

Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

M. VALLOTTON IN LONDON.

A declaration of Switzerland's determination to resist all forms of aggression, whether military or in the form of propaganda, was made by M. Henri Vallotton, President of the Swiss National Council, at the House of Commons.

He was delivering an address on Swiss foreign policy to a gathering of representatives of the Cabinet, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons, at the invitation of Capt. Plugge, M.P.

M. Vallotton, one of Switzerland's most eminent politicians, is in London to study British Parliamentary procedure with a view of introducing certain of its aspects to the Swiss Parliament — the Federal Assembly.

"Switzerland has been a neutral country for more than four centuries," he said. "But, faced with a warlike and nervous Europe resembling a great munitions factory under full steam, Switzerland, too, has been obliged to bring her army up to date, to give it efficient arms and to fortify her frontiers.

"The Government and Parliament decided to issue a loan for national defence with a first instalment of 80,000,000 Swiss francs — about £4,000,000 at the current rate. The people forthwith subscribed the whole amount: 320,000,000 francs — £16,000,000.

"This is another proof of the determination of every Swiss to defend his country to the last drop of blood, whoever the aggressor may be.

"Switzerland endeavours to maintain the best possible relations with all countries, but she is not prepared to bow to the domination of any State. She is determined to remain mistress in her own house and to allow no foreign propaganda on her territory. This is the main reason why, after memorable debates in 1926 and 1936, the Swiss Parliament decided not to resume diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

"A passionate lover of liberty Switzerland is fiercely independent and intends to remain Swiss. She refuses to allow foreign ideologies to penetrate her territory.

"We know that in critical times little Switzerland can rely on great England, who has always been her friend. We thank you for it."

SWISS JOURNALISTS IN ITALY.

M. Motta, Chief of the Political Department of the Federal Council, learnt that the Italian Government have decided to grant an unlimited respite to the three Swiss journalists, one of them the correspondent of the French newspaper *Le Temps*, who were to have been expelled from Italy. The Italian authorities are ready to reconsider the whole affair and eventually to cancel the measure recently taken.

INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

The Federal Council has appointed M. Plinio Holla, Federal Judge, to be a member of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, in succession to the late Federal Judge, M. Soldati.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

The death has occurred in Zurich of Dr. E. Buomberger, at the age of 62.

The deceased was for many years connected with the Swiss Press, principally in the cantons of St. Gall and Zurich. In 1924 he was appointed editor-in-chief of the "Neuen Zürcher Nach-

richten," and soon after he was elected a member of the "Grossen Stadtrat," and later on of the "Stadtrat," he had been a member of Parliament (Nat. Council) since 1936.

Dr. Conrad Bürgi, in Zurich will occupy the seat in the National Council, which has become vacant through the death of Dr. Buomberger. Dr. Bürgi was born in 1874 and has been a medical practitioner in Zurich for the last 23 years. The new member of Parliament is a member of the "Kantonsrat" since 1931.

BERNE.

Dr. R. Flatt from Basle has been appointed Professor of Chemistry at the University of Berne. Professor Flatt, is the son of a former rector of the "Obere Realschule" in Basle and since 1934 a lecturer at the University of Basle.

Mme. Etienne Ducommun, the oldest inhabitant of the town of Berne has died at the age of nearly 101 years.

SCHWYZ.

The successor of the late Martin Ochsner in the States Council, is Dr. Fritz Stähli, President of the Tribunal in Siebnen, who hitherto sat in the National Council (1928-1939).

His successor in the National Council is M. Klemens Ulrich from Küssnacht a. R.

ST. GALL.

All the members of the cantonal government, which came up for re-election, have been confirmed in their offices, the result is as follows:

Dr. Karl Kobelt (Liberal) 43,029; J. J. Gabathuler (Liberal) 42,919; Dr. Joseph Riedener (Conservative) 42,108; Dr. Albert Gemperli (Conservative) 42,059; Emil Grünenfelder (Conservative) 41,153; Dr. Adolf Römer (Liberal) 40,893; Valentin Keel (Socialist) 38,861.

GRISONS.

A company of 130 officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the 12th Alpine Battalion, which is exercising in the Pontresina district in the Engadine, ascended recently to Piz Palü (12,835ft.), on the summit of which the company in war kit was assembled at midday.

AARGAU.

Dr. Agostino Nizzola has celebrated his 70th birthday. He started his career with the Engineering firm of Brown, Boveri & Co. in Baden. In 1895 he joined the "Motor, A.G." During nearly 50 years Dr. Nizzola has rendered eminent services to the Electrical Industry of our country.

THE SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION AT ZURICH.

A National Exhibition brings to the mind of most people the thought of walking wearily from one building to another, and taking away with them at the close of their visit a rather confused impression of the many interesting things on view.

These drawbacks have been avoided with remarkable success at the Zurich Exhibition, due to the spirit of co-operation shown by the Swiss Exhibitors under the expert leadership of the Exhibition Committee, headed by its Manager, Mr. Meili.

