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justification of the considerable expenditure involved. The creation of a new university should be envisaged within a general development plan for the country. On present trends, it appears that expansion and population growth will slow down and more emphasis placed

on the quality of life. This will surely have a bearing on higher education.

In the meanwhile, it can be said that most of the problems of society today are concentrated and amplified in the small world of the university.

P.M.B.

SWISS EVENTS

END OF FIRST SESSION OF DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON HUMANITARIAN LAW IN GENEVA

Mr. Pierre Gruber drew very optimistic conclusions at the end of a three-week session by 120 delegations to revise the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Speaking to journalists after the closing meeting in Geneva the Head of Switzerland's diplomacy said that a second and final session of the conference would take place next February. Mr. Gruber hoped that it would be sufficient to confirm and expand existing humanitarian laws applicable to war situations. He had presided over the sometime stormy meeting which had been convened by Switzerland. The importance of these negotiations was underlined by the presence of 120 national delegations, plus a great number of delegates from liberation movements, whereas only 50 countries had participated in the elaboration of the 1949 Convention. Mr. Gruber stressed that the 1974 session had constituted a first attempt at a universal codification of prisoner-of-war provisions.

The beginning of the Conference was beset by disagreement between Western and Third World and Communist delegations on the status of the Vietcong as a fully-fledged member of the Conference. This was eventually denied to South Vietnam's Revolutionary and Provisional Government, which walked out of the Conference. A consensus was then reached on allowing liberation movements to participate but not to vote. Liberation wars were also accepted as "wars in their own right" so that the norms of humanitarian behaviour considered for other classical wars should also be applicable to them.

This recent session to be considered as a first contact for the 120 participating nations who now have a year during which to define their policies so that the 1975 session can result in decisions and a new body of internationally accepted standards for the treatment of prisoners of war.

The local Press commented that the success of the conference and the fact that so many countries had responded to Switzerland's call to meet in Geneva

enhanced our country's international prestige.

Geneva names street after Ansermet

A street has been renamed in honour of the late Ernest Ansermet, founder and leader of the Swiss Romande Orchestra. The "Quai de l'Ecole de Medecine" bordering the river Arve will henceforth be called "quai Ernest Ansermet". The Geneva authorities had waited a customary period of five years after the conductor's death before making a change which was not only appropriate in view of Ansermet's importance in the history of music, but also because he had directed over 450 concerts in the neighbouring studios of Radio Suisse Romande. The orchestra which he had founded and which was one of the leading symphony orchestras of the world is now conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch.

Streaking makes a brief appearance

With a time-lag of about a week, streaking spread from the Anglo-Saxon world to Switzerland during the middle of March. The first incident recorded by the Press apparently happened in Zurich, where two youths streaked along the Bahnhofstrasse. A few days later, a group of men ran naked across La Place Neuve in Geneva. There were other examples in most towns, but the sensation was over in about two weeks, as it was elsewhere.

MR. ERNST BRUGGER ATTENDS POMPIDOU'S FUNERAL SERVICE

Mr. Ernst Brugger, Head of the Department of Public Economy and President of the Confederation for 1974, represented Switzerland at President Pompidou's funeral service in Paris. The Federal Council took some time before it decided that Switzerland should be represented at this level and chose at first to see what other countries were doing. When it realised that about sixty heads of State or government were going to Paris it decided to break an old tradition according to which a Federal Councillor does not go abroad while holding the office of President. The fact that Switzerland had been represented by a former President (Max Petitpierre) at General de Gaulle's funeral service had shocked several members of parliament.

Requiem masses were celebrated in Berne and Geneva in memory of the late French President.

