of possible planes for the past two years. The list includes the American "Corsair", the "Fiat", the "Mirage 5", the Anglo-French "Jaguar", and, more recently, the "Harrier", the British-built vertical take-off aircraft. The thirty "Hunters" will be bought dismantled and entirely re-serviced by Hawker Siddeley. They will be re-assembled in Switzerland. They will be as good as new although they are a relatively old type of aircraft. Other items included in the 646 million-franc package will be 47 million francs' worth of new machine-guns, 231 million francs of communications electronics and a number of 50-ton capacity transportable bridges for the engineers corps. Much of this material will be acquired abroad, in particular the new portable walkie-talkies introduced in infantry. In some cases this was made necessary because the required hardware was not produced in Switzerland, but the decision also tallied with the official policy of not overburdening the economy.

THE UNWAVERING MAJOR

When the Federal Council first decided to yield to the pressures of the Palestinian terrorists who had sky-jacked a Swissair airliner last year, a Genevese officer, Major Troyon, sent his military booklet to the Military De-

partment in a gesture of resignation together with an open letter to Mr. Gnaegi, Head of the Department, in which he tempered against the "shameful capitulation" of the Federal Council. His resignation was refused, he was reprimanded and punished militarily for having involved the Army in a political debate with which it had nothing to do. Two months later the "Oswald Report" appeared and prompted him to repeat his act. The relaxed prescriptions of Army conduct put forward in this report so outraged Major Troyon that he sent his military booklet to the Department a second time. His open letter to Mr. Gnaegi, now President of the Confederation, was however stopped along the pipeline and never reached him. This time the major may be abandoning his stripes for good. His point was that: "The demission and demagoguery of the Report will not attract one single hippy to the Army".

SWISS AID TO TIBETAN REFUGEES

In March, 1959, the Chinese invaded Tibet. They bombed the capital Lhasa and forced the Dalai Lhama and 73,000 followers into exile. The great majority of these refugees now live in camps in India and 16,000 of them are supported in the neighbouring states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Very few have left Asia. A thousand have been transplanted to South East Asia, and the majority of the young refugees flown to Europe found a haven in

Switzerland. There are at present 820 Tibetans in Pestalozzi villages and other charitable institutions. Switzerland has thus concentrated her regular humanitarian aid to the Indian sub-continent into the support given to the refugee camp of Dharamsala. Swiss funds have helped to build a school with 700 children and a technical college which has so far trained 150 young Tibetans into a profession. A Tibetan Institute has furthermore been created at Rilon, near Winterthur. By and large Switzerland is directly responsible for the welfare of some 8,000 Tibetan refugees. Much of the help offered has been in medical assistance against tuberculosis, a disease which has caused the death of an appalling number of refugees.

THE "CORBUSIER CENTRE" IN DIFFICULTY

The last building Le Corbusier ever drew is an elegant elongated cube covered by a concrete panoply of a geometric design at Zurichhorn, near Kloten Airport. This building was promoted by a Le Corbusier devotee, Frau Heidi Weber, to the status of a "Centre Le Corbusier" in which conferences and debates on architecture and town planning were held. This shrine, consecrated to the greatest of Swiss architects, ran into difficulties last year and made a loss of some 240,000 francs. Its handy position near the airport made it an attraction for passengers immobilised by long hours of waiting. Despite

the presence of this fortuitous public the future of a Le Corbusier Centre in Zurich as a private institution is bleak, and other ways will have to be sought to keep it alive. Le Corbusier said that "Les Suisses n'ont jamais été chics avec moi". Somewhere in Zurich people are trying to decide whether they should behave otherwise towards his memory.

(Neue Zürcher Zeitung)

A BISHOP ACCUSED

A lawyer from Kloten lodged a complaint in court against the Bishop of the Valais, Monseigneur Nestor Adam, for alleged misappropriation of funds intended to the victims of East Pakistan. The lawyer's charges were specifically directed against one of his direct subordinates, the Abbé Tscherrig, and founded on press reports on a collection which had raised 300,000 francs for the Pakistan disaster. The lawyer claimed that no one knew what had been done with the money and demanded an enquiry. Reports had furthermore circulated on the proposed expenditure of 150,000 francs on the extension of a Cistercian monastery in the Valais. The lawyer alleged that this sum had been sloughed off the original disaster fund. The Abbé Tscherrig countered these charges and said that the proceeds of the collection (which he had organised himself under the auspices of the Caritas organisation) had been sent to the Pope. As for the improvement of a Cistercian monastery in the Sion diocese, it had been author-

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ised by the Bishop and the necessary money would be raised in another fund raising campaign. The people of the Catholic Valais were understandably troubled by these allegations implicating their revered Bishop.

THE FIRST WOMAN ON EVEREST

The first woman to set foot on the summit of Mount Everest may well be a Swiss woman, Yvette Vaucher. She is in the international party now attempting to scale the south face of Everest for the first time. Yvette Vaucher will not, however, use this stupendous 8,000 ft. "direct route" but will go on the West Ridge Route first used by the American expedition of 1963. Yvette Vaucher, 41, is a well known figure in Switzerland and a reputed parachutist. She holds all the female free fall records. She married a school-teacher, Michel Vaucher, who was a climbing addict, and together they have made all the most difficult climbs of the Alps.

A PEASANT "OIL KING"

A 35 year old peasant and father of eight, Aloïs Schürmann, owner of a small farm above Zeil in Canton Lucerne, has proposed an unusual deal to the Government of Lucerne: If it is ready to guarantee him a substantial profit, he will be ready to reveal the location of an important oilfield.

This peasant, apparently fired by the ambition of being Switzerland's first petrol king, wrote about his finds to the authorities of Lucerne in a neatly written letter.

