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THE FUTURE OF THE LUCENS NUCLEAR REACTOR

The future of Switzerland's ill-fated first nuclear reactor has been the theme of an informative press conference. A spokesman for the National Society for Nuclear Energy explained that the purpose of the Lucens reactor had been to develop a prototype of power-reactor to be subsequently used on an industrial scale. It had been half financed by the Confederation, the rest coming from the cantons. The technicians at Lucens had known that an accident could happen but they were never in the position of saying exactly when. In the course of the reactors' life, industry had shown a diminishing interest for its practical possibilities.

After the accident that definitely halted its operation in January, it was necessary to decide what to do with the hewn-in cavern and the installations of Lucens. Following an expertise, it was found that the only possible solution was to create a national storehouse of radioactive wastes.

Stocking the rejects of atomic reactors presented no dangers for Lucens because every precaution had been taken. There were at present great amounts of radioactive wastes still lying in the cavern because they could not be taken out. The best idea was to leave them there and complete them with other wastes from the rest of the country. They could remain there from twelve to twenty years. There were various ways of eliminating radioactive wastes, but Switzerland did not possess any deserts in which to dump them, like the United States.

The frights of the inhabitants of Lucens had no real foundation and were primarily psychological. The villagers' fears that the presence of radioactive wastes in their commune would be a hindrance to tourism was unjustified. Strongly shaken by the failure of their reactor, they had initially opposed very strongly its transformation into a national nuclear dumping-house.

TWO NEW ELECTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

The State Council has elected Mr. Paul Torche, Christian-Social Conservative from Fribourg, as its President for 1970. He is 57 and has already been president of the State Council of the Canton of Fribourg six times.

The National Council has elected its present vice-president, Mr. Mathias Eggenberger, Socialist from St. Gall, as its president for the coming year. Mr. Eggenberger is 64.

understanding". The Christian can live in entire confidence in the One that has made himself known, whose exigencies he has learnt to love. There is a shift from a self-centred struggle for life and objects to a God-centred obedience throughout life and a grateful receptivity to what it has to offer.

Barth contends that faith is not irrational or supra-rational. Correctly understood, it is perfectly rational. Theology is a rational and exact science because it has its experimental fact: God. Not a reproducible laboratory fact, true. The arrival of God is not a possibility that can be discussed: it remains forever a mystery to man. But he *does* exist and millions of Christians have known and experienced him. The necessary "experimental fact" is present in every day of their lives: they don't have to try and prove it, it's there! Theology's work is not to prove the existence of God since that is the assumption on which it rests! Its ploy begins once God has been revealed and received. Faith is more than an inexplicable confidence, it is new understanding of life, a new *knowledge*. One has *grasped* something and realised that the meaning of one's life is contained in this new vision and nowhere else. One *knows* what the whole universe is all about. But this knowledge is not descriptive: one just knows. In the same way, knowledge of God is not a descriptive knowledge. What can be described and understood belongs to the earth. God is the "All Other" completely outside the grasp of our rational and utilitarian intelligences. His knowledge can only be received in rather the same way that the true knowledge of another *person*, neither describable or possessable, can only be received.

Barth, as we can see, is rather rough on the seekers. He tells them from the start that all their efforts towards faith are vain and that they must wait on God's good will. This sounds like frightful predestination! No recipes for faith are contained in these chapters. Still, this is hardly surprising since all that can be acquired through a recipe must be a "possessible" thing: objects and human situations. God is well outside this realm.

Although Barth does not give any precise indication of what the seeker must do, he does give hints to the answer in many of his assertions. He says, for instance, that the men who became Christ's disciples were at one crucial moment in their lives in a *position* where they could believe. In another passage, Barth says that there is a powerful tendency in man to reject God's grace, which in the particular context may be understood to mean the world and God himself as a loving gift not to be "had" but received. The implication is that as a man's life unweaves, there are always circumstances where he may catch a glimpse of the truth of God, but that he is prevented by a powerful ego-centred wish of doing everything by himself. Barth also

speaks of the anxiety caused by man's vision of the ugliness of life, which prevents him from even wanting to believe in the goodness of God. As it were, he is shut up in himself and refuses to see the sun. Therefore the only "recipe" that can be implied from Barth's understanding of faith is to be "actively passive", or to divest oneself of all the false Gods and self-designed spiritualities to clear the void which man can at last discover in himself, and let it be filled with God's presence. What Barth encourages his readers to do is to revert to the state of "little children" or "poor in spirit". This is the essential first step, the rest depending on God's grace. Being "little children" is in fact to adapt to the order of the universe. Beyond our villages, there are a million trillion stars; next to our families, there are three billion men. Faced with this reality, there is logically little alternative to becoming "poor in spirit".

