

Federal Mosaic

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1968)**

Heft 1554

PDF erstellt am: **20.09.2024**

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DOMINUS PROVIDEBIT

The Lord provides. Every man, woman and child in Switzerland should know these two words. But how many do, although they could see them many times a day. How? These two words work in secret as it were, yet every Swiss bank handles them a thousand times a day. Look at a Swiss five-franc silver piece, no, not where you might expect to find them, neither on the face nor on the reverse side, but along the edge in slightly raised letters, so tiny that one can only just decipher them. By accident almost was I made aware of them when I read an article by Hermann Wahlen in the monthly magazine of the Swiss Country Women's Association. And curiously enough, a few days later in the "Echo", monthly review of the Swiss abroad, Oskar Reck, President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, mentioned them too in an article on political matters. And now, every time I handle a *Fünfliber*, I feel for the words.

Dominus providebit. The fishermen on our picture patiently wait for their catch, sure in the knowledge that their endurance will sooner or later be rewarded. Few of them are conscious of why the fish may bite at all. We don't readily admit that our earthly goods are given us by the grace of God. If the fish bite, it is no doubt the excellence of the fly, the clever choice of the water, the super quality of the line, the expert handling of the rod. We consider our clever hands and astute brain responsible for our success and forget that they, too, are ours by the grace of God.

We complain and criticize and blame others if things go badly and overlook that we may have made the wrong use of what we have been endowed with.

On Sunday we celebrate the Federal Day of Thanksgiving, Atonement and Prayer. *Dominus providebit* — yes, we have much to be thankful for, not least for the strength the Lord provides to cope with adversity. Let us pray for faith and clarity of mind to realise our responsibilities, for the more we are provided with, the greater is our personal responsibility.

The recent events in another small country have made us realise once more how rich we are in having freedom. The Lord provided it, but it put an obligation on us. Heinz Kreis in the "Basler Nachrichten" said that the episode of long speeches, of patriotic exhortations, of pride and conceit has come to an end. We have been sobered up and realise that not all is well in the model democracy called Switzerland. Not all is well with our Swiss communities abroad; some of the young *Auslandschweizer* who spoke up at Schaffhausen put their fingers on more than one spot. Nor is all well in our own personal lives.

Dominus providebit — that is what we thank for, and that we may be granted guidance, humility and wisdom to see what this implies is what we pray for on Sunday.

MM

FEDERAL MOSAIC

At the end of last year, the Federal Council decided to redistribute the Federal Departments as from 1st July. Accordingly, Federal Councillor Bonvin changed over from Finance and Customs to Communications and Energy production, and Federal Councillor Gnaegi moved from the latter to the Military Department, whereas the former head of the *Militärdepartement*, Federal Councillor Celio, took over Finance and Customs. This is the first time since 1920 that the Federal Council has made a redistribution of Departments without being forced by personal events.

The draft for a new Constitutional Article regarding radio and television has been passed on to the Cantonal Governments, the political Parties and a large number of organisations interested in radio and TV. This has been done according to the right of consultation, the *Vernehmlassungsverfahren*. The new Article would put radio and television into the hands of the Confederation who would appoint various institutions to run the services according to the principles of freedom of communication and with due regard to the spiritual and cultural needs of the Cantons, the various regions and languages.

Among international agreements Switzerland has signed in recent months, are the international wheat and the coffee agreement, the UNO agreement regarding the safety and getting back of astronauts and reclaiming of spacecraft. Regarding the international atomic proliferation treaty, the Federal Council has asked for more details, re-affirming its conviction that the use of nuclear arms should be limited. With Brazil and Sweden, agreements regarding the peaceful use of atomic energy have been signed, and the agreement with Germany facilitating air rescue and repatriation of aircraft has been ratified.

Double taxation agreements with South Africa and Ireland have been made or already ratified, and one on legal matters with Liechtenstein. With Ecuador, agreement has been reached regarding protection of investments and compensation. Social security has been covered in agreements with Luxembourg, Spain and Austria, and negotiations are going on in Moscow concerning co-operation in the watch industry.

In recent months quite a few important foreign statesmen have paid a visit to Switzerland. After the Tunisian Head of State Bourguiba and the President of the Finnish Assembly Dr. Virolainen, the Austrian Minister of Defence Dr. G. Prader paid an official visit to Berne, followed by the Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. K. Waldheim. In July, U Thant, United Nations Organisation's Secretary-General went to Berne.

In the first six months of the year, federal revenue reached 2,961 million francs or 198m. more than in the same period last year. This is much as expected. All revenue from taxes has gone up, except the withholding tax (*Verrechnungssteuer*). Revenue from customs duties has also gone up.

Switzerland's contribution to the World Health Organisation (WHO) is about 2 million francs this year. In addition, Switzerland is contributing in the ten-year programme to eliminate smallpox and has donated a voluntary consignment of frozen vaccine to the value of Fr.100,000.—. On the other hand, Switzerland has been allocated scholarships by WHO.

Switzerland recognises 132 countries at the moment, of which 116 have Swiss Embassies and/or Consulates.

The "Mirage" orders will finally cost 1.2 milliard francs for 58 aircraft only.