"For twenty years I have been concerned in my sparetime with petrol in the Canton, and more especially in the Hinterland of Lucerne" he wrote. He continued to explain that a few years ago experts had predicted that oil would be found at Pfaffnau. Several millions were invested there in vain prospecting, but, asserts Aloïs Schürmann, "his" own petrol field is different. It lies at only 165 metres underground, as compared with 1,000-metre deep oilfields sought for in the rest of the country. "All my observations are an eloquent proof that I am on the right track" he asserts. Schürmann will not give any proof nor go into any more detail than to disclose that he has found oil somewhere between Gettnau and Zeil. He became convinced 18 months ago that there was oil in the region because the streams smelt of petrol and their surface was coloured by an oily film. He claimed to have seen water mixed with petrol seeping out from the ground and said that he had often found earth imbibed with oil. He had furthermore discovered sand pockets soaked in petrol after the thaw and earth movements in Spring.

The Lucerne Government was astonished and couldn't make out what to think of the offer. Was Aloïs Schürmann a crackpot? It is indeed compromising for a cantonal government to

make a deal on what may perhaps be a gigantic leg-pull. As for Schürmann, he is determined to disclose his secret to a better bidder if Lucerne lets him down.

A POOR RECORD AT GENEVA UNIVERSITY

Hardly over a third of the students who enrolled for a complete course of study at Geneva University between 1955 and 1963 came out with a degree. Such were the conclusions of a study on the "failures in the course of study" remitted to the Rectorate of the University of Geneva. These results were based on 4,500 individual dossiers which will now be further processed by computers. They have also somewhat tarnished the image of the university and its efficiency. Some quarters believe that University entrance requirements should be made more stringent. Others would like to see a limited number of vacancies each year.

PRACTICAL JOKES AGAINST POLITICAL LEADERS

A number of Swiss politicians, including Mr. Rudolph Gnaegi, President of the Confederation, received little parcels containing small charges of powder dosed to set themselves alight when the parcels were opened. The Federal Attorney, Mr. Walder, who disclosed this gimmicky piece of news, made the necessary precision that the fact that Mr. Gnaegi was actually in hospital at the time of expedition of these parcels was totally unrelated to this incident! The President's mail, he said, was technically supervised by the criminal police so that similar attempts would always fail. All the parcels seem to have been sent by the same person somewhere in Berne and signed by a so-called "*Mouvement Séparatiste Révolutionnaire*". However, the leader of the Separatist Movement Roland Béguelin disclaimed any knowledge of such a groupment.

SPRING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

The National Council and the Council of State began a busy three-week session on Monday, 1st March. The first item on the National Council's agenda will be the extension in time of the present system of federal taxation. This (at the time of writing) was expected to be passed. Many proposals were planned for debate, namely: The introduction of a direct tax imposed on a category of large firms; the increase from 9.5 per cent to 12 per cent of the maximum level of federal income tax; the introduction of taxation on the income of married women and, finally, an adjustment in the equalisation of cantonal contributions to the federal central state.

Other matters to be discussed will be: Supplementary federal aid to housing and building (eight motions and

postulates have been tabled on this subject); new credits for the railway, road and navigation enterprises; the fight against aircraft noise and the question of a new international convention on air transport.

The heated and unfinished debate of January on the political activities of refugees will be resumed.

The Council of State will discuss new legislation on work contracts and the so-called "code of obligations". It will also attend to the new provisions of the watch-making industry and legal protection of the Swiss-made brand of watches, as well as a proposed law on expropriation.

These are the main themes, but debates are expected on the (recurring) milk problem, the proposed 400 million francs of federal aid to the Third World, on environment, invalidity insurance, to name but a few. Sixty personal interventions require answers from the Federal Council.

TO REBUILD LUCERNE RAILWAY STATION

Over a thousand political personalities, Federal Railways representatives and citizens from Lucerne met in a round-table discussion to discuss whether Lucerne's proud railway station, whose left frontal wing was gutted by fire on 5th February, should be entirely rebuilt. The other alternative would be to reconstruct the damaged parts, but the experts have not yet determined whether the outer walls of the destroyed wing and of the central hall will be strong enough to sustain a new construction. The people of Lucerne are concerned over the fate of their railway station, which will be 75 years old this year. A Federal Railways official said that the construction of an entirely new station could be envisaged. He foresaw an imminent national competition among Swiss architects for the submission of a new project.

FIRST "JUMBO" FOR SWISSAIR

Our national air carrier took proud possession of its first, spanking new Boeing 747 on Saturday, 27th February. It had been flown over from Seattle in one big non-stop 6,000 mile jump lasting just eleven hours and was manned by Swissair pilots already schooled into these new machines. A further 130 festive passengers were on board, nearly all of them Swissair, Boeing and Pratt and Whitney executives. The Swiss consul in Seattle was there too. The aircraft, with registration number HB-IGA is expected to start its first trans-Atlantic flights in the middle of March. Its first scheduled flight was however planned for 1st April and each of its 32 First Class and 321 Economy Class seats have been reserved. The monster weighs 330 tons at take-off, 150 of which is kerosene.

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RAILWAY DISASTER AT AITRANG

The "Bavaria" or regular Trans Europe Express from Munich to Zurich was derailed on a sharp bend outside the village of Aitrang in southern Germany. The disaster cost the lives of 28 passengers, including 13 Swiss and the stage manager Leonard Steckel. The luxury express had rocketed towards this notoriously dangerous bend at 132 km/h when the prescribed speed was 80 km/h. The enquiry has ascertained that the 50 year old driver from Lindau (Zh), who was also a victim of the crash, had been conscious before the accident happened. All "TEE" engines are equipped with a "dead man's pedal", namely, a pedal which must be constantly pressed down by the driver and which automatically actuates an emergency stop of the train should he let it go as a result of a sudden heart attack or unconsciousness. Enquirers believe that the driver at Aitrang may have misjudged his position because of the night and the fog.

