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## COMMENT

### A STRAIGHTFORWARD VOTE

The women of Switzerland had their first opportunity to vote on federal matters on the week-end of June 6th. Elderly women who had not held a voting slip all their long lives were seen to enter polling booths with pride and singleness of purpose to give their suffrage on two rather plain, almost boring issues: Taxation and the Environment.

The state of the Swiss tax system is one of the trickiest consequences of federalism. There are as many fiscal laws as there are cantons, and despite the many proposals by various committees of experts, the population was asked to pass last June 6th a federal regime of taxation which hardly differed from the provisions which they accepted the last time it was asked to vote on the same matter in 1963.

Traditionally, the federal state obtains its revenue from purchase tax and the cantons draw income tax. However, the heavy demands of the war have made it necessary for the Confederation to seek revenue in income tax, which is made up essentially of the so-called *Verrechnungssteuer* and National Defence tax.

The financial regime which had prevailed until the heated debate in Parliament last November which led to this national suffrage contained no upper and lower limits to what the Confederation could levy from individual tax payers. The people agreed to reinstate these limits on 6th June and accepted an alteration of the progression of federal tax (i.e. National Defence tax). That is, the not-so-well-off will pay less Defence Tax and the progression with income will start off slower than previously, to grow in relative importance with the big salaries. The new system, which is to last until 1982 barring an initiative, embodies certain tax rebates of social nature and gives a 10 per cent flexibility in the choice of the upper limit of federal taxation.

The people said "yes" to these proposals. It was indeed difficult for the immense majority of voters (and housewives!) to have any definite opinion on how the Swiss tax structure should be. Obviously, if they had their way, they would have done away with taxes altogether.

The experts, however, agree that the present system of taxation in Switzerland is unsatisfactory. They see the trouble residing in the insistence of cantons to maintain their own fiscal systems as one of the last preserves of their sovereignty. There are three eventual ways to harmonise taxation in Switzerland: A federal law imposed upon the cantons, a gentlemen's agreement between the cantons and the

Confederation and an inter-cantonal convention on taxation similar to the recent inter-cantonal convention on education. This last solution, which protects a fraction of cantonal autonomy, is preferred by most. Another point increasingly argued in the committee rooms of the Financial Department is the eventual necessity of adapting the Swiss tax system to European practice, and in particular to introduce the much vaunted Value Added Tax.

The other issue put before the electorate was the Confederation's responsibility in keeping a habitable environment. The vote, the outcome of an initiative passed last year, came off without any problem and will result in the addition of a *seventh* clause in the 27th Article of the Federal Constitution stating the following: "The Confederation will carry out the necessary legislature to ensure the protection of man and his natural environment, in particular against noise and air pollution. The implementation of federal prescriptions will fall on the cantons unless the law provides otherwise".

The necessity of such provisions was so obvious and the assent of a population expertly groomed on pollution so foreseeable that this new constitutional clause could almost have been written down "without a show of hands".

(PMB)

## SWISS NEWS

### THE CASE OF MR. MARUTTO

An Italian worker, Mr. Severino Marutto, who was President of the shop floor commission of the Geneva firm Charmilles S.A. and a member for seven years of the Union of Metal Workers, was arrested at Cointrin Airport as he was about to leave for Rome.

He was carrying a suitcase full of trade union and Communist documents which the customs officials and the Federal Police, who were later called to investigate his case, suspected as subversive, thus bringing their owner under the ruling of the 70th Constitutional Article.

The Geneva Trade Unions very soon heard of the event and called a Press conference where representatives of the local sections of all the main trade unions stressed their unanimous support of Mr. Marutto and warned that there would be trouble if he were found guilty of "endangering the security of the State" and extradited according to the provisions of the 70th Article.

A speaker came forward with a photocopy of the seized documents. They appeared inoffensive enough and mainly comprised correspondence between Marutto and the Secretariat of

the Italian Communist Party, of which he was a member. Another speaker said that there were over 600,000 foreign workers in Switzerland, all vital to the economy but with precious little say in the realms of politics. They were entitled to their own ideas. The organisers of the Press conference appealed to the Swiss TUC, asking it to approach the Federal Council in the event of an extradition of Mr. Marutto.