God is not describable and the Bible never attempts to picture him. Quite on the contrary, heathen images are proscribed throughout the history of the Hebrew people. What is available to man is only to see what God has done in the Scriptures. The Bible, this document of God's action in the world, is essential to true Christian faith. Knowing God is in fact "knowing Jesus-Christ", and there is no other first-step in doing so than to read of his works and teachings in the Gospels.

Unfortunately, we cannot talk of Barth's understanding of the "Word of God", since this will carry us too far. Let us just say that Barth understands the Bible as a human book expressing humanity as well as the reality of God. The act of reading the Bible is not in itself a guarantee that "faith will come", but it is certainly true that the physical words of Christ are the latchspring to the entry in God's realm. It is only then, when one has faith, that the Bible means more than an ordinary book. But in the meanwhile Barth tells his reader to take the Book *seriously* and therefore acknowledge his helplessness. That is his only responsibility, the rest is God's.

Barth has touched off an extremely fruitful development of Protestant theology. In many cases he has been overtaken, even contradicted by equally great thinkers. Some of his work is presently in disrepute because it systematically ignores some realities of present-day mentality, namely, that men can't make the immense jump to faith without some rational persuasion. Barth's attitude of placing theology above science goes against our times, which are still liberalistically-minded. People want a language which they can understand and Barth is a rather voluminous writer not always clear in his exposition. But the fact remains that, in European theology, liberalism is definitely dead thanks to his pioneering action. This being, the serious modern theologians agree with him on the essentials.

(PMB)

(ATS)

SIGNATURE OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

The Federal Council has examined the problems presented by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and has arrived at the conclusion that nothing prevented Switzerland today from signing the treaty. It has therefore authorised the Political Department to give its signature. The topic will be discussed in the Federal Chambers (Parliament) only on the day when Russia and America will have ratified the treaty.

Federal Councillor Spühler, head of the Political Department, explained that the treaty, valid for 25 years, could be denounced at all times and did not bind Switzerland irrevocably over its nuclear policy. In this way, there was no contradiction with the popular will, as expressed in the rejection of the anti-atomic initiative of 1963. The treaty will only take effect when the three great powers and 40 other states will have ratified it. (ATS)

A HIT-AND-RUN DRIVER

A pedestrian on the Appenzell to Steinegg road was knocked down and killed on the spot by a car driven by a drunken driver. The victim, 55-year old Fraulein Theres Inauen, was walking correctly on the right side of the road but the car was speeding on the left lane. After the shock which smashed the windscreen, the driver switched off his lights and took to flight. But the police distributed leaflets in the region and managed to get hold of him very soon. He was a 19-year-old youth with no driving licence. (ATS)

ALMS FOR ITALIAN STRIKERS

The assembly of the "Free Italian Colony" of the district of Délémont held a meeting in that town and decided to transfer 1,000 fr. to striking Italian workers and their families. Mrs. Pesche,

member of the Swiss management of the "Free Italian Colony", whose headquarters are in Berne, developed the main points discussed at the Olten congress of the organisation. These included the rejection of the Schwarzenbach Initiative school integration and equal democratic rights. (ATS)

WOMEN AND FEDERAL RIGHT TO VOTE

The "Association for Feminine Vote" published a letter arguing against the Federal Council's position on the Federal right of vote for women, as expressed in a circular sent to cantons and political parties on 23rd June. The Federal Council believes that the best way of introducing female suffrage would reside in a partial alteration of the Federal Constitution. The suffragettes are firmly at variance with this idea and say that constitutional revision is "a long and painful way, necessitating an acceptance of the Federal Council's motion by both chambers, then a popular vote, to be crowned by the acquiescence of the majority of Swiss males and of the cantons.

