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Comment

A CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION

One of the most important political developments last March was the rejection by Parliament of an initiative launched by the National Action Movement for a reduction of the number of foreigners in Switzerland. The main points of this initiative, which had been backed by over 68,000 signatures, were to reduce the resident alien population of Switzerland to half a million by 1977 and to redistribute it in such a way that no Canton, with the exception of Geneva, should have a foreign element surpassing 12 per cent of the indigenous population. As the foreign population now stands at nearly 1.1 million, such a package will entail, if it is accepted by the Swiss people during a referendum to be staged on 1st December this year, the forced repatriation of 180,000 men and women a year. Parliament decided to reject these proposals outright and opted against submitting federal counter-proposals to the people on 1st December in the belief that existing provisions and present efforts would contain the inflow of foreigners.

It now remains to be seen whether the Swiss people will agree to measures which many people have qualified as insane. Even Mr. James Schwarzenbach, leader of the Republican Party and author of the most important anti-foreign initiative to date, the one that was narrowly defeated during an historic referendum on 7th June, 1970, has completely dissociated himself from this new move. Mr. Schwarzenbach recently said at the National Council that expatriating so many men and women would be worse than what General Amin of Uganda had ever done. He said that the extreme nature of the measures pertained to "plebeian rancour and irresponsibility" — and in fact they certainly reflect deep seated anti-foreign resentment among the lower layers of the Swiss population.

Although Mr. Schwarzenbach was one of the founders of the National Action against the dangers of "over-foreignisation", he broke away from it and joined the Republicans because the National Action's objectives

were even more extremist than his own. Although he is deeply concerned by the social and national implications of harbouring an alien population which will soon account for one-fifth of the total population, he is not prepared to envisage the "radical" solutions claimed by angry representatives of working people who are confronted with foreigners every day, at work and out of work.

Instead, his party (the Republicans) have just presented 53,000 signatures required for the backing of yet *another*, but milder, anti-foreign initiative to the Federal Chancery in Berne. Four initiatives have been presented so far on the one issue of foreign labour.

The initiative is the device offered to the ordinary Swiss citizen to directly control the laws of his country. When an initiative has been launched over a federal issue it must receive the signed support of 50,000 citizens. The Government then decides whether or not to present counter-proposals to the people. In most referendums, the people have to choose between the proposals of the original initiative and those put forward by the Government. In the great majority of cases, they opt for the latter. This of course doesn't reduce the usefulness of the original initiative, which will have prompted the Government into action. The various administrative measures that have been taken to stem the inflow of foreign workers have been taken in reaction to the initiatives that have already been launched on the matter.

The first of these initiatives was sponsored in 1965 by the Democratic Party of Zurich which Mr. Schwarzenbach represented at the National Council. It called for a reduction of the number of foreigners with a yearly or residential permit to be reduced to ten per cent of the population. Departures were to be phased at five per cent a year and as humanely as possible. The initiative was rejected by the Government in 1969. The Democratic Party didn't insist to have it carried through to the people because it had faith in the Government's promises in this matter. But in 1969, an initiative committee against "over-foreignisation" chaired by Mr. Schwarzenbach collected 71,772 signatures in record time to ask for practically the same thing: reduction of the foreign population to ten per cent of

the resident population with the exception of Geneva. This was rejected by about 51 per cent of the Swiss people in June, 1970.

On 3rd November, 1972, the National Action movement launched the third and most drastic initiative against foreign presence. This is the text that has just been debated at length, and rejected by Parliament.

But now a *fourth* initiative, launched again by Mr. Schwarzenbach, has been endorsed by a sufficient number of signatures. More humane than its fore-runners, it calls for a reduction of foreign residents to 12.5 per cent of the population in ten years. It is also suggested that foreigners should no longer be allowed to enjoy residential status. This would be compensated by a better deal for seasonal and border workers who would be freed from certain restrictions.

In addition to these four popular initiatives, a Republican National Councillor, Mr. Reich, has launched a personal initiative in favour of a more humane immigration policy stabilising the resident foreign population as soon as possible. A similar initiative is due to be launched this April by an association by Catholic workers and employees.