The management of Charmilles S.A. placarded a statement on the factory billboard whose style showed that Swiss industrial relations could still be based on a rather authoritarian basis. It deplored the indiscretion of the trade unions and their meddling with the public enquiry on Mr. Marutto's activities. It further recalled that Mr. Marutto had asked for sick leave on the day of his arrest and had therefore made abuse of the management's trust.

Mr. Marutto was eventually set free while the enquiry on his person continued and was duly reprimanded by his employers. His misadventure, which was nearly blown into a "Marutto Affair" by not very subtle and over-zealous officials, will not have served the cause of good relations between the foreign work-force and the authorities.

## THE AIMS OF SWISS TRADE UNIONS

An opinion poll among trade unionists and non-trade unionists revealed that the great majority of the Swiss work force was in support of trade unions.

However, the majority of those interviewed and holding such favourable opinions were *not* members of a trade union. This would tend to show that the majority of workers appreciate what trade unions stand for, but do not think it worthwhile joining one as their standard of living would be improving anyway.

The same survey showed that the first demand of trade unionists was the provision for more cheap housing. Fifty-four per cent of a "sample" of trade unionists interviewed said that their most urgent requirement was to be able to enjoy cheap and adequate housing; 22 per cent demanded "equal pay for equal work"; 18 per cent felt that participation in management was a primary right; 17 per cent desired improved social facilities, both public and private; 11 per cent demanded pay increases; 3 per cent a reduction of working hours, and the same proportion again wanted prolonged holidays; 2 per cent of the interviewed people had no opinion.

The most revealing aspect of this survey was the importance attached to better accommodation. This is a point where social friction and tension with foreign residents is the most likely to be felt. Relatively few workers de-

manded pay increases as such, but more wanted an abolishment of pay differentials. Only 18 per cent of workers seemed to consider participation an important issue. This means that the trade unions, which hope to obtain a constitutional addition of employee participation, will have to make more propaganda among its members.

Of a working population of three million people, there are now 530,000 trade unionists in Switzerland, or 18 per cent of the work force. This small figure shows that trade unions have lost in following since the war and that collective conventions are drawn out by trade union officials representing less than a fifth of the people concerned by these agreements.

The most important trade union is the Federation of Watch-makers and Metal-workers (126,283 members); the Union of Building Workers (98,480); the Federation of Railwaymen (58,379); the Union of Civil Servants (39,310); the Union of Commercial and Transport Employees (22,913); the Union of Typographers (14,914); the Federation of Textile and Chemical Workers (13,984). All the other unions have less than 10,000 members. These unions are grouped in the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions whose total membership is 436,700.

Added to this are 13 unions affiliated to the Federation of Christian Trade Unions with a total effective of 93,680. The three unions with over 10,000 members are the Union of Christian Building Workers (29,423); the Christian Union of Engineering Workers (27,623).

The Union of Civil Servants launched a campaign to improve the safety of the working man. There are 1,000 industrial accidents a day in Switzerland, at least one of them is fatal and 20 lead to the partial or total invalidity of their victims. Only a quarter of Swiss firms belong to the Swiss Accident Assurance Fund, which last year had to lay out 419 million francs to the 75,000 member firms. These accidents cost the economy some 1.5 billion francs a year in lost production.

The Union of Civil Servants believe that trade unions have an important role to play in ensuring the safety of industrial workers and in persuading employers into adopting measures to improve physical and hygienic conditions of work. Very little has been done in Switzerland so far in the field of work medicine.

The solution of industrial accidents, which already enjoys a complete legal framework, will lie in the willingness of large firms to employ doctors and specialists on the shop floor to implement the better conditions of work. It would mean an expenditure perhaps not directly related

to productivity but which would soon repay itself by better individual performance.

## A PROJECT FOR NEW SWISS BANK NOTES

The first bank notes issued by the Swiss National Bank remained in circulation for 45 years. The present series of 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000 and 10,000 franc notes have been in circulation since 1956 and 1957.

Now, after only 15 years of circulation, these bank notes are to be substituted by a new series which will include a 5,000 franc note.

Mr. Hay, Director of the Swiss National Bank, explained that the change was necessary in order to discourage forgeries and to keep pace with technical development. A smaller format was also felt necessary, as the notes above 100 francs are inconveniently large. The future 10,000 franc note will have the width of the present 20 franc note.

The Swiss National Bank had decided that the face of these notes should carry the portrait of a Swiss scientist. It had chosen 16 possible candidates.