They suggest two other simpler ways. The first would be to rule that the "Swiss" mentioned in the 74th Article of the Constitution be understood to mean "Swiss men and women". This is indeed the case of the 4th Article. This new interpretation should take effect from the day the Federal Council signs the "Convention of Human Rights" of the European Council. The "Association for Feminine Vote" finds it unjust that the designation of the "Swiss" in the Federal Constitution should refer everywhere to Swiss men and women except in the article relating to the right of vote. They want a fairer constitutional interpretation of the "Swiss" qualifier; but just in case they get inducted against their will, they want it to be interpreted to their

advantage in the articles ruling of military service! The other solution would consist in redrafting the second article of the Federal law on elections and federal votes. This would only call for the chambers' approbation and spare a referendum. (ATS)

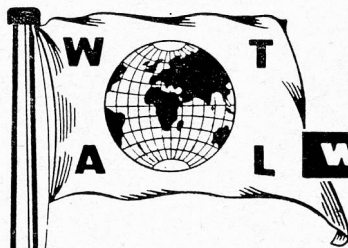
TWO UNEXPECTED CALLERS

Was it a spoof or was it sincere? Dr. Fritz Wahlen and National Councillor Broger, two members of the four wise men commission for the Jura, received the unexpected visit from two churlish Jurassians, who dumped their military gear in the parlour of their houses. They left the following written message: "As members of the good-offices commission for the Jura, you have accepted a mandate from the Bernese Government, you have signed a report which, in contradiction with the right of self-determination of nations, throws the fate of the Jura in the hands of Bernese colonisers unassimilated among us. You have thus served the cause of Bernese imperialism to the prejudice of French-speaking people perfectly able to govern themselves. To make you understand that we will never accept such a parody of 'free self-determination' we are leaving our junk in your hands".

When they arrived at the home of Dr. Wahlen, he was absent and Mrs. Wahlen was there to receive them but would not let them stay. A few hours later, they called at Dr. Broger's. He was in and entertained them for well over half an hour.

The two men have said that they had spared Mr. Pierre Graber because they expected him to drop out of the four wise men commission following his entry in the Federal Council. They added that they might well still pay a visit to Dr. Max Petipierre, the fourth member of the commission. (ATS)

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INTRONISATION OF THE NEW ABBOT OF EINSIEDELN

Monseigneur Georg Holzherr, the new abbot of the Abbey of Einsiedeln, has been intronised in the course of a very simple ceremony by his predecessor, Cardinal Benno Gut. The State Council of Schwytz was represented by its vice-president, Mr. Leimbacher. Dr. Widmer, mayor of Zurich, represented his city. The great majority of Swiss bishops and other Catholic dignitaries were present at the ceremony.

Monseigneur Holzherr is the 57th abbot of Einsiedeln. He is a native of Neuendorf in Solothurn and becomes an honorary citizen of both Zurich and Einsiedeln through his new functions.

THE CAR OF ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE HANDBOOK BURNED DOWN

Unknown firebrands destroyed the car of Mr. Albert Bachmann, one of the authors of the little red book. He is also the author of the Soldier's Handbook and had recently been receiving threatening calls. He is a military instructor by profession. (ATS)

NEW CULTURAL ARCHIVES IN MORGES

The "Archives Culturelles Romandes", created as a foundation thanks to an important initial gift of books, reviews, letters and manuscripts

by Professor Daniel Simond of Lausanne, have been inaugurated in the Maison de Seigneux in Morges in the presence of many prominent literary and cultural personalities. Professor Simond will be curator of the collection, which will be progressively enriched with unpublished and original documents illustrating the continuity, the diversity and the unity of the cultural life of *Romandie*.

The pieces contained in the collection already include letters and manuscripts by Ernest Ansermet, René Auberjonois, Alice Bailly, Albert Béguin, R. Th. Bosshard, Paul Budry, C. A. Cingria, E. H. Crisinel, Edmond Mieville, René Morax, Giuseppe Motta, Georges Nicole, Guy de Pourtales, C. F. Ramuz, Arnold Reymond, Léon Savary, Henri Spiess, Jean-Paul Zimmermann, as well as documents by illustrious foreigners closely tied with Switzerland, such as Albert Einstein and André Gide. (ATS)

JEAN REY IN BERNE

The president of the European Economic Community, Monsieur Jean Rey has paid a visit to the Swiss Government. He said in a press conference that he had made a fruitful survey of the problems facing Europe and Switzerland with Mr. Celio, Mr. Spühler and their collaborators. Mr. Rey's visit had not been motivated by the imminent conference at The Hague, where British application to the Common Market was to be discussed.

