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Three new Federal Councillors elected

The parliamentary session on 5th December was of special significance, for three seats in the Federal Council had become vacant due to the resignation of Federal Councillors Tschudi, Bonvin and Celio. (See last special issue).

As their successors, the three largest parties in Parliament put up the following National Councillors: Schmid (Solothurn), Franzoni (Ticino) and Schmitt (Geneva).

The elections on 5th December were surprising in more than one way, for none of the official candidates was elected. On close examination, one could not say that the parties suffered a defeat, especially since the three official candidates had been elected with only a very small majority within their parties. This allowed outsiders a much greater chance.

It is an unwritten agreement that the representation of the parties in the Federal Council should always be the same. Thus each of the larger parties is practically certain to get in its candidate. When the last elections took place, it was the Social-Democrat Schmid who had to go through the ordeal first. Not even did he get all his own party's votes, but neither the *Buergerliche*, nor the Liberals supported him; they gave their votes to Willi Ritschard. Thus the parties felt released from the usual principle of mutual support, and the other two official candidates had to suffer for it. One could say that it was not so much individuals as representatives of various parties who were elected. Thus the highest legislative authority in the land, Parliament decided in favour of Messrs. Ritschard, Huerlimann and Chevallaz.

At the moment, the Confederation's Executive is composed of the following: Two Socio-Democrats: Graber and Ritschard, two Christian-Democrats: Furgler and Huerlimann, two Liberals: Brugger and Chevallaz, and one representative of the *Bürger* — and Farmers' Party — Gnaegi.

WILLI RITSCHARD

He was born on 28th September, 1918, as citizen of Oberhofen/BE and Luterbach/SO. He went to primary and regional (*Bezirk*) school and was apprenticed as a heating erector. He became a member of the Luterbach Commune Council in 1945, and was President of the Commune from 1947–59. In 1945, he was elected to the Solothurn Cantonal Parliament. He presided over the Cantonal Council in 1963 and remained on it up to 1964. He was a member of the National Council from 1955 to 63.

Since joining the Solothurn Government in 1964, he has been in charge of the Finance and Forestry Department. He became particularly well known as Chairman of the Conference of



Cantonal Finance Directors and as Chairman of the special commission for simplifying and coordinating the tax system, a commission set up by the Conference of Cantonal Finance Directors.

Federal Councillor Willi Ritschard is an enthusiastic rambler in the Jura where he spends most of his leisure time. He is married and has one son and one daughter.

HANS HUERLIMANN

He was born at his Commune of origin Walchwil/ZF on 6th April, 1918. He spent his school years at the *Stiftschule* at Einsiedeln, where he passed the matriculation exams. He studied law at the Universities of Berne and Fribourg and graduated as a doctor of law in 1945.

Federal Councillor Huerlimann was a member of the Cantonal Government of Zug from 1954 onward. First he was head of the Department of Justice, Police and Military Affairs. In 1962 he changed over



to the Department of Education, Culture, and again, Military Affairs. In 1967, the Canton delegated him to the Council of States in Berne. For eight years, he chaired the Conference of the Cantonal Military Directors, and later, from 1968–73, that of the Directors of Education. In this capacity he worked indefatigably towards coordination of schooling. He also belonged to various commissions, especially in the interest of children and young people.

Federal Councillor Huerlimann has two sons and a daughter.

GEORGES-ANDRE CHEVALLAZ

He was born in Lausanne on 7th February, 1915. He is a citizen of Montherod/VD. He studied history in Lausanne and Paris and got his doctorate in Lausanne on "agriculture in the Canton of Vaud at the end of the *ancien régime*."



He began his career as a teacher at the *Ecole Supérieure de Commerce* in Lausanne in 1942 and was appointed director of the Cantonal and University Library in 1955. He resigned as teacher in 1958 and became Mayor of Lausanne. A year later, he was elected National Councillor. He is head of his parliamentary party and chaired the Commission on Foreign Affairs. At the time of his election, he was a member of the Commission on Military matters. Having been at the head of the Radical-Democratic Party of Lausanne and later of the Canton of Vaud, he finally became President of the Swiss Radical-Democrats.

Federal Councillor Chevallaz has published several books, amongst them "Switzerland, or the Sleep of the Just". He is married and has two children.