Among them were: Leonard Euler, the 18th century Basle mathematician; Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, the Geneva 18th century geologist and meteorologist; Konrad Gessner, 16th century physician and naturalist; Francesco Borromini, a 16th century architect from Ticino; Auguste Forel, a 19th century psychiatrist and entomologist and the physicist and explorer Auguste Piccard.

The National Bank invited 14 well known artists to choose one of the 16 proposed scientists and design a pattern for the back of the bank note bearing some relation to the life and work of the chosen scientist. A special jury examined the drafts presented by these artists and awarded the first prize to Roger Pfund of Ostermundigen, who picked the mathematician Leonard Euler.

The basic themes and designs of the future series of seven bank notes has therefore been adopted by this jury, whose choice was based on both aesthetical and technical considerations. There will now be five years of detailed and technical work before the new notes are distributed to the banks. They will have a watermark of the portrait they bear on the left-hand upper corner of their face to make imitation impossible.

An important novelty will be the printing of the normal indications in four languages. On the recommendation of the authorities of Graubünden, the Swiss National Bank has decided to use "Surmيران", the Rheto-Romanic dialect of the Oberhalbstein.



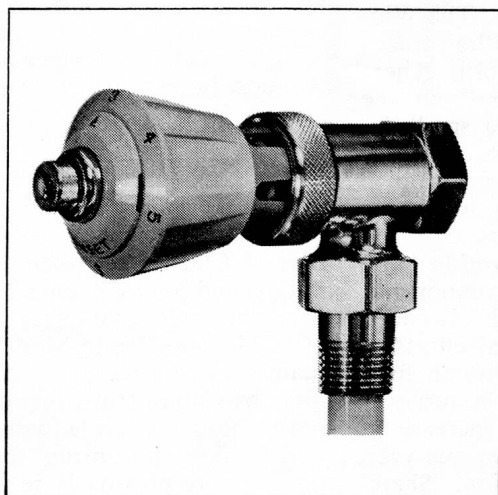
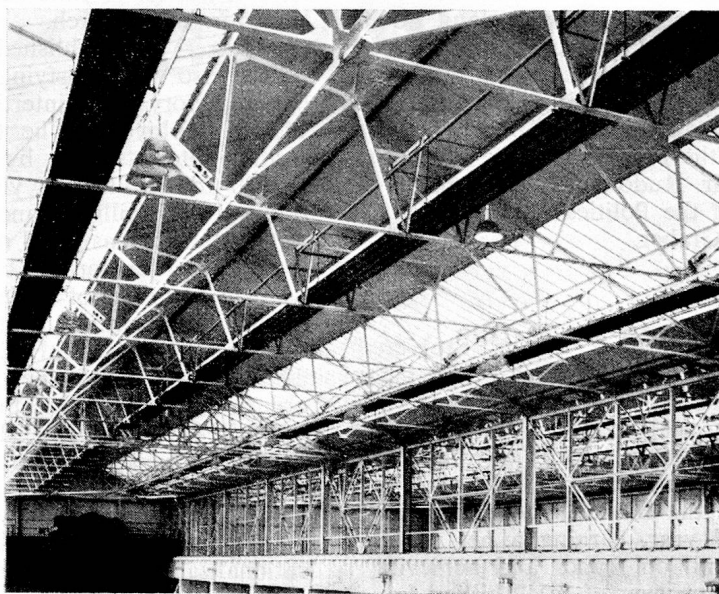
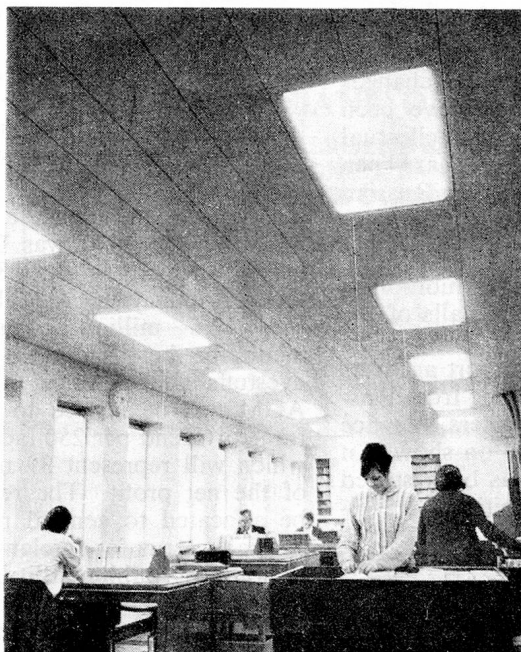
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## THE FIRST RUSSIAN TRADE EXHIBITION IN SWITZERLAND

The first trade agreement between Switzerland and Russia was signed in March, 1948. In the spring of 1966, Switzerland staged a trade exhibition in Moscow which had great success.