SUPER CERN TO BE BUILT

The Council of Cern, the European organisation for nuclear research, decided on February 20th, to go ahead with the construction of a big new atom smasher for fundamental research into the nature of matter (see the "SO" of 22nd January). This decision was reached earlier than had been at first predicted. Ten of the 12 Cern countries will cover the cost of the project. Denmark and Greece are not taking part. The main contributors will be West Germany (23.96%), Britain (22.25), France (20.48) and Italy (13.37).

THE "BELIER TRIAL" IN LAUSANNE

Eleven members of the Groupe Bélier, charged with having occupied Police headquarters in Delémont on 29th June, 1968 and with having created a disruption of the proceedings of the National Council on 11th December of the same year were absent from their trial at the Federal Court in Lausanne. Instead, they had left with their leader Pierre Grimm for Strasburg and lodged a complaint against their "victimisation" with the European Commission for Human Rights. There was, of course, nothing the Commission could do, since Switzerland was not a member of it. They simultaneously sent a strongly-worded letter to the Court in Lausanne, explaining that because the witnesses named by the Defence had been rejected and also because their trial had been staged by the State in a biased way they had decided not to take part in a masquerade of justice. The court heard the letter with surprise, but decided to ignore this contempt of court and proceed with the trial. The court wanted to keep it down to sensible proportions. There was no need to transform Lausanne into another Burgos!

Five charges had been initially levelled against the 11 Separatists. The two most serious were the "formation of illicit groups" and the "attacks against constitutional order". They were dropped in a move to keep the affair down to its correct proportions. They would have entailed sentences of up to 5 years. The outcome of the trial was surprisingly lenient. The Attorney-General demanded sentences ranging from a few days to a month's imprisonment for the accused and the leaders of the Bélier Group together with moderate fines.

A HIGHER OFFICER KILLED DURING MANOEUVRES

The Commander of the 4th Army Corps, Colonel Adolf Hanslin, was killed when his helicopter struck a high tension line and crashed near Ruti, in the Zurich Oberland. The pilot and an officer of his general staff were seriously injured. Colonel Hanslin was commanding a widescale combat exercise in which part of the 33,000 troops under his command were participating. He was born in Diesshofen in 1911 and promoted Commander of the 4th Division in 1962.

GUARANTEED OLD AGE INCOME IN ZURICH

The people of Zurich passed a new cantonal law on Old Age Pension on February 7th. They agreed that the canton should supplement the income derived from the normal State Old Age Pension (AHV) by benefits maintaining the income of old people above a minimum level. For example, a celibate pensioner with no private income is now guaranteed a yearly income of 6,000 francs (or 500 francs a month) by these cantonal supplementary benefits. To this is added a rent subsidy not exceeding 1,200 francs. A married couple is guaranteed an income of 9,600 a year, or 800 francs a month.

But besides these cantonal "Zusatzleistungen" granted in excess of AHV pensions, the communes allocate additional old age subsidies to their own elder members. Following the 7th February vote, the Canton of Zurich will have to redefine their old age assistance policies. It is generally felt in Switzerland that while 500 francs a month may protect lonely pensioners from material misery, it still condemns them to a very frugal existence. Under the various schemes which the communes of Zurich are developing, married pensioners in the near future may get a maximum effective income of 18,000 francs, as in the case of Kusnacht.

Swiss Development Aid

OECD's Development Aid Committee (DAC) recently carried out the annual examination of Switzerland's efforts and development aid policy. It noted that Switzerland's total contribution of financial resources to the de-

veloping countries fell from 1968 to 1969, dropping from 241 to 119 million dollars, owing to a sudden falling off in the outgoings of private capital. Expressed as a percentage of the gross national product, this total contribution fell from 1.41% to 0.64%. The Committee, however, greeted with satisfaction the statement recently made by the Swiss government on the occasion of the "Second Decade of Development", in which the Swiss government expressed its intention to take steps with a view to achieving as regularly as possible the target of 1% of the GNP, by means of a gradual strengthening of public development aid. The latter has already undergone a substantial growth during the last two years to top the 30 million dollar mark in 1969. Expressed as a percentage of the GNP, the volume of public development aid has however not exceeded 0.16%, a proportion decidedly lower than the average recorded for countries belonging to DAC. The Committee was pleased with the size of the elements of the donation represented by Switzerland's public development aid and noted that Switzerland planned unilaterally to release its bilateral loans to development.

(OSEC)

By Train with no need for Money

Since 1st December, all Swiss Federal Railway ticket offices have been accepting the cheques presented to them by holders of "Swiss Cheque" cards. It should be remembered that this card issued by Swiss banks entitles the holder, without any special formalities, to cash over the counters of almost all banks in Europe checks not exceeding S.Fr. 300 (U.S. \$69.8) in amount. Other Swiss transport concerns involved in the direct carriage of passengers and baggage (private railways, shipping and road transport companies) have joined in the scheme with the Swiss Federal Railways. In order to prevent any delays at ticket offices,