He believed that a decision concerning an eventual enlargement of the Community would be reached at about Easter 1970. This enlargement would probably not only concern Great Britain but Ireland, Norway and Denmark as well. His feeling was that negotiations with neutral countries, Switzerland first among them, should be under way before a definite agreement on the first new entries in the Common Market could be clinched. Mr Rey said that, at present, it was too soon to say anything on the form and content of any eventual arrangements. He concluded by mentioning the very friendly atmosphere of his talks with Swiss authorities.

THE STATUTES OF THE "MOVEMENT FOR THE UNITY IN THE JURA"

When a new political creation finds the day, it is necessary to seat it on a firm legal foundation. The movement for the unity of Jura, or third force party (a go-between of the Separatists and the Unionists) founded in August must now define in the books what it actually is. It has recently issued the following communiqué: "On August 18th 1969, a hundred people, gathered in Moutier, decided to create a movement of "third force" tendency with the aim of reaching a settlement of the Jura problem in maintaining the unity of the province and obtaining a status of autonomy within the old Canton. A study-group was appointed to defend a programme,

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which has already been made public, and to prepare the statutes of the movement. Since the middle of August, the study-group has accomplished a considerable amount of work, making many contacts and defending the arguments of the movement. It has also prepared the future statutes, these will be submitted to an assembly on Tuesday, 16th December at 8 p.m., in the gym hall of Moutier. Every person approving the goals set forth in them are invited to this assembly. These goals are to save the political unity of the Jura and to arrive at a statute of autonomy within the Canton of Berne. All those approving the new statutes will be considered to be the founding members of the movement. These members will then designate the members of the committee and will define a programme of action". (ATS)

SWISS FIRMS TO EQUIP DAMS IN ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian Government has recently awarded contracts to two Swiss firms for the construction of the hydro-electric dam of Fincha, to be achieved with the help of the World Bank at a cost of 130 million francs. The "Machines Bell" company, a member of the Escher-Wyss group, which is itself a member of the Sulzer group, has been designated for the construction of three vertical Pelton turbines. The Norwegian subsidiary of Brown Boveri has received an order for three generators worth 8 million francs. The actual dam will be erected by an Italian contractor and the high-tension link laid down by a Yugoslav firm. (ATS)

THE MOST MODERN TIME-SHARING SYSTEM IN EUROPE

One of Basle's great chemical companies has recently inaugurated what is considered to be the most perfected time-sharing computer in Europe. The system had needed 18 months of study. "Time-sharing" describes computers which can be used simultaneously at distance by many people. The mass of information is such that the help of time-sharing facilities had become necessary in that particular Basle firm. The advantage is that a practically unlimited number of researchers can obtain information whenever they want. The machine has a memory containing the gist of 300,000 papers and 60,000 books on chemistry and allows the scientists of the firm to be informed of the latest research undertaken in America. This is particularly interesting, since 10 per cent. of the sums devoted to research are wasted on work that has already been done somewhere else in the world. (ATS)

A SLUMP IN THE PRICE OF GOLD

The last week of November was marked in Zurich by an unprecedented slump in the price of gold. Due to high selling-pressures, the price of the ounce,

at 35.50 dollars, reached its lowest since 18th March, 1968. These exceptional prices managed to reanimate the sale of gold so that prices soon settled at a low plateau of 36.15 to 36.30 dollars an ounce. Three days previously the ounce had fetched a price of about 38 dollars. Although there was a normal and constant demand for gold in industry, there was a lower than usual demand on the part of traditional hoarders from the Middle and Far East. (ATS)

TRAVEL AGENCIES WITH PROBLEMS

The President of the Swiss Federation of Travel Agencies, Mr. Hans Joos, of Basle, has said that travel agencies could at present not face the future with equanimity. The Federation, which groups 92 agencies with 217 ticket-offices and 3,000 employees, was holding its 42nd general assembly.

In its resolution, the assembly asks the tourist-propaganda offices, which benefit from public aid, from contributions and tourism taxes, not to engage in commercial activities traditionally belonging to travel agencies. The resolution expresses the conviction that there should be an appropriate separation of labour between tourist-propaganda offices and travel agencies. It is maintained that tourist offices, regional tourism unions and the Swiss National Tourist Office should limit themselves to general publicity; the organisation and sale of concrete journeys and holidays should remain the preserve of travel agencies.