Such a string of political actions shows that the foreign population issue has been the most constant pre-occupation of the Swiss for nearly 20 years.

P.M.B.

SWISS EVENTS

One Swiss in five would like to live abroad

One Swiss in five would emigrate if he had the opportunity. Such was the startling result of a poll organised among about a thousand persons across the country. The exact proportion of would-be emigrants was 21 per cent, showing a tendency higher in Switzerland than in most other countries. Similar polls conducted elsewhere showed the following proportion of people wishing to emigrate in other countries: United States ten per cent, Spain 13 per cent, Australia 13 per cent, Canada 15 per cent, Great Britain 39 per cent and Uruguay 41 per cent.

The poll did not say whether this desire to live elsewhere reflects dissatisfaction, or whether it was related to a tradition for seeking a new life overseas. This could well be the case of the Swiss, who not so long ago were *compelled* to emigrate. To the question "where would you like to settle down?", 13 per cent of would-be Swiss emigrants said they would like to go to the United

States, 12 per cent to Australia, 5 per cent to South Africa, 5 per cent to Great Britain, 5 per cent to Israel, 5 per cent to Brazil, 5 per cent to Spain, 3 per cent to Sweden, New Zealand, France, Egypt, West Germany and Italy.

Of note is the fact that more Swiss would like to live in Britain than in neighbouring France, Italy or Germany.

OBERRIET ATTACKERS ARRESTED

Two of the three men wanted for the murder of two Swiss customs officers and an Austrian motorist at the Oberriet border post on the night of 5th January have been arrested in Strasburg in early March following a tip-off by the West German police. They are Carlo Gritti, 29, the leader of the gang, and Carlo Bernini, 29. Both were living in Strasburg under an assumed name. The third man to have taken part in the raid, and in the bank robbery which was staged at Buchs the previous day, is still at large. He is Sergio Bernini, 24, brother of Carlo Bernini. Gritti was an international crook wanted for murder in Italy and other crimes. The Swiss, German and French police organised a large-scale manhunt to find him. It is believed that they were helped in this by a betrayal. They eventually pinned him down in Strasburg after the arrest of two Italian women as they were storing nearly half the money stolen at Buchs (Sw.fr.227,000) in a luggage locker at Hanover Railway Station. The two women had been under police observation following a tip-off from the

French authorities. The two women told the police that Gritti and Bernini were in Strasburg and this information was transmitted to the French police.

TROUBLE AT A PLANNED NUCLEAR SITE

Now that work has begun on the future nuclear power station of Kaiseraugst, near Basle, after years of local opposition, the people living in the Verbois area near Geneva are rising against the planned construction of a nuclear power station at their village. Verbois is one of four planned nuclear power stations for which building permission has been sought. In all these cases operations are slowed down by all the legal and administrative hurdles set up by angry local communes.

But electricity authorities have now managed to overcome local objections at Kaiseraugst, Leibstadt (Aarau) and Gösigen-Daeniken (Solothurn) where sites have been opened for the construction of three power stations of nearly a thousand megawatts each. Construction should take about five years and the installations should be operational by 1979.

There are at present three operational power stations in the country — at Muehleberg and Beznau (where there are two). Each of these power stations produce about 350 megawatts and together supply 18 per cent of the country's electricity needs (which in turn cover only 15 per cent of its total energy requirements). Two-thirds of the heat

produced by Muehleberg is "wasted" and serves to raise the temperature of the Aar. Due to the particular type of reactor used and other technical reasons, it is not possible to use this energy to heat houses. Both Muehleberg and Beznau were constructed before environmental considerations came to the fore. Muehleberg was built cheaply (Sw.fr.350 million) by Brown Boveri and General Electric because the Americans were at the time "dumping" their nuclear technology to capture a market in Europe. But Kaiseraugst and other similar power stations are budgeted at Sw.fr.1.7 billion and the country will have to raise Sw.fr.1.2 billion a year to finance its nuclear programme. Most of this money is to be raised on the capital market.

