

The new President of the Swiss Confederation

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THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

Federal Councillor Dr. h.c. Hans Schaffner

Mr. Hans Schaffner was born on 16th December 1908 at Interlaken, a citizen of Gränichen (Aargau). Although he spent his youth in the Canton of Berne and graduated in law at Berne University, he figures as a representative of the Aargau.

He began his career in 1934 as Secretary of the Bernese Upper Court of Justice and later as assistant of the Bernese Association of Commerce and Industry. He joined the Federal Service in 1938 as legal adviser of the BIGA. In 1941, Federal Councillor Stampfli called him in as chief of the Federal Central Office of Wartime Economy. In 1954, Mr. Schaffner advanced to Delegate for Trade Agreements (rank of Minister). Nine years later he became the successor of Dr. Jean Hotz as head of the Commercial Section of the Federal Department of Economy. From 1953 to 1961, he was a member of the European Trade Directorate of OEEC, Paris.

It was on 15th June 1961 that the Federal Assembly elected Mr. Schaffner Federal Councillor. This was a personal success for him, as former federal employees only rarely advance to governmental position. He was predestined to take charge of the Federal Department of Economy, a post he has held ever since. In 1965, he was Vice-President of the Confederation.

In recognition of his achievements in legal and economic spheres, Berne University awarded him an Honorary Doctorate.

Federal Councillor Schaffner married the daughter of the Bernese Regierungsrat Rudolf in 1936. He has two sons.

[S.N.T.O. and A.T.S.]

THE NEW FEDERAL COUNCILLOR

Regierungsrat Rudolf Gnägi, Berne

Mr. Rudolf Gnägi was born on 3rd August 1917, the youngest of four sons (and two daughters), at his place of origin of Schwadernau in the Bernese Seeland. His father was well-known as a farmer and was Commune President at the early age of 22, member of the Cantonal Parliament, co-founder of the Bernese BGB Party, National Councillor and friend of the late Federal Councillor Minger. Rudolf Gnägi was educated at the *Gymnasium* in Bienne and studied law at Berne University.

In 1945, after two years with a firm of lawyers, he joined the Secretariats of the Bernese Farmers' and the Cantonal as well as the National "Bauern-, Gewerbe- und Bürgerpartei". He was elected to the Bernese Government in 1952, in which he has been the head of the Department of Economy. A year later, he became the then youngest National Councillor. In the twelve years as an M.P., he has sat on fifty-three commissions, on six of them as chairman.

Since 1957 he is President of the "Schweizerischer Fremdenverkehrsverband", of the "Bernische Winterhilfe" and is on the committee of Radio Berne and the Swiss National Tourist Office. He presided the "Kantonal-schützenfest" in Berne in 1960 and the Bernese Day at the EXPO in 1964.

Federal Councillor Gnägi is a Major of Artillery. He has been married since 1951, has four boys of between three and twelve years and lives at Spiegel near Berne.

[A.T.S.]

THE SEARCH FOR BODIES ENDS AT MATTMARK

On 23rd December, the site of the glacier avalanche catastrophe at Mattmark in the Valais was closed. Of the eighty-eight victims, two only could not be recovered, those of an Italian and an Austrian. All the eighty-six bodies could be identified and surrendered to their relatives.

In spite of very bad weather conditions, work by a team of twenty-five experts went on in order to recover the bodies. But the snow lies now so thick that activities on the site have had to stop. The mass of ice and rock was about 25 m. deep, and of the million cubic metres, nearly half have been removed. International scientific and legal experts are working on the official enquiry. The engineering firms in charge of construction of the barrage are investigating the safety of the dam.

Amongst the victims were fifty-six Italians, twenty-three Swiss, four Spaniards, two Germans, two Austrians and one stateless person. Thirty-seven were single, fifty-one married; these left seventy-nine children. Of the widows, five are expecting babies. Much was done to lighten the burden of the bereaved and to help them over a very sad Christmas.

[A.T.S.]

SERIOUS FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE IN

SWITZERLAND

After a lengthy disease-free period, the first outbreaks were reported in October from Brent s/Clarens in Vaud and Schoenenbuch in Baselland. At the same time, many other parts in Europe began to show cases of infection. The disease in Switzerland spread rapidly, and by Christmas, over 550 herds were affected. Over 18,000 animals had to be slaughtered. About 240,000 animals were vaccinated. Special "buffer zones" were ordered by the Federal Veterinary Office, where all animals had to be vaccinated in order to prevent further areas from being infected. The Federal Vaccine Institute in Basle cannot produce more than a certain amount of the vaccine. Imports have been made from Denmark and Italy. Special regulations have come into force regarding inspection, import of fodder, etc. Federal Councillor Schaffner stated in a declaration that the question is being studied whether all Swiss cattle should and could be vaccinated.

Many animal parks and zoos have been closed as a precaution, and festivities in the countryside as well as markets and fairs have been cancelled.

[A.T.S.]

COMPLETION OF A BIG SWISS

CARTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

The last sheet of the Swiss National Map to a scale of 1:100,000 appeared last spring. This new map was intended not only to equal but even to surpass the famous Dufour map, which won first prize at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1889 and which was considered a masterpiece of its kind. The new national map to a scale of 1:100,000 comprises 22 whole sheets and one half-sheet; it covers the whole of Switzerland and the frontier regions of the neighbouring countries. Modern surveying methods make it possible to achieve far greater precision than before and the new copying techniques have also made considerable progress so that the new map now available to civilians and the Swiss army is a perfectly produced work of a high artistic standard.

[O.S.E.C.]