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# The Swiss Observer

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taking care of the foreigner's money, the MIGROS Bank spurned it and turned to the small saver, just as MIGROS stores had sought the small consumer 30 years before. The MIGROS Bank in the Seidenstrasse in Zurich is the only downtown bank doing business from eight to five and on Saturdays. MIGROS Banks refused to join the Swiss Bankers Association and took a very distant stand from the position of its established competitors, accusing them of accepting foreign money too gleefully and indulging in the glut of investments which have overheated the Swiss economy of the 1960s so badly and made prices soar. The MIGROS and the Independents feel that the established and cartelised big banks other than the cantonal banks have acted irresponsibly in accepting so many funds from abroad and investing them locally. MIGROS wants Swiss money to be invested in Switzerland and unconventionally does not want to be taken for a traditional "Swiss Bank", refusing to do business abroad (when not forced by official measures). Duttweiler once said that the Swiss should cease being "*Eine Nation von Watch-und-Cheese-makers, Hotelpartiers, und Bankiers*". This subversive statement, with which he wanted to free the Swiss from their image, reflects the pattern of an independent life spent struggling against the strictures in the establishment.

Although the MIGROS Bank started with a built-in, loyal clientele of "Migros Club" members, it is still a small bank. The Big Banks are said to fear its competition while not holding it in particular esteem. Who knows, the MIGROS Bank may one day grow into a giant, just as the Volksbank, created for the small saver, has now become one of the established giants. Gottlieb Duttweiler set out in 1925 to fight against the cartels. When he died in 1962 he left instead the biggest cartel of them all. (PMB)

# COMMENT

## REDUCE THE VOTING AGE TO 18?

Dr. Fritz Tanner, a marriage counsellor and a great friend of the young who is at the same time a member of the National Council, introduced a *postulate* in the Chamber aiming at lowering the minimum voting age by two years. The postulate is a Swiss political creation and consists, when it is passed by the National Council, in inviting the Federal Council to consider the issues it raised. It is therefore not a motion but an obligation and usually calls for a reply by the Federal Council.

As a result of the postulate, "Die Weltwoche" had the idea of inviting a panel of young people and of recording their views of the problem. Six youths, in and out of school, aged between 18 and 24 were interviewed together and the most striking impression one gathered from reading the interview was that they had a sound common sense.

They raised many sensible points. The first was that to be able to take part in the political life of the community it was necessary to be politically educated and to know what each party and electoral list stood for. It was therefore a task for the schools to educate all future citizens in these matters. This is in fact already practised in Swiss schools and Civic Instruction is given in primary school and Political Science in the third year of secondary school. In spite of this, one of the girls of the panel said that many 18-year-olds couldn't say if they were asked what the National Council was. Another point raised was the immense separation between the respective lives and interests of the parties and the young. A student said that it was pointless to lower the voting age if the parties were entirely governed by old people not open to the young. The feeling was that the parties were controlled by the old and that the young had no place in them. One member of the panel said, however, that he might try for the Social Democratic party — it was the party which perhaps offered the best chance to the young. The Initiative principle was criticised and the initiative launched last year by students to change the law on the Institute of Technology was considered as a failure. The young had launched an initiative but those in a position to implement it, the old in Parliament, had done what they wanted to anyway. Besides, the initiative was a very slow procedure and one youth claimed that the treatment received by apprentices, who get a very small pay in Switzerland, could only be improved if they went on strike and not through

an initiative. It would just have no effect. Asked whether they were interested in getting effective power, one of the panel frankly admitted that youth was not interested in power, all they wanted were good chances and a peaceful life. Neither did the panel appear to be particularly outraged by the materialism of their surrounding. Children, and their parents as well, should be taught that life was not just a matter of consumption. It was all a question of education. The youth are also the country's conscience and the panel agreed that if 18-year-olds had been given a chance to vote on June 7th, then the Schwarzenbach Initiative would not have been rejected by such a small majority.

The discussion did not show a strong common will in favour of the right of vote at 18. It seemed as though the students were as guarded against themselves as they were against society.