New speed limit introduced on motorways

The Federal Council has imposed a 130 kmh speed limit on all motorways for an interim period ending in 1975. Until last November, there were no speed limits on motorways. A 100 kmh speed limit had been introduced at the beginning of 1973 on all other roads for an experimental period of three years. With the petrol crisis, the Government decided to extend this speed limit to motorways as well. Now the petrol shortage is over, the authorities preferred to introduce a new speed limit on motorways rather than return to unlimited speeds. This limit should presumably be reconsidered in two years

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time on the basis of its results in saving lives. The 100 kmh speed limit has apparently been very effective in this respect and saved an estimated 300 lives.

THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE SWISS OF GEX

Despite years of discussions, the Swiss of London failed to buy their own Club House. Where the 8,000-strong Swiss community of the British capital failed, the 600 Swiss of Gex succeeded. The Swiss community of this French village two miles from the Swiss border, hardly twenty minutes away from Geneva by car, pooled their resources and built a Club chalet which cost them about Fr.fr.500,000 (nearly £50,000 at the present rate of exchange). If the amount of the work put in benevolently is considered, then the value of the building can be estimated at over a million French francs. About Fr.fr.200,000 of the required cash was raised by issuing shares among members. The remaining Fr.fr.300,000 were borrowed. Now the pride and joy of opening the new chalet (last July) has given place to the worry of repaying this debt. Renting the premises to Swiss societies and other organisations in the area apparently suffices to pay for the interest. The chalet has been rented for 54 evenings this year. But repayment of the principal of the loan is another problem. At their last AGM, members of the Society heard urgent appeals for an increased effort and yet more generosity. The Committee is planning to multiply subscription fees by five in order to meet the cost of paying back such a massive loan.

MARXISTS LOSE CASE AT FEDERAL COURT

The Federal Court has rejected an appeal by a left-wing movement which had filed a suit against the Federal Attorney and the Head of the Federal police for having hidden listening devices in the hall where its 1973 Congress had been held. Thus the outcome of the "Epalinges Microphone" Affair turned out to be in favour of established order and its defence. The "Ligue Marxiste Révolutionnaire" had lodged a complaint because of what it considered to be a breach of the articles of the Criminal Code relating to the use of listening devices. But the Federal Court argued that the Federal Attorney had acted within the directives contained in two separate Federal Orders entitling him to use listening devices or methods of his choosing to obtain information on the acts of organisations committed to the overthrow of existing order and endangering the security of the State. It was argued that with its "Revolutionary" denomination and the various demonstrations which had been staged in the country, the "Ligue" was not an entirely trustworthy institution. The Federal Attorney's decision to place "bugs" in the Congress Hall at Epalinges (Lausanne) had therefore been justified.

This important episode of case law ended with the "Ligue" being ordered to pay the costs of their legal action.

JACK THE RIPPER AT WORK IN ZURICH

Two prostitutes were brutally strangled within a few hours at the end of March in Zurich. The police announced on a Saturday night that Mrs. Erika Wattenhofer, 39, had been discovered strangled in her apartment. Then on the following Sunday, it was announced that Margrit Maria Szenasi, 47, had been found killed by the same method in a Zurich hotel room.

A 21-year-old call girl had furthermore been attacked at her home on the previous Friday by a client who tried to throttle her. The girl had staggered outside for help and a young man had been seen climbing inside a small saloon car and driving off. Police were searching for a 22-year-old butcher in connection with the assault. They were also looking for a middle-aged well-built man whom a friend of Frau Wattenhofer had seen with the prostitute shortly before she was killed.

New increase in the cost of petrol

The cost of petrol has been raised again in Switzerland, where a litre of regular now costs 93 cents and a litre of super 97. They had been raised to about

80 cents only two months earlier. Despite these increases, the cost of petrol is still lower in Switzerland than in most neighbouring countries. Thus the cost of a litre has increased by the following amounts between September, 1973 and March, 1974: Italy 46.9 cents, France 31.8, West Germany 15.3, Austria 31.7, Switzerland 22. Present costs are as follows: Italy 124.5 cents a litre of super, France 111.5, West Germany 108.9, Austria 103.0 and Switzerland 97.