NEGLIGENCE CAUSES A TRAIN COLLISION NEAR NEUCHATEL

The station master of Boudry and an assistant station master at the neighbouring station of Bevaix were charged with careless manslaughter following a collision between a stationary express train going from Neuchatel to Lausanne and a slow passenger train. Two people were killed and eight others injured in the accident. An enquiry showed that the station master at Boudry had delivered a written authorisation to the driver of the slow passenger train to start off in the Yverdon direction despite there being red lights. This authorisation had been given following unclear instructions phoned to him from Bevaix, the next stop down the line, by the assistant station master. The omnibus train crashed into a stationary express train opposite Perreux psychiatric hospital. The express had come to a stop because an unknown man had stood on the line in a suicide attempt and been fatally injured.

A Swiss firm will keep time at the 1976 Olympics

The Organising Committee of the 1976 Olympics have signed a contract with Swiss Timing, entrusting the Swiss firm with the time-keeping of both Summer and Winter Olympics. The Swiss watch industry will thus undertake a highly complex task which it has performed with only one or two exceptions since 1932. The two firms that have usually kept time up to now at the Olympic Games were Longines and Omega.

Plea for the right to strike

A federation of civil servants ("Union fédérative du personnel des administrations et des entreprises publiques") has asked the Federal Council to start the necessary procedure to abrogate Constitutional provisions (Article 23) forbidding public employees from going on strike.

The Swiss Navy too small

The proverbial Swiss Navy is now equipped with 28 merchant ships of a total tonnage of 365,000 tons. In addition to this, 125 ships of a total tonnage of 140,000 tons fly the Swiss flag on the Rhine, which is a sharp drop with respect to the Rhine fleet of 1967. It then consisted of 253 boats grossing 230,000 tons.

The Swiss Government considers that the Swiss merchant navy on the high seas should be larger in case there should be a new war or an international emergency.

The port of Basle handled nine million tons of traffic in 1970 but this volume hasn't increased since.

SOLZHENITSYN SETTLES DOWN IN ZURICH

Forty-four days after having been banned from his country and deprived of his Soviet citizenship, Alexander Solzhenitsyn was reunited with his family in Zurich on 29th March. He greeted his wife Natalya, his three children, his mother-in-law and a child by his wife's first marriage at Kloten Airport. One of the first declarations by his wife was "We shall return". The Nobel Prize winner has rented a house on the Zurichberg, not far from Toblerplatz. The day after the family reunion, a crowd of reporters were still keeping watch outside the house when a group of children from a local school marched by carrying placards in defence of Solzhenitsyn's privacy. One of the writer's children went outside to greet them then took a placard and placed it on the house balcony for all the journalists to see. Solzhenitsyn is now looking for a villa outside Zurich and has been out on a survey with the son of his lawyer, Fritz Heeb.

BERNARD CORNFELD FREED ON BAIL

The financier Bernie Cornfeld, founder of the fallen investment empire IOS (Investment Overseas Services) has been freed on bail of five million francs in Geneva, where he had spent almost a year at St. Antone's Prison. Several previous attempts at obtaining bail had been rejected by the magistrate handling his case. Cornfeld's arrest, which arose from proceedings initiated by former IOS

employees who had lost heavily when the shares of the organisation plummeted to nearly nil values, took place while he was dropping in to see his mother at his Geneva lakeside villa. He is faced with charges of fraud and mismanagement, but insists that he is innocent and that the fall of his company, the biggest and most popular investment group of the sixties handling over two million dollars worth of private savings, was due to the dishonesty and incompetence of his successors. On the night of his release, Cornfeld flew to London and hence to America. The Geneva Press fears that it will be most difficult to get him back to appear at future hearings.

Michel Soutter produces his sixth film

Michel Soutter, a Genevese film director already known for his "Arpenteurs", "Hachisch" and "La Lune entre les Dents" has just released his sixth film, "L'Escapade". This is the first film he has undertaken with important financial means and the first work intended for the public at large. With Jean Claude Goretta and Alain Tanner, Michel Soutter completes the trio of Swiss cineasts who have been the motive force behind the actual re-birth of the Swiss film industry. "Salamandre" by Tanner and "L'Invitation" by Goretta have been screened to a wide public in Britain.

