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Farmer

in Berne

THE Swiss Broadcasting Corporation has a new Director General – Mr Leo Schürmann.

He succeeds Mr Stelio Molo, Director General since 1972, who has retired after more than 30 years' service with the SBC.

Mr Schürmann (pictured below) is 63, and has been vice-president of the Swiss National Bank for the past four years. He was a Member of Parliament from 1959 to 1974, and in 1973 became known as "Mr Prices" when he was appointed by the federal government to the newly-created post of consumer prices supervisor.



THE inflation rate in Switzerland this year is expected to remain at four per cent, says Economics Minister Fritz Honegger. He also predicts that the Swiss franc will strengthen during 1981, with negative effects on exports and tourism.

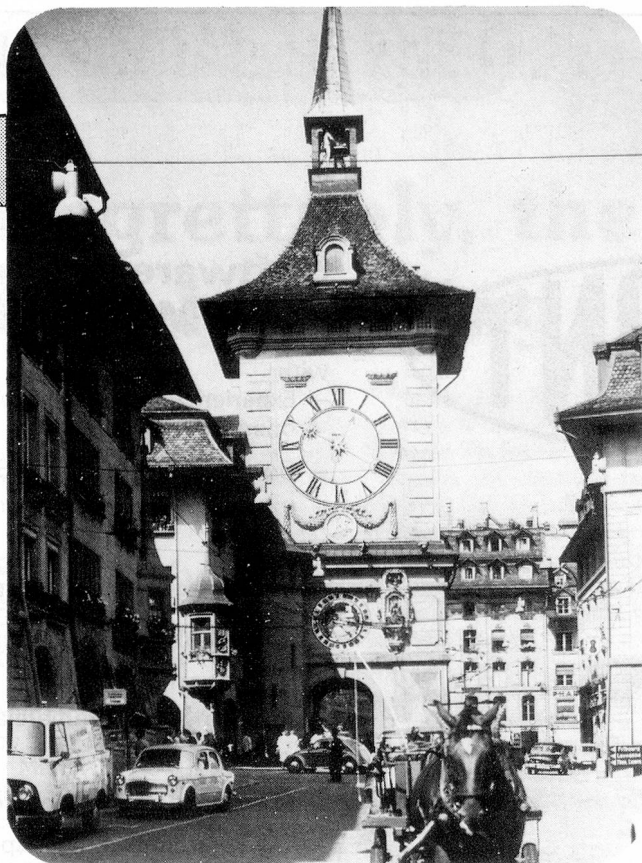
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SWITZERLAND'S four per cent inflation rate last year was the second lowest in the world, according to provisional figures released by the International Monetary Fund.

Highest inflation rate was recorded by Israel, with 131.5 per cent, followed by Turkey (109 per cent) and Argentina (102 per cent). The lowest? Saudi Arabia – with 1.5 per cent!

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SWISS salaries increased by an average two per cent in 1980, according to a Swiss news agency survey. In



addition most employees also received cost-of-living adjustments.

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THE Swiss are paying more for milk and dairy products this year. Milk prices increased in January by an average five centimes per litre, and butter went up by one franc per kilo.

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THE Swiss Co-operative and Migros supermarket chains have launched a joint Sfr. 200,000 (£50,000) food aid programme to Poland.

They are delivering baby foods, meat, cheese, fats and oil to Polish church and charity organisations and are also transporting additional supplies collected by Swiss aid organisations.

Colin Farmer, our regular columnist in Berne, reports in brief on the latest happenings in Switzerland.

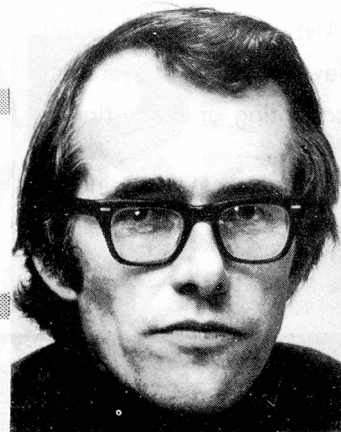
THE Swiss people are opposed to their country joining the United Nations, according to a *Weltwoche* public opinion poll.

Of those polled in an end-of-year survey, 39 per cent were against Swiss entry, 32 per cent in favour and 29 undecided. In polls in 1979, 1978 and 1977 a majority of those questioned were in favour of Swiss UN membership.

A nationwide vote on Swiss entry into the United Nations is expected to be held by 1983.

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VETERAN *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* journalist Eric Mettler has died in Zurich at the age of 63. A foreign affairs specialist with the newspaper for 36 years, he served as correspondent in Rome



and, from 1951 to 1965, in London.

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AVIATION pioneer Henri Dufaux has died in Geneva at the age of 101. He and his brother Armand developed a helicopter in 1908 and in 1910 built the first aircraft to fly the length of Lake Geneva.

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INCREASING drug addiction in Switzerland – and the lack of suitable treatment facilities – is causing serious concern, reveals a Federal Health Office report.

The death toll among addicts now exceeds 100 a year, representing an annual increase of 20 per cent. An estimated 6,000 people are serious addicts, and up to 6,000 others are believed to be regular drug-takers.

In addition, says the report, Switzerland has about 100,000 alcoholics.

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MANAGEMENT and workers in the Swiss printing industry have reached agreement on a new collective contract.

Final agreement on improved salaries and conditions was reached after months of negotiations, one-day regional stoppages which prevented publication of several newspapers, and threats by the Swiss Paper and Printing Workers' Union of a nationwide strike.

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ROAD death figures in Zurich, Basle and Berne have fallen following experimental reduction of the standard speed limit from 60 to 50 kilometers (37 to 31 miles) per hour. During the first five months of the trial period, road accidents in these cities dropped by an average 10 per cent and traffic deaths and injuries by 14 per cent.

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SWISS writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt celebrated his 60th birthday last month. Among the congratulations were messages from Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany and Swiss Interior Minister Hans Hürlimann.