Now the Russians are putting their products on show for the first time in Switzerland, only a few months after the 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in which Mr. Kosygin had stressed his country's wish to develop trade with the West. He had said that the creation of economic ties with individual Western European countries was one of the essential aspects of Russia's foreign policy. Placed in this context, the Basle exhibition has more than just a commercial meaning. Contacts with the Russians have increased lately and a series of agreements have been passed between large Swiss watch-making, mechanical and chemical firms and the Russians.

So far, the economic exchanges between the two countries have been very small indeed. But the intellectual and scientific co-operation has been fairly important, with many Russian scientists coming each year to Switzerland and vice-versa.

The Russian Trade Exhibition is to be held in Basle in the halls of the Swiss "Mustermesse" from 3rd to 23rd June. Twenty Russian export agencies are exhibiting goods ranging from Russian dolls to heavy helicopters. A space vehicle is (naturally) also on show. An exhibition on Georgia has been staged within the Trade Exhibition. It follows a similar exhibition, presenting Ukraine to the Valais public, which was held recently at Martigny.

To mark the occasion the Russian Minister for Foreign Trade, Mr. Patolitchev, came to Switzerland to be present at the inaugural ceremony. He met Mr. Ernst Brugger, head of the Department of Public Economy, for talks on 4th June. He paid a courtesy call to the President of the Confederation, Mr. Rudolph Gnaegi, and to the head of the Political Department, Mr. Pierre Graber.

## COMPANY AGM'S

The Annual General Meeting of *George Fischer AG*, Switzerland's first metallurgical firm, was held at Schaffhausen at the end of May under the chairmanship of Mr. G. Kaiser, Chairman of the Board. The company had a good year, earning a net profit of 15.66 million francs and achieving a record turnover of 1.042 billion francs. The company is 169 years old and in a period of expansion not preceded since it became public 75 years ago. Mr. Kaiser forecasted that, barring serious fluctuations in the economic climate, the turnover of the group

should reach 1.6 billion francs within the next five years.

*Ciba-Geigy's* Chairman, Mr. R. Kaeppli, could also look back on a highly satisfactory year. The merger of two companies of such a size as Ciba and Geigy was not carried out without creating administrative problems and involving psychological pressures on higher management, but both turnover and profits continued to evolve in a satisfactory way, thus proving wrong all those who had predicted that the first year of activity of the new conglomerate would show a loss. The process of reorganisation was still under way and the company had adopted a policy of maximum decentralisation and autonomy for the many subsidiaries, yet compatible with a centralised and simple financial structure. The revaluation of the Swiss franc had come as a blow to the mother firm in Basle and somewhat weakened its competitive strength. The AGM passed the management's report and the accounts for 1970 and agreed to a dividend of 22 francs on the group's 100 francs bearer and registered shares. The capital of the group will be raised to 405 million francs.

*Sandoz* also had a good year. Turnover for 1970 was 2,751 million francs, an increase of 10.8 per cent on the previous year, and the net profit was 52.6 million. Pharmaceuticals made the best progress, followed by dyestuffs and chemical products. The AGM will be invited to accept a 65-franc dividend per 250 face-value share which will represent 39 million francs of the net profit. The remainder will be allocated to general reserves, to a special reserve for foreign interests and to aims of public utility. The group invested 247 million francs last year (half of which abroad) and spent 250 million francs, or nine per cent of its turnover, on research.

*Sulzer* has published its annual report, also with satisfying results. The home factory in Winterthur employs 14,750 employees. The turnover, including interests, rose by 11 per cent to 930 million francs, yielding a net profit of 28.7 million francs. The Winterthur factory has 1,105 million francs worth of orders on its books. There was an increase of orders from the European Community but a small decrease of orders from EFTA countries. There was also a 25 per cent drop in orders from America, but a 23 per cent rise in Japanese orders.

