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**Preisrekord im August
plus 7,4 Prozent – und
jetzt der grosse Schock**

Inflation

is

now

the highest for six years



THE annual inflation rate in Switzerland has now risen to 7.4 per cent – the highest for six years. And more prices rises are on the way.

Swiss National Bank deputy director Pierre Languetin told businessmen in a September speech that inflation had now reached "alarming proportions." He appealed for co-operation from management and workers in combatting "the most important problem now facing the Swiss economy."

In some cantons inflation is even running above the national average – in Zurich, for example, the figure is already up to 8.3 per cent.

Mortgage interest rates – and consequently many rents – have been increased twice so far this year. Swiss rail fares are to be increased by almost nine per cent next March, only 18 months after the last rise of six per cent. An increase in the price of bread, meat and other foods is imminent.

And the biggest shock of all has been announced by the Federation of Health Insurance Societies – premium increases of up to 60 per cent from January. The Federation reports that its six largest member-societies currently share a combined deficit of almost Sfr 200, which it blames on soaring medical costs and cuts in Swiss government subsidies.

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NOW the good news. Old age pensions in Switzerland are to be increased in Switzerland from January – by an average of nearly 13 per cent.

And the compulsory contributions payable by Swiss workers and employers to the federal unemployment insurance scheme are to go down from the same month. Contributions will be reduced by .5 per cent to .3 per cent of salaries, to be shared equally by workers and management.

The unemployment rate in Switzerland is currently one of the lowest in the world – .2 per cent.

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SANDOZ of Basle – Switzerland's third largest chemical concern – is to cut back its workforce by nearly 1,000 within the next two years. The cutbacks are necessary because of in-



"One day, my son, all this mortgage will be yours" – from the Schweizer Illustrierte

creasing production costs, said a company announcement.

About half the jobs are expected to disappear by not replacing workers who resign or retire from the company, and many other personnel will be offered early retirement.

Some workers being made redundant will be offered part-time employment by Sandoz, and the company will help others to find jobs elsewhere.

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THE number of Polish citizens seeking political asylum in Switzerland is rising sharply, according to official figures released in Berne. Applications from Polish visitors totalled nearly 300 in the first seven months of this year, com-

pared with 184 during the whole of 1980.

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A NATIONWIDE vote is to be held in Switzerland on the controversial issue of more government cash for culture.

Groups behind the initiative have submitted to the government 124,000 signatures – 24,000 more than the minimum necessary to force a federal vote. But because of various procedures, Swiss citizens will not be summoned to the ballot box before 1983 at the very earliest.

The campaign was launched by Swiss film makers, but later joined by other cultural circles throughout the country. Claiming that the government is not doing enough to protect and promote the nation's cultural activities, they want a new article to be written into the Federal Constitution.

This would guarantee that one per cent of annual Swiss government expenditure be spent on culture – currently equal to three times federal expenditure in this field.

As supporters of the cash-for-culture campaign point out, the Swiss government currently spends Sfr 65 million on culture – and five times more on subsidising cheese.

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THE Swiss section of Amnesty International has appealed to the Czechoslovak authorities for the immediate release of a journalist, arrested after being granted political asylum in Britain.

Fifty-four-year-old Karel Kyncl – who worked for Czechoslovak radio and television and was a signatory of the Charter 77 human rights document –

was arrested in May before he could leave the country. He has since been imprisoned without trial, accused of "subversion in collusion with a foreign power."

According to Amnesty International representatives in Switzerland, Kyncl is seriously ill and in urgent need of hospital treatment. Czechoslovak authorities are quoted as saying that treatment is not possible – "because the prison hospital is full."

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BRITAIN wants Switzerland to agree to a change in the 1977 double taxation agreement between the two countries.

Under the agreement Swiss firms with at least a 10 per cent share in British companies enjoy tax privileges on dividends. But the British government now fears that companies from other countries may attempt to use the agreement as a tax loophole, by forming intermediate operations in Switzerland.

The change requested by Britain would close this loophole. The Swiss government is in favour – but it has to seek Parliamentary approval.

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SWITZERLAND'S Winterthur Insurance Company is making a takeover bid for Provident Life of London. The Winterthur concern already owns a 25 per cent stake in the British company, and the bid to take gain complete control is worth an estimated £15 million.