Crows attack sheep in the Valais

A re-enactment of Hitchcock's "The Birds" has been experienced by peasants in the Lens area of the Valais, whose sheep are being attacked, savagely maimed and killed by famished mountain crows. These birds are presently protected. Before swooping on sheep, they used to feed on open garbage heaps. The construction of a cleaner waste-disposal system appears to have starved them and left them no alternative. The cantonal game-keeper is reviewing the situation and will lift the protection order on these birds if they wreak more havoc among the sheep of the Valais.

Do-gooders accused

The controversy on Chilean refugees took a new turn at the end of

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March when the Federal Council severely accused a voluntary welfare organisation called "Places Gratuites" of having illegally brought eleven refugees into the Tessin. This organisation and its supporters had waged a campaign to offer free board and lodging to a vastly superior number of Chileans to the 220 who were eventually allowed entry following the Military Coup in Chile last September. They complain that the federal authorities have been callous and ungenerous in their welcome to these destitute people facing physical danger under the new right wing regime of Chile. However, Parliament approved the Federal Council's policy of strengthening border controls and asking would-be immigrants to arrive with visas.

Over a million foreigners

Latest figures shown by the immigration registrar in Berne show that there were 1,052,505 foreign residents or yearly-permit holders living in Switzerland last December. There were a further 19,048 workers with a seasonal permit and 97,940 "borderers" working in Switzerland and living across the border. Fifty seven per cent of the foreign population established in Switzerland is employed. This manpower totals 595,548 people, or a little less than the 603,000 workers set as a limit by the Federal Council. The Italian foreign community is by far the largest with 551,768 persons, then come the Spaniards (119,072), the Germans (111,411), the French (53,054), the Austrians (43,013), the Yugoslavs (31,578) and the Turks (23,158). With 211,648 foreigners, Canton-Zurich has the greatest contingent and is 19 per cent foreign. But in relative figures it comes behind Geneva, 36 per cent of whose population is foreign, Ticino (27 per cent) and a few other cantons.

Swiss banker quits after loss

LOSSES believed to run into several million Swiss francs have been sustained by the Zurich-based Union Bank of Switzerland. The bank, one of the three largest in Switzerland, has announced the resignation of an assistant director-general, Mr. Robert Strel, who was in charge of the foreign exchange department.

It is understood that the bank advanced substantial credits to a client who used them to finance foreign exchange speculations which turned out to be unsuccessful. The brief bank statement refers simply to a "substantial loss", and there is no suggestion of wrongdoing on the part of Mr. Strel.

The loss, the bank notes, is more than amply covered by its reserves of foreign exchange and precious metals.

Nestlés described in the Observer

A long article on the Nestlé food empire appeared in the *Observer* on 14th April. The article was entitled "How Nestlé keeps the Swiss sweet". It was the third of a series on the "unknown giants of European business" and considered Nestlé as "the only true multinational".

Here are some of the facts recorded in this survey:

Nestlé is the world's twelfth non-American company with sales totalling £2,200 million last year (Unilever £2,670) or twice as much as its nearest Swiss rival - Ciba-Geigy. Trading profits totalled £200 million and net profits £95 million, making the Vevey-based group a particularly profitable enterprise. 115,000 employees work for it, 5,000 of them in Switzerland and 13,000 in the UK. It has 286 factories outside Switzerland including 16 in Great Britain and 81 in developing countries. There are only about 300 Swiss nationals in these factories.

Nestlé has been self-financing since 1922. Its latest balance sheet shows liquidities of around £300 million which means that it hardly needs to seek outside financing for new investments or acquisitions. This is the reason it is not listed on the London and New York stock exchanges (for which it doesn't meet all the requirements in respect of company information, although "it is unusually frank about its finances by Swiss standards"). Bearer shares are quoted on Switzerland's six stock exchanges, at Paris, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Vienna. In order to keep control of the group in

Swiss hands, its 80,000 shares are divided into 16,000 registered shares which only Swiss nationals can buy and 64,000 bearer shares open to the rest of the world. Registered shares are currently changing hands at £300 (much less than Hoffmann la Roche shares) while bearer shares are exchanged nowadays at £500. This puts the stock market value of the group at a relatively modest £1,000 million.