*Ebauches SA*, the world's first manufacturer of watch components, had a slower rate of growth. It ended a year marked by continued efforts at rationalisation and difficulties in finding adequate labour with a turnover of 473 million francs, an increase of only 2.8 per cent of the previous year, and a profit of 3.14 million. Shareholders are receiving 50 francs per share, which will leave a remainder of 320,000 francs for the reserves. The

group has increased its participation in *Lip*, the first French watch company, from 33 per cent to 44 per cent. It has opened a model factory at Marin, on the tip of Lake Neuchatel, producing electronic watches. The company has been pursuing development work in its own quartz watch, but has not yet brought it to a commercialisable stage. The payroll of the group stands at 10,600.

## SETTLEMENT PROPOSED AT THE UNITED CALIFORNIA BANK IN BASLE

The Basle branch of the United California Bank collapsed last year after having made heavy losses in commodities speculation. The executives responsible for these unauthorised dealings were sent to prison but the affair has not yet been tried. However, the home company in Los Angeles has proposed to save its good name in the eyes of the many creditors of the Basle branch by paying them their due integrally, plus interest. Following a lengthy audit of the bank's affairs, it turned out that creditors could receive no more than 45 per cent of the funds they had entrusted to it. The bank in California is now prepared to pay out the remaining 55 per cent.

## CHRISTIE'S SUCCESS

Christie's, the London firm of auctioneers which has opened a Geneva branch, held a highly successful sale at the end of May during which jewellery and works of art were sold for 15.6 million francs.

The most attractive item on sale was the jewellery collection of Mrs. Dodge, widow of the American car manufacturer. One of the finest and purest diamonds in the world, a 47 carat piece carved as an emerald, went for 2.5 million francs. The second largest yellow diamond in the world, after the "Tiffany" (104 carats), fetched 1.9 million francs. The buyers remained strictly anonymous, but it was suspected that the Parisian jeweller Arpers and Van Cleef counted among the most important buyers of jewellery.

## SENSATIONAL AMERICAN TAKEOVER

The American "Zenith Corporation of Chicago", makers of TV sets, radios and gramophones, have taken over the well established watch firm of "Movado-Zenith-Mondia" whose main factories are at Le Locle. It is quite by chance that the two companies have the same trade name "Zenith" and it does not mean that the two groups were previously related.

This is the second major attempt by an American company to take an interest with a Swiss firm engaged in

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different activities from its own. Westinghouse failed not long ago in its attempts to take over Longines.

Although the finished products of Zenith-America and Zenith-Switzerland may be different, they have similar components. The Zenith Corporation of Chicago has vast experience in transistors and electronic devices whereas the research capacity of a relatively small firm like Zenith-Movado-Mondia could not compete with the technological strength of other giants in the coming era of the electronic watch.

The Swiss company not only had a technological interest in giving away its independence to an American company, it also had a welcome outlet on the American market. Mr. Daniel Reichenbach, Managing Director of the group, said that an alliance between Zenith and a more powerful company had to come sooner or later. He believed that Swiss firms should be prepared to co-operate with foreign firms and that the time had come to forget nationalism in the field of financial co-operation. He said that Zenith had come through some financial difficulties, but none warranting the necessity of a sudden takeover. The arrangement with the American company had been made after much consideration and was in the firm's best interest.

As the Zenith Corporation of America had no other watch-making interests, the company at Le Locle would continue to enjoy a considerable degree of independence.

The trade unions and Swiss public opinion greeted the news with the expected reaction that "yet another of our prestigious firms is falling in the hands of the Americans". The Metallurgical and Watchmaking Union expressed fears that the jobs of Zenith workers would be endangered.

#### **BRITISH LEYLAND MAY MOVE ITS CONTINENTAL HEADQUARTERS AWAY FROM LAUSANNE**

British Leyland Motor Corporation will shortly announce changes in the organisation structure of the company's European operations. The main development will be the transfer of numerous management responsibilities to London from the BLMC European headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland.

According to informed sources a number of senior executives will be moved from Lausanne to London. The London head office considers that the Lausanne bureau has outlived its usefulness and should be reduced to a small "services centre" for the wide network of BLMC companies operating on the Continent.

A spokesman for the company in Lausanne said that the office would not be closed completely and that movements would be minimal.