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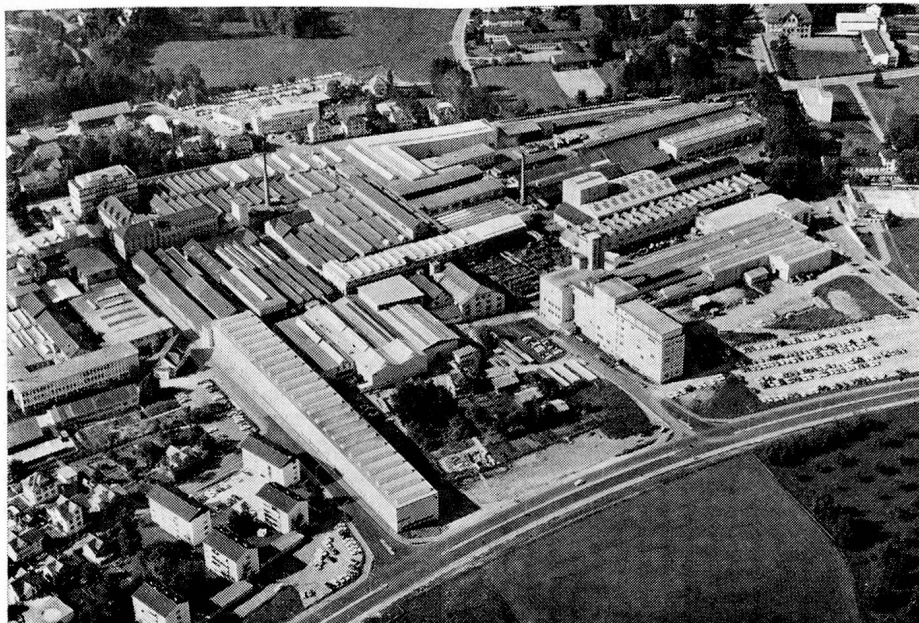
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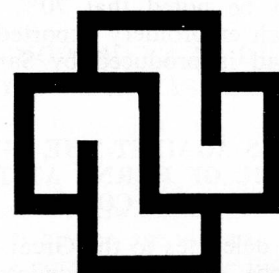
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(OSEC)

Swiss Embroiderers Work for one of the Biggest Museums in the World

The American wing in the famous Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York will soon be re-opened to the public. Thanks to a Swiss embroidery firm, visitors to this section will be able to admire the copies of six pairs of richly embroidered curtains. The originals, whose age was estimated to be in the neighbourhood of a hundred years, had in fact become so fragile that they had to be replaced. Looking for a firm capable of copying these masterpieces of the ancient art of embroidery, the Museum selected the firm of Sandheer Textiles, at Berneck (canton of St. Gall), which still employs a number of women embroiderers trained to do this kind of work. The manufacturing programme of this firm founded at the beginning of the century includes other sectors too; the firm's mainstay is the chain-stitch department manufacturing tablecloths and curtains appreciated all over the world. While all the designs are created in the firm's workshop, they are generally executed in the homes of over 700 men and women living in the Rhine valley, Toggenburg, Appenzell, the Ticino and even the Austrian Voralberg. A second department manufactures embroidered edgings and trimmings for dresses and bed-linen, while a third, more recent, goes in for the manufacture of layettes. It should be noted that 70% of all chain-stitch embroidery exported from Switzerland is produced by Sandheer Textiles.

(OSEC)

CHARGES AGAINST THE GREAT COUNCIL OF BERNE AT THE FEDERAL COURT

Two delegates to the Great Council of Berne, carrying a mandate from 16 of their political colleagues, lodged a complaint at the Federal Tribunal against the Great Council for having passed what they believed to have been an unconstitutional decree. On February 1st, the Great Council had adopted a decree on the reorganisation of the Executive. The third article of this decree was the main object of their complaint. It laid down that: "The government of Berne is entitled to decree a *state of emergency* should the country be implicated in acts of war or if *other causes* should warrant it." The two delegates contended that all the provisions on a hypothetical "state of emergency" were already contained in the 39th article of the cantonal constitution and should not therefore have appeared in the newly drafted decree. It should have been limited to purely

administrative matters. In a 14 page document, the two scrupulous constitutionalists went on to show that, according to the 39th article, the Executive should "notify the Great Council *immediately* of any measures of exception."

The contested decree ruled on the other hand that "the Executive Council will present a report to the Great Council on the measures which it has taken in any particular case". In other words, the 1st February decree (which, in fact, supplemented the actual 44th article of the Cantonal Constitution) not only duplicated the provisions of the 39th article, but were less democratic and more arbitrary as they did not bind the Executive to an immediate explanation of its actions to Parliament, and furthermore referred to unspecified "other causes". A minority motion to introduce a "clause of immediacy" in the 1st February decree had been defeated during its reading. One of the two plaintiffs was a Jurassian 3rd Force delegate. His party was concerned that the decree should give the means to the Bernese Government of a possible rash intervention in the political life of the Jura.

The Federal Court was seized with another political action at the same time. A citizen from Oberueti in Canton Aargau called on the Court to annul the popular verdict expressed in the 7th February national referendum giving the right of vote to women. He was not opposed to women's rights, he declared, but contended that the people had been asked to answer two very different questions: one on the right of vote and one on female political eligibility, and give one answer. The Court declared the case to be beyond its competence and made it known that the Special Tribunal for administrative matters of the Federal Court would not take it on either.

THE PROBLEMS POSED BY THE RHINE

The proposed bridge over the Rhine at Hemishofen was the key subject of the last session of the Great Council of Schaffhausen. The ancient bridge across the Rhine at the small town of Hemishofen above Stein am Rhein has lived its useful life and must be replaced. Although it was originally a fairly minor link, it has become of great importance to Schaffhausen. As it connects Schaffhausen and Thurgau, the authorities of Schaffhausen would like their neighbours to contribute to its cost. But the Hemishofen road bridge is of secondary importance to Thurgau, who would rather spend its spare funds on more pressing projects. The problem of the replacement of this bridge has been linked for some time with the problems of the erection of a regulating dam on the Rhine, possibly at Stein am Rhein. This is a question about which Thurgau, which has suffered many disastrous floods in its his-

tory, is far more concerned.