LONG DEBATE ON NEW ECONOMIC ARTICLES

The National Council debated for two full days before adopting a toned-down version of Government proposals for increased powers to intervene in the economy. The Federal Council had asked the House to approve a new Constitutional Article (no. 31-5) which would enable it to act promptly in a fairly wide range of economic activities to fight against inflation and other emergencies. The National Council accepted to give the Government new powers of control in monetary and financial policy, and in foreign relations. There was a disagreement with the Council of States, which was willing to give more extended powers to the Government. Once Parliament will have agreed on the draft of the new Article, it will be submitted to the people in a referendum.

European Security Conference in a deadlock

The second phase of the European Security Conference is progressing painfully slowly in Geneva. The first phase was opened early last year in Helsinki by the foreign ministers of over thirty European countries and those of the United States and Canada. Called by the Russians, this conference was planned to establish a new and definite order of peace and prosperity in Europe. It was the first meeting of this kind attended by Switzerland since the end of the war. After several months of negotiations in the Finnish capital, the 33 delegations agreed on an agenda for the technical stage in Geneva.

This second stage, which has been in progress for months, should lead up to a third and final stage which the Russians want to see at summit level. Russia's Western partners are not as keen to end the conference in this way because they feel that it would not be justified by the result obtained so far. There were, from the outset, differences of approach between the two sides. While the Russians were eager to ratify the implantations of communism in Eastern Europe and to sanction the division of the continent in spheres of influence, the West were more concerned with developing institutions

and attitudes which would eventually help to reverse these barriers. By the West one should distinguish those countries belonging to NATO and the neutrals, such as Switzerland and Austria, who emerged as a distinct group with strong ideas of its own. But agreement between the 15 NATO delegations was very loose indeed and Stage Two saw the nine Common Market countries more or less adopting the same standpoint.

None of the European delegations were willing to rush things. They obviously had the highest stakes and were not prepared to envisage a grand summit when none of their aspirations concerning greater human contacts and cultural exchanges between East and West had been met by their Communist interlocutors. Last Autumn, the Soviet Communist Party Chief Leonid Brezhnev said optimistically that the second stage of the Security Conference should be over by Christmas. Last month, a conference official said that an agreement before the summer was practically impossible. The cautious attitude of the Europeans upset the Russians. They told President Pompidou, when he saw Mr. Brezhnev on the shores of the Black Sea in early March, that their fastidiousness



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and deliberate feet-dragging had caused the conference to stall. The Americans, too, felt that it was necessary for the conference to step up its pace. Mr. Kissinger expressed some discontent at those finicking EEC diplomats. Washington's delegate in Geneva attempted to exercise some prodding but this had no effect on some EEC delegations, particularly the French, who would never miss a chance to assert their independence from America.

While the second technical working group on economic exchanges has made satisfactory progress, the first group on the definition of the principles of detente and on military relations has made *some* progress, and the first group, the one concerned with co-operation in human affairs, has hardly made any noticeable progress.

MAX PETITPIERRE 75

The leading statesman of the post-war era, Mr. Max Petitpierre, has just celebrated his 75th anniversary. Born in 1899 in Neuchatel, Mr. Petitpierre succeeded Mr. Marcel Pilet Golaz as Head of the Political Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in 1944, only two years after joining the Council of States as Representative of Neuchatel. He held that post until his retirement in 1961 and was elected President of the Confederation three times. He has since held several important functions in economic and political life, such as President of the Board of Directors of Nestlé — and Chairman of the Mediator Commission for the Jura. He also has a seat at the International Red Cross Committee.

He will be remembered chiefly for his contribution to the image of Swiss neutrality, an image that had been somewhat dented during the war. The policy adopted today by the Swiss Government, which allies neutrality with solidarity, was inaugurated by him. Mr. Petitpierre was also responsible for establishing the present relationship between Switzerland and the main agencies of the United Nations.

Swiss hotels report declining business

For the first time since 1965, Switzerland's hoteliers failed last year to

increase their turnover. In fact, they registered a 1.4 per cent fall in reservations. In all, foreign tourists spent 13.55 million nights in Swiss hotels, entailing an average occupancy ratio of 44 per cent.