Compared with 1966, which was the year with the highest figures ever recorded, guarantees against export risks

were less heavy in 1967. Last year, 3,076 (1966: 3,303) applications were granted. The value of the new guarantees provided by the Confederation totalled 1,070 (1966: 1,096.7) million. After deducting cancellations, the guarantees remaining amounted to 844.4 (1966: 909.8) million. At the end of the year, the Confederation's commitments totalled 2,084 (1966: 1,831) million francs. Deducting cancellations again, fees brought in 10.83 (1966: 13) million. Altogether, 485,423 francs (1966: 878,332) was paid out to cover twelve cases of loss occurring in different countries. Industry repaid a total of Fr.498,069 (1966: 295,924) on previous loans by the Confederation. The Confederation also received a total of 4.3 million, representing refunds and the payment of interest by various countries, mainly in Latin America. Receipts from insurance having exceeded expenditure, a sum of 14.9 million in round figures was paid into the reserve fund, which now totals 58.5 million francs in round figures. Since the creation of the guarantee fund against export risks in 1934, the losses made good by the Swiss Confederation amount, after deduction of all repayments, to some 22 million francs, which represents about 1.15% of the business transacted. (O.S.E.C.)

Following a request by the "Wirtschaftsrevue", the Swiss public have awarded marks to the seven members of the Government. 1 = very good, 2 = good, 3 = mediocre and 4 = bad. Results have shown that Federal Councillor Celio got by far the best marks, average 1.36. Next came Federal Councillor Gnaegi with 2.30, and Home Secretary Tschudi with 2.47. In fourth place was Federal President Spuehler with 2.60, followed by Federal Councillor von Moos with 2.80. Federal Councillor Schaffner managed a 2.88 only, and last came the previous Finance Minister Bonvin with 3.0.

*(By courtesy of the Agence
Télégraphique Suisse.)*

ANGLO-SWISS NEWS ITEMS

An historic collection of Meissen porcelain was sold in Geneva on 7th June, fetching £114,625. The auction was the first Christie's held in Switzerland since they opened a branch in Geneva last year. The members of the Swiss Antique Dealers had been asked to boycott the sale, but it was ignored.

The present Rector of Basle University, Prof. Dr. Oscar Cullmann (Church History and New Testament), has been appointed Corresponding Member of the British Academy. He had already been awarded the Burkitt Medal.

The Foseco Company Ltd., London, producers of special chemicals required by smelters, steelworkers and building industry, as well as for oil refineries and chemical works, took up a loan of 15 million francs in Switzerland (5½%) for financing their expansion in and out of Europe.

Great Britain is represented at the International Exhibition of Laboratory, Chemical Engineering, Measurement and Automation Techniques in Chemistry, known as ILMAC, which is held in Basle from 9th to 14th September.

We reported on 9th August that a group of Swiss Parliamentarians visited Great Britain at the invitation of the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Chancellor. We have since learnt that the group also met the Lord Mayor and the Dean of Westminster, and that the group spent the weekend in the country with various M.P.s. The leader of the delegation National Councillor Dr. H. Konzett was presented to the Queen at a Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party.

[A.T.S.]

SWISS NATIONAL DAY AT DUERRENAESCH AND IN SWEDEN

A good hundred Swiss took part in the 1st August outing to Central Switzerland, organised by the Home for Swiss Abroad at Duerrenaesch. They came from many parts of the world, and the celebration showed clearly that the Swiss abroad have still a great attachment to a patriotic celebration of the first of August. A former head of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. René Bovey, addressed the party in Lucerne, and he compared the problems of today with the uneasiness felt at various times in the history of Switzerland.

By boat and coach, the participants of the outing visited historic sites, and on the Ruetli Meadow, cradle of Switzerland, the National Anthem was sung in all four national languages.

The Swiss abroad, said Dr. E. Wiget, a Toggenburger resident in London, will adhere to a celebration of the Swiss National Day, even if inside Switzerland, such a celebration were to be dropped altogether. For them it is symbolic and for many the only tie which still connects them with their home country.

The Auslandschweizer-Home Celebration of the 1968 National Day ended with a folkloristic evening — a happy event from beginning to end.

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A celebration of an unusual kind was arranged by the Swiss Club of Norrköping and Stockholm. "Swiss Weekend" it was called, and a large number of Swiss took part in this event at the Kolmarden Animal Park. It was opened by the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. R. Faessler, and the items on the programme included a shooting contest and balloon flight, rural music from Switzerland, Swiss food. Entertainment and dancing, as well as a patriotic ceremony formed part of the first day. On Sunday, there was an Ecumenical open-air Service and in the afternoon a football match between two Swiss teams from Stockholm and Norrköping. The Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. M. Ney, was in Sweden for the event.

A SWISS MEDALLIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY

If one particular firm can be said to have spread the fame of the small town of Le Locle far beyond the borders of Switzerland, that firm is Huguenin Médailleurs S.A. who celebrate their hundredth anniversary this year. The firm's founders, who had specialised in watch case decoration (niello process) soon saw the future metal stamping offered and begun turning out commemorative medals. Notwithstanding two world wars and resulting crises, the firm never stopped making medals. Honoric decorations, collectors' coins and insignia of every description were progressively added to the manufacturing programme. The Swiss Confederation awarding no military or civil decorations, medals soon became a highly appreciated export. In fact, ever since Georges Huguenin returned from Serbia in 1910 with an order for one-and-a-half million military medals, few major events have occurred without an original and artistically superior Huguenin design. What better proof that in the age of computers and nucleonics, the combination of superb craftsmanship, tradition and artistic creativity can survive? Of course, this unique production makes use of the most modern blanking and stamping processes such as ultrasonics and electro-erosion.

[O.S.E.C.]