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Labour Shortage at the Vatican

Not enough Swiss Guards

THE VATICAN is suffering from an acute labour shortage in one particular and important department: Security.

Owing to the growing difficulty of finding new recruits for the Swiss guards, the Pope is at present inadequately protected. The disbanding of the Palatine and the Noble Guards in 1970 left our compatriots at St. Peter's overburdened. While there should theoretically be a hundred Swiss *hallberdiers* in Rome, there are at present only 66. Twenty-six volunteers have strengthened this force during the summer, but the solution was only temporary. Recent wage increases, benefits and improved conditions have made the job more attractive. But to seek employment in the Vatican goes against the times. Colonel Franz Pfygger von Altishofen, 56, who assumed responsibility for the Swiss Guard last year, explains this by the decline in religious fervour, and by a greater job availability at home. Another important factor is the ban on marriage imposed on all young recruits. They must moreover show exemplary standards of morality. This may be asking a lot of many young people today. Those who are busy marshalling tourists on St. Peter's Square are nevertheless said to be quite content with their present situation.