This decline of business was in great part due to the adverse effect of the currency situation on the buying power of British and Italian tourists. Britons spent about 10 per cent fewer nights in Swiss hotels last year than in 1972 and accounted for only 9 per cent of all visitors. The Germans came first; 30 per cent of hotel bookings are made by Germans. Then came the French and the Americans (12 per cent each) followed by the British, the Belgians (8 per cent), the Dutch and the Italians 5.5 per cent.

Foreign exchange earnings from tourism have not yet been computed for last year. In 1972, foreign tourists spent 4.95 billion francs while Swiss tourists spent 2.40 billion francs abroad.

END OF "OPERATION TWO HUNDRED"

The operation launched after the military takeover in Chile last September to give shelter to political refugees from that country has been officially completed. Code named "Action two hundred", it eventually allowed 255 refugees to find political asylum in Switzerland. But with the continuing anti-left witch-hunt in Chile, the number of refugees looking towards Switzerland as their last hope has not subsided. The organisations who have undertaken to look after these people and their families are still overburdened. An appeal towards the Swiss people to offer free board and lodging to refugees has led to an offer of accommodation to 3,000 refugees. But the Federal Council decided at the end of February that all new refugees from Chile should be considered individually by consular representations abroad and prevented from entering the country unless they held a visa.

This decision followed an incident at Cointrin Airport, Geneva, on 1st February. Five Chilean nationals were expelled after pretending to be tourists. Immigration officials discovered that they had no money and knew no one in Switzerland. The incident led to a motion

of protest by Socialist delegates at the National Council.

The whole problem of Chilean refugees was highly controversial because the Swiss Government's offer of hospitality was followed by a wave of applications with which the Embassy in Santiago could hardly cope. Many refugees sought protection in the Embassy and remained there until they obtained a safe-conduct to go abroad.

PARLIAMENT ASKED TO RATIFY THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Federal Council will ask Parliament to ratify Switzerland's adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights with two small reservations.

Switzerland is one of the few countries of Europe which haven't yet signed this legal treaty. The absence of women's right of vote and, later, the Constitutional articles banning the Jesuit Order from exercising their activities in Switzerland were contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Convention. But now both these obstacles have been lifted by the Swiss people and the only objection that would remain pertains to the rights of Cantons.

Among the diminishing rights still left to them, Cantons are entitled to their own legal procedure. The law of Habeas Corpus preventing arrested persons from remaining in custody without a specific order from a magistrate does not exist. Cantons are allowed to hold suspects in custody for any length of time without the authorisation of the judiciary. Although this does not happen often in practice, it conflicts with the ideals of the Convention and its concern for people held in custody. The second exception is related to the demand of the Convention that hearings should be held in public.

The Federal Council would like these two "provisos" maintained for the sake of federalism. If Cantons have to abide to a supranational treaty, then so much more of their autonomy would be sacrificed.

By adhering to the Convention, Switzerland would automatically inscribe new provisions in its own legislation. Persons could appeal to the Federal Court