The *Observer* adds that Nestlé has had trouble with some of its purchases, such as Libby and Findus. "Crosse and Blackwell, acquired in 1960, has been even more of a cross to bear", it says. One of the recent diversifying operations of the group was to take a stake in L'Oréal, the French cosmetics empire.

Nestlé's chairman and general manager is a Frenchman born in London, Mr. Pierre Liotard-Vogt, "a self-effacing 64-year-old commerce graduate". Sales in the UK are running at £100 million a year with such brand names as Ideal milk, Chef soups, Branston pickles, Milo milk drinks and Sweetheart deserts. Nestlé was founded in 1867 with a milk food for babies invented by Henri Nestlé. Today, the group produces more than 14,000 lines. All family influence has gone and nobody owns more than 2 per cent of the shares. "The group is run with Swiss efficiency from a lakeside office complex with the air of a particularly well endowed hospital" in the "sleepy" town of Vevey.

All this makes it sound as a rock-solid investment.

HIGHER FEDERAL TAXES IN THE OFFING

Mr. Georges-André Chevallaz, Head of the Department of Finance, has announced a new programme of increased direct and indirect taxes to help the Confederation to meet its increased commitments. The progression rate of Federal income tax (Defence) will be steeper and attain a maximum of 12 per cent compared with 9.5 per cent at present. Turnover Tax on retail and wholesale business will be raised from 6.6 and 4.4 per cent to 9 and 6 per cent respectively. These new provisions have to be approved by the people in a compulsory referendum due to be staged next December. They will probably take effect during the next fiscal year. Mr. Chevallaz has also announced that, in the long run, Switzerland will have to introduce some form of VAT.

The Minister appropriately summed

up the purpose of the planned reform by saying: "One cannot enjoy the achievements of Sweden while paying the tax rate of Portugal".

Switzerland triumphs in curling

Switzerland scored a magnificent victory last March at the World Curling Championships in Berne. A team of four Zurich students came off with the Swiss colours flying as the winners of this event after beating, among other curling nations, the Canadians and the Scots.

Old Age Pension: Parliament votes 13th month

Parliament ended its March session by a debate on Old Age Pensions. Both the National Council and the Council of States opted in favour of awarding a 13th month of pension for the current year in

order to keep pace with increases in the cost of living and wage rises. Although this would cost 650 million francs to the country, Parliament voted with a strong majority to ask the Government to revise present OAP plans accordingly.

(Incidentally: Some readers may have noticed in the last special issue, pp. 15-16, that pensions would be upgraded by 25 per cent as from 1st January this year. Unfortunately, this was a mistake for which we apologise. Pensions will be increased by the said amount on 1st January, 1975).

RESIGNATION OF A CONTROVERSIAL TEACHER

Professor Stephanus Pfuerter, a Dominican who has held the chair of Moral Theology at Fribourg's Catholic University for many years, has resigned from this post. He explained that he could not continue to carry out his research while everything published by him was being censored by the Congregation of the Faith which had condemned him during a secret trial for his teachings. A statement by the students of Fribourg University expressed their regret at Professor Pfuerter's decision.

Professor Pfuerter was at the heart of a nation-wide controversy eighteen months ago after running into trouble with the Vatican and the Hierarchy of the Swiss Catholic Church over his ethical teachings, which did not condemn premarital relations.

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GROUP RESOURCES EXCEED £500,000,000

The Hochwald air disaster due to human error

The enquiry on the Hochwald air disaster in which 108 British tourists were killed has revealed that it was due to an error on the part of the pilot. The results of the enquiry have not yet been made public, but this fact has been well established. The "Vanguard" was on a

weekend trip with many women from villages in Devonshire. The pilot was apparently confused between the approach beacons at either end of Basle's main runway and crashed on the foothills of the Jura. A monument in memory of the 108 victims was officially unveiled in Hochwald on 8th April, first anniversary of the disaster.



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