Schaffhausen has, however, been opposed to a regulation of the Rhine ever since it was suggested. Speakers at the Great Council urged the Government to yield on this point as it would encourage Thurgau to be more co-operative in helping to pay for the Hemishofen Bridge. Other speakers believed that Schaffhausen should carry the whole burden itself. Others said that there were other ways to tame the Rhine besides a dam and that these should first be investigated seriously before the two cantons begin to bargain. A third speaker held that the regulation of the Rhine was an entirely federal attribution as it involved neighbouring Germany. It was therefore pointless and unconstitutional to bargain with Thurgau on such a point. His stand carried the day.

STRIKES, FOR A CHANGE . . .

Judged by British standards, the strikes which crippled three metal-working factories in Geneva was insignificant. Eight hundred workers from the firms "Verntissa", "Hispano-Oerlikon" and "Ateliers des Charmilles" laid down their tools in protest against a convention signed by their own unions and the federation of metal-working industries according to which all workers in the branch were to receive an increase of 7 per cent plus a bonus of 3 per cent dependant on individual performance. It was the allocation of this "personalised" supplement which incensed the workers from the three firms concerned. Trouble started at the "Verntissa" factory in the suburb of Vernier, and unofficial strikers elected a cosmopolitan strike committee of four—a Swiss, a Frenchman, a Spaniard and an Italian—to negotiate with the Union of Metal-Working Industries.

A situation therefore arose where the workers' union and the employers took a common stand against the strike. This original development is typical of the labour context in Switzerland. Over 40 per cent of the 10,000 manual work force of Geneva's metal industry is foreign. Most of these workers are not unionised. In fact, they view the unions with suspicion. They are not educated in the practice of negotiation which have been the accepted rule ever since the "Peace of Labour" of 1936 set the framework of industrial relations in Switzerland. On the other hand, many of the younger Swiss elements entering the work force are imbued with militant ideas and tend to consider the unions as bureaucratic machinery. This means that a major Swiss union has failed to keep a hold on a working force with a changed mentality. Support for the strikers was by no means total however and many workers had rather hesitatingly followed the strike in a forced movement of solidarity, remaining uneasy about a possible state of strife which they did

not want. The incident was partly compounded by the fact that both "Vern-tissa" and "Hispano-Oerlikon", formerly part of "Hispano-Suiza" have been taken over by "Sulzer" and "Buehrle" respectively, and that the new orders dictated from German-Switzerland had been a psychological strain on part of the personnel.

(Tribune de Genève)

A SWISS COLONY HALF AN HOUR FROM HOME!

The fact that the Swiss living in the "Pays de Gex" should feel the need to unite in a "Swiss Colony" would seem to disprove the idea that the tenacity of national life abroad is dependant on the distance from home. Gex is a small French town on the foot of the Faucille Pass hardly twenty minutes away from Geneva. Yet the Swiss there have managed to raise the money for a new chalet to be dedicated to Franco-Swiss friendship and due to be opened on 1st August. They invited Mr. L. Nicole, President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, at their 1971 General Assembly. Reviewing the activities of the past year, their President mentioned two outings to alpine sites in Switzerland which had attracted 120 participants. The 1st August celebration had been attended by 800 Swiss. Despite the liveliness of these activities, the borderer-expatriates of Gex need new blood. The Committee of the Swiss of Gex has invited 11 young people to form a commission with the objectives of defining the new tasks of the Society and of preparing for the succession of the Committee.

GABRIEL LEBEDINSKY APPEALS

Gabriel Lebedinsky, the principal accused at the Buehrle Trial, has appealed against his sentence and will be retried by the special Supreme Court of Appeal composed of former federal judges, none of which are members of the Federal Penal Court. Lebedinsky was condemned to 18 months imprisonment for his major involvement in the "Buehrle affair", in which over 50m francs of arms had been exported to countries on the Arms Ban List with the help of illegal export documents. Lebedinsky, 57, was the sales director at Buehrle-Oerlikon during the period these dealings were carried out. Two other accused, Mr. Max Meili, 70, and Mr. Alexandre Gelbert, 61, former executives at the same company, were each sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, but obtained medical certificates attesting that their state of health did not allow them to serve such a period of imprisonment. These certificates and their sources will be examined by an official doctor. As for Lebedinsky, he is still free and has not yet begun to serve his sentence. The Buehrle Trial which took place in Lausanne last December caused quiet a sensation by the leniency of the sentence passed on

Dr. Dieter Buehrle, owner and managing director of the firm. He got away with the trifling fine of 20,000 francs.

A BLUNDER WITH HEAVY CONSEQUENCES

At the end of December 1968, 80 persons showed symptoms of poisoning after having drunk a "tonic wine" offered as an end-of-year gift by a large chemist store in Zurich. The production manager and technical director of the firm in Muttentz which produced this potion appeared before the penal court of Basle Land. The production manager was sentenced to five months imprisonment with remission and his senior colleague was acquitted.

The incident happened on 6th December, 1968. The production manager had ordered an Italian labourer to fill a 25-litre can with the tonic wine, which had already been prepared. The Italian had only been employed with the firm for two months and was not yet used to working in the laboratory. As an urgent order for henbane dye had just been sent in, he decided to do this job first. Proceeding again with his handling of the tonic wine, he accidentally mixed the dye with the wine, both liquids resembling each other closely and being stored in identical recipients. He filled one which already contained 15 litres of dye with tonic wine and placed the can with those already filled and ready for delivery.

