

Votes for women and human rights

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VOTES FOR WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The first of February was declared *Frauenstimmrechts-tag*. There was a public demonstration in Zurich when the President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Spuehler, addressed the gathering on "the Declaration of Human Rights and Switzerland". He gave a general survey of human rights in Europe and explained Switzerland's relevant position in the United Nations and the Council of Europe. He said that her joining the Human Rights Convention would have to be examined once again. He considered it no honour for Switzerland that she was one of a minority of seven Asian and African countries that had not yet introduced general adult suffrage.

The demonstration opened Human Rights Year (declared by UNO) in Zurich, and the President of the "Zuercher Frauenzentrale", Dr. Hulda Autenrieth, reminded citizens that suffrage was one of the human rights, so far still denied most Swiss women. A torch procession to the Lindenhof brought the demonstration to a close.

[A.T.S.]

FORUM HELVETICUM

On 30th January, the foundation meeting of the National Conference for Spiritual Defence took place in Berne, chaired by National Councillor Peter Duerrenmatt. The Chairman reminded the representatives of 44 organisations of the preliminary work, of the two meetings of the cultural, political and economic umbrella organisations in 1964. Since then, a draft constitution had been prepared on which 40 organisations had given their considered opinion, most of them favourably. One of the opponents was the Nouvelle Société Helvétique which sees in the new Conference a danger of a "united front" which would prevent a large number of sceptics from joining. The NSH would prefer to see the already existing institution of the Philipp-Albert Stapfer Haus on Castle Lenzburg developed, and they would be willing to organise meetings there periodically which would serve the aims as outlined in the draft constitution of the Conference.

The meeting in Berne decided on the name "Forum Helveticum", a term applicable in all four linguistic parts of the country. The second meeting in June will consider the relations with the Confederation and deal with elections. So far, agreement has been reached with the Foundation "Pro Helvetia" which will be concerned mostly with cultural matters, whilst the Forum will devote itself more to civic and political questions.

[A.T.S.]

THE OLD AND THE NEW BISHOP

On 17th November 1936, Mgr. Dr. Franciscus von Streng was elected as Bishop of Basle and Lugano. This was confirmed by the Vatican a fortnight later, and the ordination took place on 24th January of the following year. After 30 years of service, the Bishop asked His Holiness to be relieved of his office in October 1966. The resignation was accepted a little more than a year later. The Basle Government gave a farewell reception for Dr. von Streng on 23rd January. The President of the *Regierungsrat*, Dr. Edmund Wyss, mentioned the great merits of the departing Bishop and the hard work he had put into his office right up to the last — he is in his 84th year. The Basle population considered him as one of them, considering that the Bishop had been at the St. Clara Church in Basle before he was elected to the Bishopric. In a historic survey, Dr. Wyss referred to the "golden times" Basle had had in the past thanks to the Bishops.

On 11th February, the new Bishop, Mgr. Dr. Anton Haengi, was sworn in at the Solothurn *Rathaus*, according to an agreement between the Apostolic See and the Cantons of the Basle Bishopric 140 years ago. *Regierungsrat* Dr. Alfred Wyser, President of the Diocesan Conference, expressed satisfaction that the spirit and the letter of the concordat of 1828 had been taken over into the new era, and that spiritual and secular authorities were able to co-operate fruitfully. The new Bishop put his introductory address under the motto in his crest "*ut unum sint*" — that they be one. He promised to do everything possible for the unity of State, Church and People. Then followed the ceremony of the oath according to a new and simpler formula, and the *landesherrliche Bewilligung* was given for the Bishop to execute his office. The soldiers of Battery 17 honoured their former comrade who had done his military service with them as *Sanitaetssoldat*, by a gun salute of 17 shots.

In the presence of many inland and foreign Bishops, Abbots, Cardinal Journet, the Apostolic Nuntio, Federal Councillor von Moos and the former Federal Councillor Etter, the new Bishop was then ordained at St. Ursen Cathedral in Solothurn. He was the first Bishop to be consecrated according to the new rites. The two Bishops of Chur and Lausanne/Geneva/Fribourg assisted in the consecration.

In the afternoon, a celebration took place at the *Landhaus* in the presence of many clerical and secular personalities. The retiring Bishop thanked his collaborators and wished his successor strength and God's blessings in his new and difficult task.

Landammann Dr. F. Jeger expressed the pleasure of people and Government that a Solothurn citizen should have become Bishop of Basle, the first since K. A. Obrist (from 1854 to 1862). Past difficulties should be disregarded, and the two high powers, Church and State, should work together in the *res mixtae* for the good of the people. A number of personalities of all creeds and many nationalities addressed the gathering, including a woman, Dr. Margrit Erni, member of the Diocesan Council of the Basle Bishopric.

[A.T.S.]

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