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spin-off from arms development is negligible. Switzerland presently sells about £7 million worth of arms to developing countries. This places her way behind Britain, France and America in absolute figures but in second world position (after Britain) in terms of the sales/PNB ratio.

It is furthermore claimed that "to argue that arms exports help the Army to reduce its expenditures is tantamount to saying that our defence is

financed with the help of foreign countries, particularly developing countries." The document says that the Government's counter-proposals entail nothing more than strengthening existing controls and adds that the current initiative is "a practical effort at eliminating the scandal of arms exports which have been the subject of thirty parliamentary interventions since the end of the war".

(PMB)

SWISS EVENTS

COMMENT

THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROVERSY

The three-year-old controversy over the arms ban initiative proves how statistics can be handled to support conflicting arguments. In a study published by the Swiss Society for Military Studies, a General Staff officer, Captain Dominique Brunner, set out to develop a set of arguments against the current arms ban initiative, which would like to ban Swiss arms exports to all countries with the exception of neutral European nations. His main arguments are that by curtailing her market, Switzerland's arms industry will lose the advantages of economies of scale. The cost of home-made weapons would thus increase by 30 million to 50 million francs. Growing imports would have a negative effect on the balance of payments, bringing Switzerland's balance of trade deeper in the red by 500 million francs a year.

The promoters of the initiative have published a counter-document in which they point out that three quarters of the country's military equipment are already imported. It adds that only 30 per cent of Buehrle's turnover actually relied on arms. With SIG of Neuhausen, the Buehrle group of companies is responsible for four-fifths of Swiss arms exports. The sponsors of the initiative also stress that any loss of arms business would be readily replaced by increased machine tool production, this being a field actually where industry is stretched to the limit and where the technological

FEDERAL

Mr. Nello Celio's 1st August speech

In his 1st August speech to the country, Mr. Nello Celio, President of the Confederation for 1972, laid particular emphasis on the fight against inflation and appealed to every Swiss to feel responsible for the future of their country. "If we consider Switzerland's present situation, we have to recognise that our standard of living is surpassed by very few other countries. We are one of the most favoured nations in the world today, but we should not try to ignore the continuing problems resulting from the co-existence among us of communities with differing origins, character and interests. These problems may even have grown in complexity. Furthermore, our continuing material blessings tend to make many of us believe that this welfare is a gift from heaven and that work and perseverance belong to another age. The contempt in which we hold the elementary laws of existence could prepare for a bleak future".

Mr. Celio also referred to recent outbursts of violence. He deplored "the acts of violence committed by some of our citizens in the recent past."

"The Federal Council is deeply aware of the need for change in several areas of society and for reforms in our institutions. But it will defend the democratic rights and civic liberties with utmost energy and make sure that all our efforts strive towards the present and future preservation of our country".

Speaking of the future, Mr. Celio said that man never tiring of his

achievements, had played the Sorcerers Apprentice with his environment. He said that problems were no longer circumscribed by national boundaries and that the duty of Switzerland as a whole was to remain open to the world and concerned with international institutions.

Having raised the problem of inflation and its nuisance to cantons and communes, Mr. Celio ended his address by saying that "the State and its citizens cannot live off material satisfactions alone. The value of a society may not be measured only in terms of progress and technology. One should not only be realistic, that is, know what is possible and what is not, but one should also be a spiritual being, refusing to be exclusively attached to material values and unable to find inner peace".

European Security Conference

Switzerland intends to have a say at the planned European Security Conference. Ambassador Ernesto Thalmann, General Secretary of the Political Department said in an interview to the "Aargauer Tagblatt" after returning from a journey to six eastern European countries, that Switzerland would press for a system of solving differences between nations. This system might prove more efficient than the UN Security Council. He added that Switzerland would not disavow its neutral policy in taking part in such a conference, because it would not be tied to any of the power groups represented.