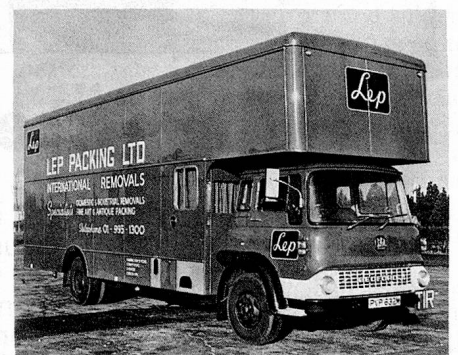
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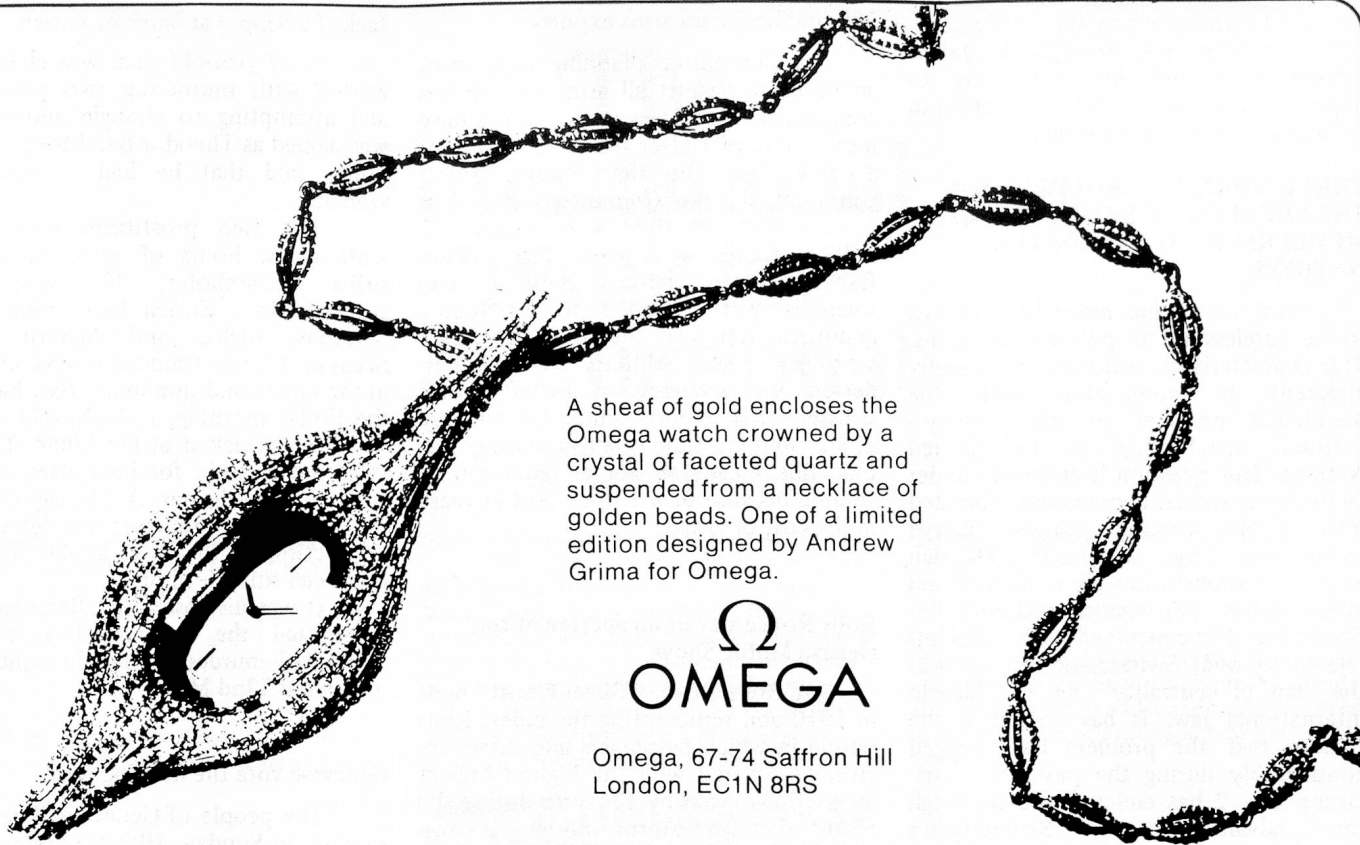
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and invoke violations of the Convention. This possibility will prompt Mr. James Scharzenbach and his supporters to oppose ratification of the Convention in the name of national sovereignty.

THREE WORKING GROUPS STUDY THE PROBLEM OF SWITZERLAND'S MEMBERSHIP TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Switzerland has never been known to be careless in its political decisions. This characteristic caution has been really apparent in connection with the decade-old problem of the country's eventual membership to the United Nations. This question is currently under study by a special commission separated into three working groups chaired respectively by Professor Dietrich Schindler, Ambassador Pierre Micheli and Mrs. Edith Zimmermann-Buetikofer. Group No. 1 is concerned with problems related to what Switzerland considers as the "law of neutrality" and its place in international law. It has arrived at the finding that the problem has changed considerably during the past few years. Group No. 2 has endeavoured to weigh the advantages of Switzerland's membership. When it recently published its first conclusions, it said that the UN was an organisation which, for all its shortcomings, had well served the cause of world peace. The fact that the UN Charter had not always been respected was not a sufficient reason for Switzerland's non-membership, particularly in view of the fact that the Charter coincided with the aims of Switzerland's foreign policy. Moreover, the actual situation made Switzerland's participation in new negotiations on international law more difficult.