The Lausanne office has a staff of 120 and manages and co-ordinates the activities of the company throughout the Continent.

In a move that was clearly an indication of the cutback to come in Lausanne, the BLMC European finance director, Mr. Donald Kress, moved to London from Lausanne several months ago.

The managing director in Lausanne is Mr. Richard Bergesen, who said recently that by the end of this year BLMC will have set up its own national companies in almost every country in Western Europe.

Informed sources said the establishing of these companies and development of basic market research on the Continent had been the main task of the Lausanne office since its creation immediately after the BMC-Leyland merger in 1967.

With the task now almost completed it is felt that marketing, servicing and general organisation policies can now be run from London at lower cost than it is possible from Switzerland. Sales on the Continent last year totalled 194,000.

Mr. Bergesen said that sales this year should total about 242,000 and should be almost double this in 1974. The company announcement on the future of the Lausanne office is expected to be made in the next two or three weeks.

*(The Times)*

#### **SWISS VOTE TO WAGE WAR ON NOISE**

Swiss voters approved on June 6th a proposal to give the Federal Government powers to check pollution.

By 1,222,493 votes to 96,380 in a referendum they approved a new clause in the constitution providing for the protection of man and his natural environment. It was the first time women had been able to take part in a national referendum.

The new measure gives Parliament power to legislate stern penalties for pollution of air, water and the environment in general, and to wage war on noise.

The pollution threat has been causing growing concern in Switzerland with the post-war increase in industry, population, cars and aircraft noise.

The electorate also agreed — by 931,129 votes to 348,451 — to harmonise taxation. The new system is expected to bring in an extra 200m. Swiss francs (£20m.) in revenue next year.

Mr. Nello Celio, the Finance Minister, told a press conference that Switzerland would have to consider imposing a value added tax in view of a possible agreement with the Common Market.

Women were given federal voting rights in a referendum in February. Observers said they seemed to have seized the chance in most areas, except perhaps in some small cantons, where the poll was not much greater than usual.

Cloistered nuns, authorised to vote by the Swiss bishops' conference, turned out in force at polling booths near their convents.

*(The Times)*

#### **A FEDERAL DECREE ON BUILDING**

Building is one of Switzerland's most thriving industries since almost 20 per cent of the nation's savings are spent on it. The Federal Council recently tried to slow down the rate of inflation by encouraging the cantons to tone down their building investments. In fact, the pace of construction has tended to settle down except in the large centres where there is a shortage of housing.

The towns where this shortage is most acutely felt are Geneva, Zurich and Basle. In Geneva, the situation

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For one thing, we took another look at our hostesses' uniforms. Uniforms? Horrid word, applied to girls. Regulation length, regulation color, close-buttoned jacket, garrison cap.

Instead of the regulation dark blue-gray (known in the dye trade as Swissair blue)

we've given our hostesses three different clear, strong blue shades. We've given them white boots. We've given them a sparkling gold brooch. And above all, we've given them freedom—to combine the various colors according to taste and set their own skirt lengths. We snipped off all the uniform buttons. The effect was tremendous.\*

That left the matter of the cap. Flat, peaked, Nimrod, képi, garrison cap?

Having tried out any number of models, we finally took the easiest way: asked our hostesses what kind of headgear they would like.

They said, Instead of a hat, how about a kerchief? It's warmer, more flattering, less forbidding. And if we happen to feel like showing off our hair-dos, we can tie a kerchief around our necks.



We said yes, why not; and went to the Swiss silk industry. They designed us an exclusive pattern of red, white and dark blue.

Thank you, said our hostesses. The pleasure was ours, we replied.

*(Which all adds up to saying you should book Swissair if you want to see an airline that has made pretty girls into still prettier hostesses even without hats.)*

*\* No less pleasing, a few weeks from now, will be the spectacle of our ground hostesses, check-in and counter girls in Switzerland: the same combinations, but a glowing red.*



has reached such a pitch that a group-ment of angry citizens, calling themselves the defenders of the town's Swiss character, distributed tracts demanding the expulsion from their homes of 5,000 resident foreigners. It is true that the presence of foreigners makes it harder for the Swiss of smaller means to find adequate accommodation, but the real cause of housing shortage lies as well in a wrongly oriented housing policy.