The production manager, who had previously told his employee to be careful not to confuse the two liquids, noticed the disappearance of his can of dye and realised the error. However, he didn't consider it necessary to check each recipient and took no steps to avert a possible danger, thinking that the consumers of his tonic wine would at worst feel a little stomach pain. According to his initial declaration, he wasn't fully aware of the dangers of henbane dye. The chemist soon enquired at the firm, having received the first complaints from his customers. The technical production manager didn't mention that there had been a confusion with the cans. It was decided at his trial not to lay charges on the Italian labourer because, with his level of information, he could not be held responsible for the incident.

(ATS)

DRUG CASES IN GENEVA

A young Pakistani was arrested at Cointrin Airport with 70 lbs of hashish in his suitcases. His lawyer pleaded not guilty and alleged that his client had been the victim of a Pakistani racket which had mirrored before him the promise of a free journey to London and work in Britain in exchange for this small "service". The accused claimed his innocence and vowed that he ignored the contents of his luggage.

Another case involved three young men from Geneva who had tangled with narcotics traffic to the United

States. Having established contact with the specialised French and English mafias, their association succeeded in shipping 100 kg of heroin to the United States with a market value of £250,000 and bringing them a net profit of £40,000. The drug was smuggled in small compartments in American airliners. This trail was eventually discovered and the four associates then smuggled their merchandise by sea. This time, the heroin was encased in tins of Spanish food. An import firm for these products was specially set up in the United States. Some of the tins were emptied of their contents and closed again with the original seal. They managed in this way to send 67 kg of heroin to the United States and collect £22,000. However 57 kg were seized by the American police and the four acolytes arrested in Switzerland.

The prosecution demanded sentences of 6 years, 5 years and 18 months respectively for the three accused with fines of 20,000, 15,000 and 5,000 francs and the deprivation of their civic rights. The defence attempted to reduce the magnitude of their offence, demonstrating that the three accused were amateurs and pawns in a large scale racket whose promoters were the real culprits. The lawyers of the three accused urged the court not to make an example out of their case and judge them only for what they had actually done.

In the event they were condemned to prison sentences of 5 years, 4 years and 18 months respectively and ordered to pay the fines demanded by the prosecution. This case, tried in a Police Court, according to Swiss practice, was the most important narcotics affair ever tried in Switzerland.

BISHOPS MEET TO DISCUSS THE "CARITAS AFFAIR"

The Bishops Conference held a meeting at Fribourg on 4th March to discuss the problems common to the dioceses of Switzerland. The main problem on the agenda was the rising wave of pornography. The Bishops also discussed the development of the "Caritas Affair" and examined a preliminary report prepared for them by the Conference Secretary on the development of the affair following the resignation of the director of Caritas and the appointment of a commission of enquiry. The Bishops called for a speedy elucidation of the points still unclear in this affair and agreed to take the necessary steps to endow the Swiss Caritas organisation with a structure and a management which would continue to inspire confidence among Catholics and the public at large. The Conference also designated its delegate to the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October. He will be Monseigneur Nestor Adam, Bishop of Sion.

(continued on page 18)

1,000 HASLER CASH REGISTERS

Over 1,000 Swiss-made HASLER cash registers were sold by Hasler (Great Britain) Ltd. in the UK in 1970. The HASLER cash registers have been marketed in the UK for some years already and it is estimated that there are now about 5,000 of these somewhat unusual Swiss precision products in use in the various parts of this country. The year 1970 was, however, definitely a boom year, assisted, of course, by the impending decimalisation.

To those who know HASLER mainly as a Swiss telephone concern, it may seem surprising that this Bernese firm also makes cash registers. The latter are, however, not the only mechanical products which leave the works, the production range comprising also, for instance, HASLER postal franking machines and HASLER tachometers, both of which are widely used too in Britain by customers who appreciate Swiss quality workmanship in these lines. World-wide telegraphy connections would be unthinkable today without some of HASLER'S telegraphy equipment, above all the HASLER error-correcting equipment TOR and the electronic buffer store ELSTOR. Radio emissions are frequently disturbed by bad weather, etc. and this is when TOR and ELSTOR come into action: If the signals do not arrive correctly at destination, transmission via the TOR of further incoming signals is momentarily stopped and the characters are "stockpiled" in the ELSTOR until transmission can proceed again in the normal way without interruption. UK customers of these devices include both the Post Office Corporation and Cables & Wireless Ltd., the latter being one of the largest telecommunications organisation in the world.

One piece of HASLER telecommunications equipment which has found widespread application in Britain is the HASLER paging system whose characteristic "bleep-bleep" calls the carrier of this handy little device to the telephone whenever he (or she) is somewhere else in the building and at that very moment wanted by a caller.

The HASLER list of products is indeed impressive and comprises some of the finest telecommunications and electronics equipment available. New fields too are being tackled, such as, for instance, teleprinters, electronic telex exchanges, message switching, etc.

Last but not least, there are the products of the associate firms on the HASLER group of companies, such as the computerised traffic signals of HASLER-Signal, the bus, railway and parking ticket machines of AUTELCA Guemligen, and the clocks (pendulum and quartz of crystal) of FAVAG Neuchatel, the latter, we are pleased to say, also being used in the Swiss Centre (same as the HASLER cash registers who are—as readers will no doubt have noticed—the silent assistants in the Swiss shop).

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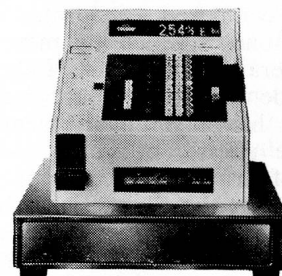
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PLETHORA OF "ANTI-BANG" SIGNATURES

The Committee of Federal Action against supersonic flights has proudly presented 65,298 signatures to the Federal Chancery. The collection of signatures was particularly successful in the cantons equipped with a large airport, namely Zurich, Geneva, Basle and Berne. The chairman of the committee, National Councillor Rohner, said that it would constitute itself into a "Swiss Society for the Protection of the Environment".