Group 3 is studying the implications on federalism of UN-membership. According to its initial conclusions, there is no incompatibility between the aims and purposes of our federal structure and those of the United Nations.

200 million francs arms exports

A Committee planning to sponsor an initiative against all arms exports has complained that Swiss arms exports have increased a year after the introduction of a new law on the matter. In a communique, the Committee said that arms exports in 1973 were worth 212 million francs as against 206 million francs the year before. Half of these weapons were shipped to developing countries. Iran was the most important customer. The Military Department denied the accuracy of these figures, stressing that exports amounted to only 208.2 million francs and pointing out that this meant an actual reduction in volume because of a 13 per cent increase in the cost of arms.

Rolls Royce star of an auction at the Geneva Motor Show

A Rolls Royce "Silver Ghost" built in 1910 and representing the oldest Rolls saloon in which passengers and driver are entirely covered won the highest bids at an auction staged by Christies during the recent Geneva Motor Show. It was bought for Sw.fr.220,000 by Mr. Toni Frei, of Lucerne. Another Rolls delivered in 1914 to Emperor Franz-Josef of Austria and used by his son for his flight to Switzerland in 1918, was sold at Sw.fr.190,000. Surprisingly, Hermann Goering's convertible 1938 Horch with bullet-proof bodywork only fetched Sw.fr.55,000. Relics of a certain past seem to have a slow appreciation.

Reconversion

Meta Antenen, Switzerland's most popular athlete who recently won the women's long jump at the European indoor championships, has decided to become a ballet dancer. Meta, who was 25 on 7th April, is an industrial draughtswoman by profession.

Jack the Ripper at work in Zurich

A 27-year-old man was charged in Zurich with murdering two prostitutes and attempting to strangle another. He was named as Theodor Berchtold, 27, and police said that he had a record for violence.

The two prostitutes were killed with a few hours of each other. Mrs. Erika Wattenhofer, 39, was found strangled in a Zurich hotel room on a Saturday night, and Margrit Maria Szenasi, 47, was found the next morning in the same condition in her flat. Early on the Friday morning, a 21-year-old call-girl had been attacked at her home. The girl staggered outside for help after a client tried to throttle her. A 22-year-old local butcher, Heinz Bruderer, was detained in connection with this attack but he produced suitable alibis.

It was disclosed that Berchtold had committed the two murders and the attempted murder during that one night of Friday, 22nd March.

Genevise vote the hunting issue

The people of Geneva will be called to vote on Sunday, 19th May on whether or not to ban hunting in their Canton. This local referendum is being called following an initiative against all forms of hunting in the Canton. The people will have to choose between this and counter-proposals by the Geneva executive.

Death of Mrs. Graber

Mrs. Pierrette Graber, wife of Mr. Pierre Graber, Head of the Political Department, has died in Berne following an operation. She was 59 and had played an active role within the Socialist Party in Lausanne.

Bonnets for men in swimming pools

Men and women should have to wear bathing bonnets if the managers of the swimming pools of French-speaking Switzerland have their way. Holding their Annual General Meeting in Geneva at the end of March, some 75 owners and managers of bathing establishments in that part of the country expressed support for the regulations already enforced in Vaud compelling women to wear bonnets. Justified by hygienic considerations (loose hair presents a health hazard and apparently clog the swimming pool piping) these regulations are highly controversial because many consider them as an infringement of personal freedom. But delegates agreed that men with long hair should submit to the same treatment as women, although many recognised that deciding when hair was long enough to necessitate a bonnet was somewhat arbitrary. The delegates also agreed that these bonnets should be sold, and not hired on the premises for hygienic reasons.

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