The accent has so far been on creating hotels, swimming pools, office blocks and luxury apartments to the neglect of cheap housing of a social nature. The figures for Geneva bear this out. On 31st December, 1970, there were 1,322 flats for sale and villas under construction, whereas the HLM (Habitation à loyer modéré) flats numbered only 1,943 out of a total of 8,201 flats and houses under construction in the canton. However, 91,253 out of 157,200 wage earners in the canton were earning less than 1,250 francs a month.

The cost of housing has risen by 36.5 per cent in Switzerland during the past four years. In Geneva it has risen by 44 per cent. The remedy offered by the Federal Council is to give itself the power to prevent temporarily the building of luxury buildings and to halt less urgent projects in favour of cheap housing in those towns where building undertakings are overburdened, and where this situation leads to excessive costs. The buildings which will be covered by the Federal decree, will be sports installations, swimming pools, cinemas, museums, family houses of over 1,500 cubic metres and costing more than 450,000 francs, holiday houses costing over 300,000 francs, luxury residential flats, hotels and restaurants costing over a million francs, military installations, large specialised shops costing over a million, churches budgeted at above a million francs and customs buildings.

The application of the decree is to last for three years. It will have to be passed by the people in a year's time according to constitutional rules. The Federal Council has thus given its long awaited reply to the problem of housing—a solution which tends to leave

intact the normal operation of a liberal building industry, except in those areas where the need for cheap and socially-minded housing is sufficiently high to keep the building industry occupied, and where its remedy has become a top priority.

### THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ANSWER EVERY QUESTION COMING FROM PARLIAMENT

The Federal Council held a special meeting to consider the plethora of motions, interpellations and postulates handed in from members of the National Council and the Council of States for the summer session. The "motion" is, as elsewhere, a written request coming from both chambers and addressed to the executive, asking it to introduce new legislation in accordance with the instructions of Parliament. The "postulate" and the "interpellation" are Swiss parliamentary terms.

The first is a demand emanating from a single member of parliament, backed by one of the two chambers, for the Federal Council to study a given problem and give a reply indicating its position. The interpellation, which must be backed by 10 members of the National Council or three members of the Council of States, requires an explanation from the government and usually expresses criticism on its policies.

Members of Parliament have tabled 110 such personal interventions for the summer session, which will involve a considerable burden on the agenda of both Parliament and the Federal Council. It is planned to alter this system somewhat and limit most personal interventions to an exchange of documents which would spare time for the debates on important issues. The idea is that the bureau of the two councils will decide which motions, postulates and interpellations will be the object of a public debate.

### A MOVE TO CHANGE ABORTION LAWS

A lawyer from Neuchatel, Mr. Maurice Favre, who is a delegate from the Radical Party to the Great Council of Neuchatel, has invited the Assembly to use its right of initiative to-

wards Federal Parliament to propose a renewal of the 1937 Swiss abortion laws.

His demand is that all articles pertaining to abortion be erased from the Swiss Penal Code. His motion stated that "no solution has yet been found to the dangerous problems resulting from an interruption of pregnancy".

The text continued by asserting that legal repression was the least acceptable of solutions. "It remained a dead letter for the more fortunate and exposed the others to dangerous and shameful practices".

The Swiss Penal Code permits abortion only in the instances where normal birth could gravely endanger the life of the mother. British law foresees the cases where the child is in danger of suffering from lasting mental and physical anomalies which could be a handicap during his lifetime. Danish law, the most liberal of the three, includes the conditions of living of the mother concerned in the picture. The Protestant weekly "La Vie Protestant", commenting on this proposed amendment, suggests that it is unwise for the churches to oppose abortion from the outset. In doing so they were taking heavy responsibilities.

The commentator suggested a new open-minded legislation which could provide for a special conciliatory commission with whom a woman wishing to have an abortion should first be confronted with her husband or companion if possible.

### SOCIALIST ORGAN TO DISAPPEAR

The last issue of the Socialist organ "Peuple-La Sentinelle" has come out with a collection of souvenirs on the history of the Socialist movement in Western Switzerland. Mr. Pierre Graber, the Foreign Minister, commented on this sad disappearance by saying that the Socialists of Switzerland will have to find other means of continuing a movement which corresponded so closely to the aspirations and interests of so many Swiss people. Mr. Graber's father had devoted the best part of his life to the paper and had been its chief editor. (ATS)

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