The method by which the signatures were delivered at the Chancery was not without symbolic humour. An electric trolley of Swiss construction emanating neither gaseous fumes nor noise, delivered the signatures in 25 packets, coming from 25 cantons.

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL SATISFIED WITH FOREIGN LABOUR EFFECTIVES

Mr. Von Moos, head of the Department of Justice and Police and therefore supremely responsible for the measures aimed at keeping down the flow of seasonal immigrants, is satisfied with the results of the policy adopted last March. The Federal Council decided at the time to alter the system of imposing a "ceiling" on the work force of each factory and fix a ceiling for each canton instead so that the national total of foreign workers was to be kept fixed. A year later there were 10,663 fewer foreign workers in the country. Eighteen cantons had co-operated in achieving this result. In seven of them, mainly the under-industrialised cantons, the imported labour force had however increased. The Federal Council has, according to the decree of March 1970, a leverage of 40,000 aliens to play with and may in the circumstances "liberate" the 20,000 working permits still available under that arrangement. This will depend on the outcome of the discussion which Mr. Gruebel, director of the Federal Office for Industry and Labour, will have on 18th March with the representatives of industry and the cantons. Negotiations are also continuing with the unions of foreign workers. Discussions with Italian labour representa-

tives have been interrupted on a sour note, but an agreement has been reached with Spanish unions to allow 2,400 Spaniards who have been regular seasonal workers for five years and totalling 45 months of employment in Switzerland to settle down in Switzerland. They will have the status of yearly workers and be entitled to bring in their families.

FRITZ PFISTER, 80

The founder of "Möbel Pfister", one of the most familiar household names in Switzerland, is 80 years old. The small furniture workshop which he inherited from his father in 1916 has become the biggest company of its kind in Europe. It employs 1,700 people and has a turnover of 200 million francs, a long way ahead of its nearest competitor in Switzerland, which has a turnover of only 18 million francs. "Pfister" means cheap and handy furniture within the reach of everyone. The firm traditionally invites customers from all parts of Switzerland to visit its standing exhibition of Pfister living rooms, bedrooms and its showroom of furniture, encouraging them by paying their fare. For all his success, Fritz Pfister has remained a simple and genial man, who says that he has always acted, in business as well as in life, on the inclinations of his heart. He is retired in a chalet at Adelsboden and has donated millions to a number of good causes. He was a great friend of sport and art and was a personal friend of Dr. Oprecht and Thomas Mann.

"CARREFOUR" TO OPEN A SECOND HYPERMARKET AT BIEL

The French chain of giant supermarkets "Carrefour" was sensationally successful with its first Swiss branch, opened at Romanel above Lausanne 9 months ago. The "Carrefour" supermarkets are designed following American patterns. They are built outside large towns, they have ample space for parking, and contain everything that the normal shopper could conceivably need for his next week. The "Carrefour" supermarket at Romanel has 880 parking spaces. Cars can be

washed and serviced while their owners go and get their provisions on a shopping floor twice as large as a football pitch and overflowing with cheaply priced goods. The planned "Carrefour" hypermarket will be sited in the new suburbs of Biel, on the territory of Brugg next to the Berne motorway.

CLINIC ON FIRE IN ZURICH

The geriatric ward of the psychiatric clinic of Burghölzli in Zurich was destroyed by fire early one morning, causing the death of 28 patients. The nurse responsible for waking up the patients was beginning her round at 6 a.m. when she discovered a fire in one of the rooms that had just started and apparently caused by an electric heater setting a waste-paper basket alight. One of the elderly inmates had witnessed the beginning of the fire but panicked and escaped, leaving the door open. The rush of air thus produced had rapidly kindled the fire, which found an easy prey with the old woodwork of the room. By 7.30 a.m., 28 people had died. Rescuers had managed to take the others to safety. All the victims were very old people and were found lying dead in their beds. Many of them were disabled and unable to move. Others had reacted senselessly and been seen to dress apathetically oblivious of the danger they were in as thick smoke gutted their rooms. The fire was totally under control by 10 a.m. The survivors had been carried away to safety and warmth (the temperature outside was -10°). The University Clinic of Burghölzli was seriously damaged by the fire. The security wing which was worst hit was old and scheduled for reconstruction.

Another fire which could have had equally dramatic consequences broke out in a fuel tank in Goldau (Zh). Three workers were working between the inner and outer wall of the tank, welding its outer wall. All of a sudden a jet of oil sprouted from the inner tank and immediately caught fire as it came into contact with the workers' flame torch. They barely had time to scramble to safety up a 22 metre ladder between the two walls before 10 million litres of fuel oil were ablaze and a pall of heavy noxious smoke was visible from as far as Küsnacht. Two

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hundred firemen from Goldau, Arth, Oberarth, Küssnacht, Einsiedlen, Schwytz, Walchwil and Lucerne fought the fire for 6 hours before it gradually abated. The tank miraculously didn't explode. It had the neighbouring buildings would have suffered serious damage. But the precaution was taken to evacuate the people.

The "Sonne" hotel in Wildhaus in the Toggenburg was completely destroyed by a fire which broke out at midnight, trapping the guests and forcing them to jump for their lives from the windows. As there was a shortage of water firemen could do no more than to prevent the surrounding buildings from catching fire by spraying them with water.

TRAGEDY ON THE "WALKER POINT"

The first direct winter ascent of the 3,800-ft. wall of the "Walker Point" in the Grandes Jorasses ended as one of the most nightmarish tragedies of alpine history.

