

New Year's Day

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Buur" articles considered the move on behalf of the trade unions as uncalled for and also accused the SGB of treating the Italians as "running board passengers".

Feeling ran high everywhere, and much was said and written. Conferences took place at the highest level, and a delegation of three went to Rome for further discussions. Dr. Holzer himself called the agreement a "lightning conductor" for the "Fremdarbeiter Malaise". He had signed it before the "Mirage Affair" had brought about a change in public attitude. As a consequence of the reaction, Prof. Holzer said, "the Federal Council is willing to pull the brakes so hard that it will grate".

By 30th October, the Federal Council announced that the agreement with Italy would *not* be enforced provisionally, but would be ratified by both Houses in December in order to become valid by 1st January 1965.

The Federal Council's message to Parliament was published on 12th November. The augmented National Council's Commission on Foreign Affairs, however, decided not to have the agreement up for debate in the December session. They would wait for another report by the Federal Council regarding the whole problem of foreign labour and the danger of "overforeignisation". The Council of States debated the treaty vehemently, but finally accepted it by 31: 0 votes.

The parliamentary editor of the "Basler Nachrichten" Arnold Fisch called the fact that one Council finally gave an unconditional approval whilst the other postponed the debate "a positively classical federal compromise".

Federal Councillor Wahlen received the Italian Ambassador in Berne at the latter's request. Monsieur Marchiori expressed the Italian government's protest and regret at the postponement, and Federal Councillor Wahlen had to explain the truly democratic mechanics of Swiss parliamentary procedure.

Whatever one's personal attitude towards the "Italian Agreement", it has no doubt brought to the fore the gravity of the whole problem of which the agreement itself is only one aspect. This time, the people have finally woken up. Like the villagers in one of C. F. Ramuz's novels, they are gripped by a sense of unease. It is hoped that they will not rest until decisive action to deal with the unsound conditions resolutely has been taken.

(Apart from the sources already mentioned, most of this article is based on information and news received by courtesy of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS

The Federal Council has appointed Mr. Charles-Albert Wetterwald as new Chief of Protocol of the Federal Political Department.

The Swiss Ambassador in Japan Monsieur Jean de Rham has also been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of South Korea.

Colonel of General Staff H. L. Raeber, has been appointed Military Attaché for the Near and Middle East and Turkey (seat in Teheran).

The Swiss Consulate in Toronto has been raised to that of Consulate-General. The new Consul-General is Monsieur Georges Falquier.

The new Consul-General in Florence will be Monsieur Edmond Deslex, and in Frankfurt Monsieur August Rebsamen.

The new Consul in Cleveland will be Monsieur Alfred Koller, in Nice Monsieur Ernst Gubler, in Hanover Monsieur Walter Dick and in Tangier Monsieur Edwin Steiner. [A.T.S.]

NEW YEAR'S DAY

The traditional reception of foreign diplomats took place at the "Federal Palace" in Berne on New Year's Day. The new President of the Confederation, Federal Councillor Prof. Dr. H. P. Tschudi, together with the new Chief of Protocol Monsieur Wetterwald, received the accredited diplomats in the late morning of 1st January. There was an abundance of magnificent flowers in red and white, provided by the federal gardeners, and precious carpets covered the floors. The arrivals followed strictly according to tradition: first the cantonal and municipal representatives (who had made the journey in seven open horse-drawn landaus), then the *doyen* of the diplomatic corps Titular Archbishop of Geremia Mgr. Alfredo Pacini (in a purple Roman cloak), followed by forty-nine Ambassadors including two ladies, the Ambassadors of Denmark and Yugoslavia, Prince Heinrich von Liechtenstein, the only permanent *Chargé d'Affaires*, and a dozen diplomats of the same rank in a temporary capacity (also including one woman representing Bolivia) brought up the rear of the distinguished visitors.

In a new year's message the new President addressed the Swiss people over radio and television. He extended special wishes to the Swiss abroad, as well as to the foreign residents in Switzerland. He referred to affluence and material wellbeing as well as to dangers of the economic boom which had not yet been arrested. Amongst achievements of 1964, he recalled the new social benefits of the old age insurance (AHV), invalidity insurance and workmen's compensation act, and he referred to the successful national exhibition, the EXPO.

As regards the new year, the President expressed his hope that every effort would be made to reduce the loss of life on the roads. He then dwelt on the youth of the country and that their wellbeing and training should have priority in the new year. He hoped that peace would reign in 1965 and that really constructive work could be done in Switzerland.

The President of the Swiss Confederation has received many letters and telegrams of congratulations. Among them were about forty from heads of states such as President Johnson, President de Gaulle, Mr. Mikojan, the Pope and the Burgomaster of Berlin. Several Royal messages of greetings also arrived.

The first meeting of the Federal Council in the new year took place on 5th January, with Federal Councillor Tschudi in the chair.

The railways had to cope with an extraordinary number of travellers, some returning from wintersports districts, Italian and other foreign workers returning from abroad, and many special trains bringing holiday visitors into Switzerland. In the first four days of the year, fifty-one supplementary trains left for Paris, Brussels and the Channel coast, eighteen relief trains travelled through Switzerland from Austria to Paris. Inside Switzerland nearly eighty special trains were put on, not counting the many trains dealing with the returning Italians and Spaniards. Between 11th December and 4th January, 872 relief trains were put on by the SBB. [A.T.S.]

SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS OF MATRIMONY

The oldest married couple in Switzerland, Monsieur and Madame Charles Burgat-Maccabez, celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary at St. Aubin (Neuchâtel) on 7th January. Both are in their hundredth year. [A.T.S.]