The resolution stresses the fact that tourism is one of the country's most precious assets and that everything should be done to enhance it. A common effort in publicity is envisaged, and it is planned to present a one-front publicity in the largest papers in co-operation with the Federal Railways and Swissair.

Professor Pierre Risch, head of the Swiss Tourism Federation, had a somewhat different point of view and added that if private travel agencies and propaganda-offices made no effort to cooperate more closely, a far more aggressive sales policy was to be expected from local and regional tourism organisations. (ATS)

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

The Federal Council decided to be represented at the European Conference on the preservation of sites and buildings of historical and cultural interest, held in Brussels from 25th to 27th November. The Swiss delegation was headed by Ambassador Pierre Micheli, general secretary of the Federal Political Department. The conference elaborated recommendations on integration of cultural property to regional planification in the framework of modern civilisation and the actual way of life.

THE POLLUTION OF LAKE GENEVA

The International Commission for the Protection of the Waters of Lake Geneva has held a recent meeting in Lyon, under the patronage of the French Foreign Ministry. The Swiss delegation comprised eight members, two of them delegated by the Confederation, and six other State Councillors, two for each of the three cantons bordering the lake.

According to the dossier of investigations conducted during 1968, the pollution of the lake of Geneva is continuing to increase at an alarming rate. The Commission therefore urges a speeding-up of the construction of purifying installations able to eliminate at least 90% of the phosphates contained in industrial and domestic wastes. This standard should be imposed on all the installations bordering the lake and those serving important localities on the lake's feeding-basin.

Canton Geneva processes almost all its used waters. Vaud purifies a little over half of them, but most of the Valais' wastes find their way to the lake. On the French side, many purifying-stations are actually under construction or in project. This, in particular, is the case of the great purifying plant of Evian and Thonon, due to be operational in 1971.

According to the communiqué, it is most important to increase the efforts in re-establishing the cleanness of the Léman. The immense quantities of organic matter and fertilisers that have been accumulated on its bed will only diminish very slowly. It will take a number of years before the chemical, bacteriological and biological evolution of the lake will be stabilised. The duty of each state, French and Swiss, is to devote every available means to save this vast reservoir of 90 billion cubic metres of water which already supplies over 400,000 people in drinking-water. (ATS)

PULLING-OUT OF VINE IN THE VALAIS

The Valais Union of Wine-Growers has published a communiqué on this very effervescent topic: "Regularly we are threatened, on pain of collective punishment, with a pulling-out of our supposedly accursed vines. This is the result of far too restrictive regulations first introduced to allow landed proprietors to live in a time when 150 million litres of wine were imported from abroad. Without wanting to impinge on the "peace of wine" which is fortunately reigning in the Valais today, isn't it time we adopted a more realistic conception of the status of wine and allowed the plantation, with order and discipline, of vine on the stony and sandy tracts of the Rhone valley? At a time when we are threatened with a shortage of wine, the plantations in the plain could just take up that tiny part of the 150 million imported litres".

THE EL AL TRIAL

After the vicissitudes of a ten-month inquiry and the problems of finding a suitable jury and screening those persons allowed to be present in the smallish court-room of Winthertur, the El Al trial is under way and is expected to last for about three weeks. The three arabs, two men and one girl, who peppered an "El Al" Boeing with 62 bullets, killing the pilot, on February 18th, face an impressive series of charges: murder with premeditation, grievous bodily harm, unnecessary obstruction to traffic, illegal use of explosives, violation of Swiss sovereignty, damage to property, illegal possession of arms and explosives. Mordchai Rahamin, the Israeli agent who jumped from the plane and fired three shots at one of the Palestinian saboteurs, killing him, will have to stand against charges of murder with passion (as opposed to manslaughter in self-defence, this having been ruled out in the act of indictment because the Palestinians never threatened him with their guns). He will also have to answer to charges of "acts accomplished without right on behalf of a foreign state".

The Palestinians refused to talk and answer any questions right from the start, so that the hearing on the afternoon of the second day only lasted two minutes. One of the two men explained that he would not answer questions because the preliminary enquiry had been conducted with partiality, the other, because Swiss opinion was biased in favour of Israel. The

woman in the trio professed her faith in an Arab Palestine and promised not to say one more word. As for the Israeli, he claims to be utterly innocent.