The varied aspects of our country, its industrial and commercial activities, its democratic institutions, schools and army, and also its history and art, will be displayed in such a manner that the visitor will take away with him a lasting and complete impression of what he has seen.

What is more, the Exhibition Buildings are beautifully set out along the tree-lined shore on both sides of the lake, and wherever possible the visitors will be conveyed from one part of the Exhibition to another in punts, following the meanderings of an inland waterway; an unusual and delightful method of transportation in such a place — noiseless, dust free and refreshing.

There will, of course, also be an amusements ground and many refreshing places for a quiet rest. The children too are bound to enjoy the corner prepared especially for them.

The Exhibition, which will open on May 6th — and, by the way, it should be ready in good time — will last until October 29th.

Every Swiss citizen living abroad who can possibly arrange for it, should make a point of seeing the unique representation of our country in miniature, which will be displayed in Zurich during the coming summer.

V. C. Ceresole,

Manager,

Swiss State Travel Bureau.

LA POLITIQUE

Les retraites des conseillers fédéraux.

Les commissions des finances du Conseil des Etats et du Conseil national s'occupent ces temps-ci d'une révision des dispositions légales en vigueur pour les retraites des conseillers fédéraux. Ce sont elles qui ont pris l'initiative de ce remaniement; celle du Conseil des Etats a élaboré un nouveau projet d'arrêté, que les commissions du National discutent à leur tour.

En 1920, un arrêté fédéral avait réglé la question des pensions accordées aux anciens membres du gouvernement helvétique. On avait jugé bon de tenir compte à la fois de la durée des fonctions et de l'âge, ce qui, en soi, paraît normal. Mais l'échelle adoptée manquait de souplesse, ainsi que l'expérience l'a prouvé depuis lors.

Pour bénéficier d'une pension de retraite, un ancien conseiller fédéral doit avoir au moins cinquante-cinq ans et avoir siégé au directoire durant dix ans au moins. A première vue, cette prescription semble assez libérale. En pratique, elle risque d'exclure du bénéfice d'une retraite nombre de magistrats méritants. Pour donner un exemple concret, parmi les membres actuels du gouvernement central, seul M. Motta, s'il venait à quitter le pouvoir, aurait droit à la pension. Ses collègues, dans la même occurrence, en seraient privés; car les uns, comme M. Pilet, auraient bien les années de fonctions exigées, mais non pas l'âge requis, tandis que d'autres, comme M. Baumann, auraient l'âge, mais non la durée d'activité prévue. D'autres enfin, tel M. Etter, ne répondraient à aucune des deux conditions.

On va disant que les anciens conseillers fédéraux ne sont pas à plaindre, que, lorsqu'ils ont quitté le gouvernement, ils trouvent facilement de grasses prébendes dans des entreprises bancaires ou industrielles, comme conseillers d'administration. C'est vrai dans certains cas. Mais cela ne l'a pas toujours été, ni ne le sera nécessairement à l'avenir. On aime à citer les tantièmes et les jetons de présence que touchent tels ou tels de nos anciens heptarques; on se garde bien de rappeler le souvenir de l'un d'eux, qui, jadis, finit tristement ses jours avec un tout petit traitement d'employé de bureau. Le peuple suisse n'entend pas qu'on s'enrichisse au gouvernement, mais il ne veut pas non plus qu'un homme qui a consacré sa vie aux affaires publiques termine son existence dans la gêne.

La commission du Conseil des Etats a donc élaboré un projet combinant d'une manière plus judicieuse que l'arrêté de 1920 l'âge et la durée des fonctions. Selon ce nouveau système pour bénéficier de la pension, il faudrait avoir un total de cinquante-cinq points, calculés sur la base de l'âge et du double de la durée des fonctions. Le montant de la pension serait naturellement variable, selon le nombre de points dépassant le minimum de cinquante-cinq.

Les commissions parlementaires ont prévu l'objection que nous relevons tout à l'heure et selon laquelle certains anciens magistrats touchent, après leur retraite officielle, des deniers relativement considérables par l'exercice d'une activité privée. On a reconnu que la pension de retraite ne devait pas s'ajouter à des émoluments déjà élevés, et le projet qui sera présenté aux Chambres prescrira, croyons-nous, qu'il y aura lieu à réduction, voire à suppression, des versements de l'Etat pour les ayants-droit qui gagneraient, dans le privé, plus qu'ils ne gagnaient dans leurs fonctions publiques.

On a certes raison de faire cette réserve. Mais il convient de signaler que les chiffres donnés par certains journaux sont ridiculement exagérés, notamment quand ils parlent de "centaines de milliers de francs de tantièmes et dividendes fournis par la haute finance internationale (sic) à ses fidèles et loyaux serviteurs." Qui sont actuellement les anciens conseillers fédéraux qui reçoivent de telles sommes? Et