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Vernet, who was at one time President of the Geneva Bar, was elected President by acclamation. He succeeds to Corporal Auguste Bernoud, 80, who resigned on account of ill health.

#### To subsidise political parties

A delegate to the Great Council of Zurich has tabled a motion inviting the cantonal government to "study the possibility of allocating financial support to political parties, and to examine the feasibility of deducing contributions paid to those political parties from the taxable income of firms and individuals". This proposal was backed by 93 out of 115 delegates. It seems more doubtful that the people of Zurich, to whom such a scheme would eventually have to be submitted, would be in favour. It would anyway require an alteration of the tax law.

#### For and against the "32"

The collection of signatures is actively under way in the Valais and the Jura for a petition to be addressed to Parliament expressing support for the "32" ministers and priests who had declared their opposition to the present form of national service. The petition which was launched in Sierre demands the speedy creation of an alternative Civil Service.

Meanwhile, ministers and priests in Zurich organised a counter-petition expressing a clear and unequivocal "yes" to the Swiss Confederation and its Army. The text of the petition which citizens are asked to sign says: "In saying 'yes' to the Army, we are saying 'yes' to the right and to the duty of the State to guarantee its own independence. Our militia system should not only help to secure the strongest possible defence, but also reflect the responsibility of every citizen in the protection of his country".

# SWISS CATHEDRALS



## SOLOTHURN: ST. URSUS CATHEDRAL

The cathedral of St. Ursus and Victor on a height East of the town, can be seen from a great distance. Since 1828, it is the cathedral of the new bishopric of Basle. A temple of Apollo must have occupied in Roman times, the site of the present church. A Christian church was built in the 5th Century on the graves of Ursus and Victor, martyrs of the Theban legion in the Burgundian epoch. It is to this first church, constructed by Werthrada, the mother of Charlemagne, that the legend of Ursus and Victor is connected.

The construction of the ancient cathedral dates of the 11th century; the western tower collapsed in the 18th.

The renowned architect Gaetano Antonio Pisoni (1713-1782) and his nephew Paolo Antonio Pisoni (1738-1804) both from Ascona (Ticino) constructed the actual cathedral between 1762 and 1773. It is a beautiful building in the best Italian Renaissance in Switzerland. Between two artificial

basins in the form of sea shells bearing the statues of Samson and Moses, three series of eleven steps lead to the three sculptured porches. The facade, ornamented with statues and candelabums of stone, rises to a great height above the neighbouring houses. The interior is cruciform. Ten powerful columns support the vaults of the central nave and of the transept; the small lateral naves have each three altars.

An imposing cupola, with three demi-cupolas, rises above the middle of the Latin cross. The cathedral numbers eleven marble altars artistically decorated by Domenisco Corvi, Joseph Escher, F.-J. Wirtz, Guiribal and J.-H. Treu. The ceiling fresco-paintings are from Domenisco Pozzi, and Gottfried Bernhard Götz, of Augsburg. The pulpit, ornamented with sculptures in relief, is the work of Doret, from Vevey; the high altar and sarcophages of the Thebans, as well as the beautiful works in stucco, were executed by the Ticinese Francesco and Carlo Pozzi.

At the N.E. extremity of the cathedral, the tower of Saint-Ursus, 60 m. high, rises above the door of Basle. It contains a very harmonious ringing of eleven bells.

The 15th Century has seen the greater part of the town's fortifications disappear, including a few gateways of great architectural value: the Door of Berne and the Door of Bienne (Gurzelenthor). The Door of Basle (Eichthor) has been preserved, for ever we hope. It was constructed by the architect Jean Gibelin between 1504 and 1508. His son Conrad perfected the construction in 1535, in providing the towers with defensive works of protection. This beautiful doorway, enhanced by the Cathedral tower of Saint-Ursus, is one of the most admirable sights of Solothurn.

*Pierre Savoie*

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