Business sources indicate that the Swiss offer will probably not prove high enough. But

if the takeover bid does succeed, then former Defence Minister John Profumo – a central figure in a 1960s London call-girl scandal – stands to make an estimated £900,000.

Profumo is deputy chairman of Provident Life and is a major shareholder in the company. His actress wife, Valerie Hobson, is also a shareholder.

The former Defence Minister is now 66 and a charity worker in London's tough East End. He resigned from the Conservative Government in 1963 after first denying and then admitting an affair with playgirl Christine Keeler while she was involved with a Soviet Embassy naval attaché.

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THE number of people suffering from depression in Switzerland has shown an "alarming" increase, reports Basle University psychiatric clinic.

The reasons – increasing materialism, the threat of war, natural and nuclear disaster, and a failure to relate to fellow members of society and one's daily work and environment.

Symptoms of depression, adds the document, are frequently of a physical nature such as tiredness, headache, heart and circulatory complaints, high blood pressure and digestive disorders.

But the Swiss are not the only people to suffer from increasing depression, says the Basle report. A similar trend is evident "in all other civilised countries."

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SWISS soldiers, citing new sex equality

legislation, have won the right to have long hair.

Muttering in the ranks came to a head when a 30-year-old Private Felix – his full name has been withheld – refused to cut his shoulder-length mane. He told his regimental commander that women soldiers are allowed long hair – and reminded him that, since June, Switzerland has had equal rights legislation.

A divisional military court deliberated for three hours – and ruled in favour of Private Felix. It twice made him put on his gas mask and steel helmet in court to prove that his hair in no way reduced his combat readiness.

But the top brass are unhappy about the verdict and the army prosecutor is taking the case to a military appeals court.

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WALTER Sturm – the man they call "the breakout king" – is back behind bars.

The 39-year-old bank robber, who escaped from a Zurich jail four months ago, has been recaptured in France. During a routine traffic check by French police, Sturm was discovered driving a stolen mini-bus with false number plates. In the back of the vehicle were a collection of other number plates, false passports and a large sum of money.

Sturm was sentenced in 1972 to an eight and a half year jail term, but has since escaped four times. When he broke out of prison in April, he even left behind a farewell note – "Gone to look for Easter eggs."

Colin Farmer

SWISS SOCCER

Football League tables up to and including September 5

'A' Division							
	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts	
Servette	4	4	0	0	15: 4	8	
Basel	4	3	1	0	4: 0	7	
Xamax	4	3	0	1	10: 4	6	
Young Boys	4	2	1	1	8: 4	5	
St. Gallen	4	2	1	1	10: 8	5	
Zürich	4	1	3	0	3: 2	5	
Grasshoppers	4	2	0	2	8: 5	4	
Luzern	4	2	0	2	7: 7	4	
Sitten	4	1	2	1	7: 7	4	
Bellinzona	4	1	2	1	4: 7	4	
Aarau	4	1	1	2	7: 6	3	
Nordstern	4	1	1	2	4: 8	3	
Lausanne	4	1	0	3	3: 8	2	
Bulle	4	1	0	3	5: 12	2	
Chiasso	4	0	1	3	2: 8	1	
Vevey	4	0	1	3	5: 12	1	

'B' Division							
	Pl	W	D	L	Gls	Pts	
Chênois	4	3	1	0	8: 2	7	
Grenchen	4	2	2	0	8: 3	6	
Freiburg	4	1	3	0	7: 3	5	
Biel	4	2	1	1	8: 5	5	
La Chaux-de-F.	4	2	1	1	5: 3	5	
Wettingen	4	1	3	0	5: 3	5	
Mendrisiostar	4	2	1	1	5: 4	5	
Locarno	4	2	0	2	6: 6	4	
Lugano	4	2	0	2	6: 6	4	
Winterthur	4	1	2	1	4: 4	4	
Ibach	4	1	2	1	3: 6	4	
Bern	4	1	1	2	8: 10	3	
Frauenfeld	4	1	1	2	4: 6	3	
Aurore Biel	4	0	2	2	2: 8	2	
Monthey	4	0	1	3	2: 6	1	
Altstätten	4	0	1	3	1: 7	1	

Lines separate championship leader, relegation and promotion zones.