THE BEGINNING OF A BUSY PARLIAMENTARY SESSION

... Thus life trudges on in the good town of Berne, unwilling to remember that, without the Confederation, she would be a rather small town. But this is perhaps one of the most significant aspects of Helvetia's democracy.

In that town then commences a long, busy four-week session for parliamentarian and journalists alike. Among the most spectacular events, there is, of course, the election of two new federal councillors, on 10th December. Simple formality, no doubt, for Messrs. Graber and Brugger. But can we ever tell? Simple formality, for sure, as regards the already conducted elections of Messrs. Mathias Eggenberger (soc. Saint-Gall) as president of the National Council, and Paul Torche (c.c.s. Fribourg), as president of the Council of States.

But the parliamentarians will also have some great themes to debate. The report on the U.N. question may not arouse too much opposition at the States, but the Council will have to re-examine that slap-up project providing for a possible limitation, and even annulment, of abusively cancelled leases. Will it follow the lines of its Commission, thus getting one step nearer to the National Council, and will it envisage annulment just for those

cantons suffering from a particular dearth of lodgings?

The two councils will have to extend the present system of rent supervision. The question of initiatives on housing, will be brought forward, especially the one by the "Mouvement populaire des familles" claiming an infringement of the right to lodgings for all in the Constitution. The initiative will no doubt be rejected, but not without some vigorous speeches.

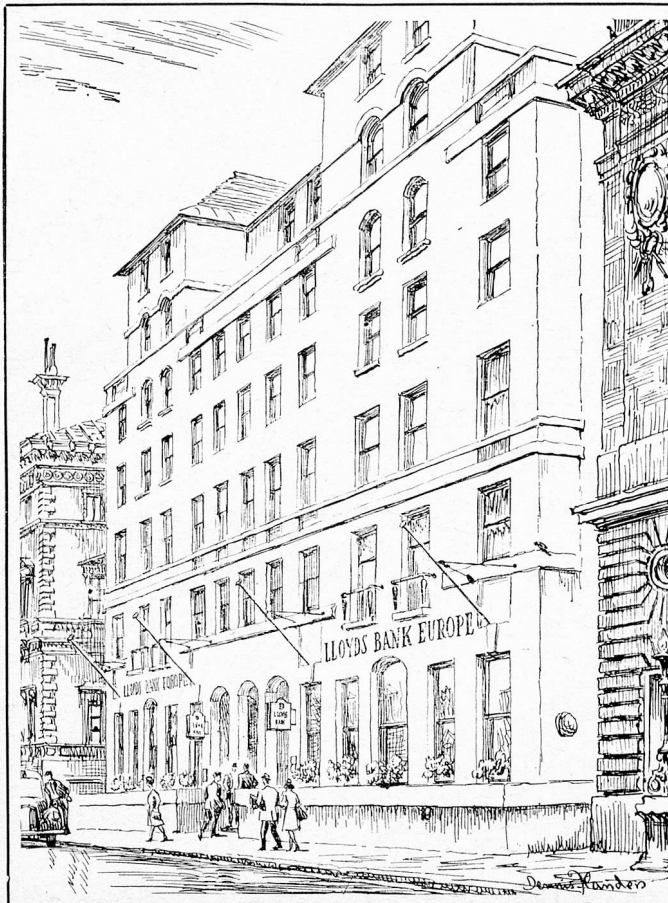
It will be necessary to lay hold of that not-less-famous Schwarzenbach Initiative. There can be no doubt over the outcome, but it will be interesting to see how each party will run the campaign for rejection and which proposals for stability they will put forward.

Although the outcome of the vote on the budget can hardly be in doubt, this will not be true of the new tax laws proposed by Mr. Celio. This project (in particular, the proposed fixing of the taxation-scale in the Constitution and the recognition of the ICHA-index as the definite receipts) could well come out of the Council of States, who will be examining it first, badly emasculated.

The National Council will be discussing labour legislation (the Code of Obligations) and the question of payed holidays will crop up.

Finally, motions, postulates and interpellations will abound and the "little red book" and "Florida" will doubtless feed the inspiration of our rhetors.

(Journal de Genève)



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