There were two men, René Demaison, 41, one of France's most experienced mountaineers, and Serge Gousseault, 24, a skilled enthusiast. The two men set out to attempt this awesome and perpendicular climb on 10th February, starting at 7 o'clock on a brisk morning. The weather was splendid and the two mountaineers expected to reach the summit within eight days. Foreseeing any unexpected delays, they had supplies of food for 10 days. They each carried 30 kilograms of supplies and equipment. Pitons, buckles, two ropes and a small gas stove to melt the ice into drinking water. Drinking was a most important discipline during such a prolonged effort. One litre in the morning and one litre at night. They had Vitamin C tablets and salt tablets, malted biscuits, dried meat, butter and mint sweets. René Demaison carried a small walkie-talkie set with which he called his wife, waiting down below at the end station of the aerial ropeway to be reassured every day.

The ascent started smoothly and the two climbers made swift progress under good conditions. When they pitched camp for their third night they had already covered half the distance. The next day the difficulties of the climb increased, but the two men covered 85 metres. That night the weather suddenly deteriorated. The temperature fell to -20°C and it began to snow. The thought came to René Demaison whether they should not turn back. The decision had to be taken now or never, as they were approaching the point of no return. Turning back would have presented some complications as the rock wall was now covered by a slippery layer of snow, but the difficulties that lay ahead were far greater. Gousseault scoffed at the suggestion and cheerfully invited Demaison to lead the way onto the 5th lap. The weather remained bad. The wind was

howling against the mountain and it was bitter cold. Demaison saw that Gousseault was not wearing his gloves and was hammering pitons with his bare hands. He told him to put them on. Gousseault complied grudgingly. It was easier to climb without gloves—besides, he had trained his hands to resist against the cold in long bare-handed ski excursions for months.

The next night they found a tiny slanting ledge in the ice on which they could hardly sit side by side. They spent the freezing night there, strapped against the rock and with their feet hanging in the void. Demaison was beginning to see white patches and feel pains in his fingertips. But for Gousseault the situation was becoming far more dramatic. His hands were swelling visibly and he was having great difficulty in pulling back pitons from the rock. Demaison chided him for leaving too many pitons behind, especially the flat pitons of which they were getting short. On the night of the 16th, after a week's climb and three days after the bad weather had settled in, Gousseault's hands had become completely unusable. They were swollen to three times their size and frozen. His right hand was entirely stripped of skin and harder than a piece of dead wood. If ever he should come out of this adventure alive, thought Demaison, then those hands would have to go!

They soldiered on for an agonising eight laps. Gousseault was desperately trying to loosen the rope from the pitons by pulling at the buckles with his teeth. Finally, on the evening of the 17th, they realised they could go no further. Demaison no longer had the strength to hoist his companion and Gousseault could just not climb any more. They pitched camp on a ridiculously small ledge and waited miserably for sunrise, huddled in their sleeping bags, while a biting wind was whipping at them.

Demaison decided to stay with Gousseault. He had given up sending regular messages to his wife a day earlier because the situation had become too serious for him to spend time trying to reach her with his walkie-talkie. His watch had furthermore broken down and he could not call his wife at the prescribed hours. The weather was worsening and the people at Chamonix were beginning to get worried. A first helicopter hovered around the two men as they lay helplessly anchored to the rock wall. Demaison made broad signs indicating that they were not climbing any higher. The helicopter flew away. Whether its pilot had understood Demaison's signs mattered little in the circumstances, as the 70 m.p.h. gusts lashing the summit of the Walker Point prevented the air-lift of a team of rescuers.

Demaison survived eight days on this ledge. It was less than a day's climb from the summit. The tempera-

(continued on page 30)

TOPICS

THE PROBLEM OF CRIME PREVENTION

While the problem of crime is not as acute in Switzerland as it is in this country, it is nonetheless, like in every "civilised" country, growing in amplitude and stretching the capability of the forces of law and order. The British Sunday papers recently estimated that British shops lost a million pounds a day through shop-lifting (most of which was committed by shop employees), the Swiss review of criminal statistics estimated the value of stolen goods in Switzerland to have risen to 30 million francs last year. One insurance company, the "Schweizer Mobiliar", which handles about 40 per cent of anti-burglar policies, had to answer claims of 13 million francs last year. Other statistics showed that the number of house-breaking incidents had risen in Zurich from 1,936 to 2,875 in ten years. Over 51,000 persons were charged in court last year, which meant that about one Swiss in a hundred was a proven "law-breaker". For forty per cent it was not the first conviction. Half the total figure pertained to driving crimes, but 19,374 people were convicted for crimes relating in the first place to theft and immorality.

St. Thomas of Aquinas believed that thievery was a product of poverty. However, twenty years of uninterrupted economic boom during which the rate of crime has steadily increased would seem to disprove this. The most general motivation for pilfering and theft is not poverty, but a general phenomenon of "covetousness". In an acquisitive society, one is "somebody" when one "possesses something". Everywhere one looks, there are incitements to consume new goods, durable or not. A study into 1,481 supermarket pilfering incidents in Switzerland showed that two-thirds of them had been committed by persons earning less than 10,000 francs a year. However, few of the persons convicted had been motivated by actual need. The same enquiry revealed that 70 per cent of them were women, but (to do them justice) they stole altogether 20 per cent less in value than the minority of male supermarket pilferers. Sociologists have long been bent on the causes of the present surge in crime. One Zurich specialist finds that driving and the possession of cars is an important component. Driving can exacerbate the lower tendencies of man and facilitate crimes through negligence.

The police of Zurich is one organisation overburdened by this rising trend. For every day that passes, the city police receives a list of 30 "wanted" persons. Half of them can quickly be discounted and only about half of the remainder found. A police official interviewed by the "Weltwoche" considered that, optimistically, 8 wanted