(PMB)

# SWISS NEWS

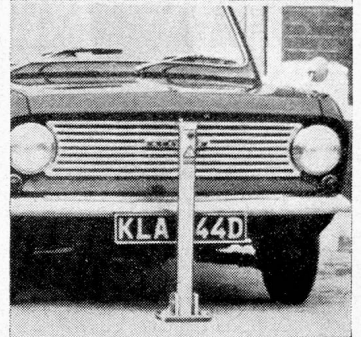
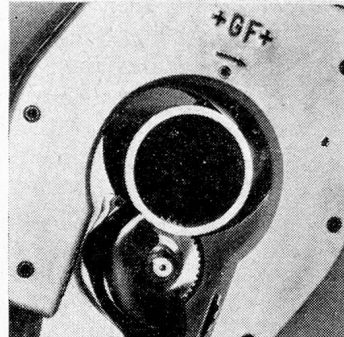
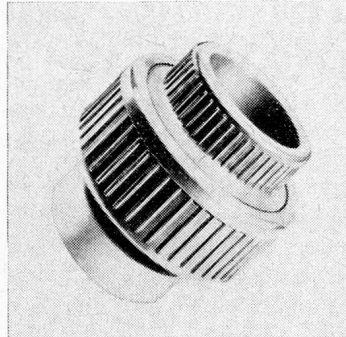
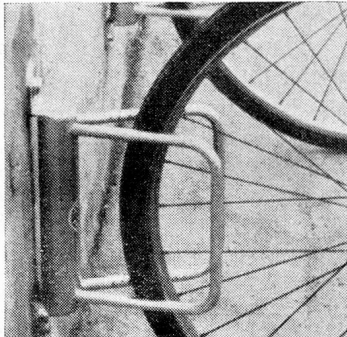
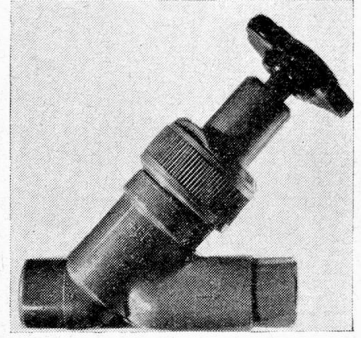
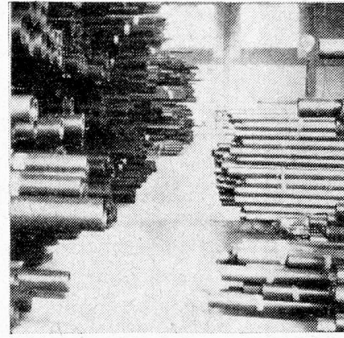
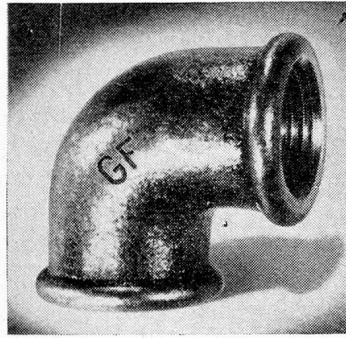
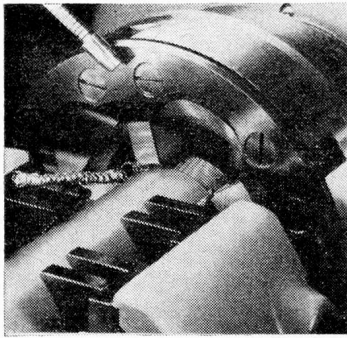
## SEVEN ACCUSED IN THE BUEHRLE AFFAIR

As a conclusion to the inquiry into the illegal arms shipment by Buehrle, the well known armaments factory in Oerlikon, seven persons have been charged with falsifying the documents warranting an arms export licence. The enquiry had been directed against a director of the company, a manager, a signing clerk and two junior employees. It was a surprise to learn that seven employees instead of six, of the company had been involved in the charges, which will now be dealt with by the Federal Court. The Buehrle Company has been found guilty of exporting some 88.7 million francs worth of arms to countries inscribed in the Swiss arms ban list. 52.7 million francs worth was sent to South Africa, 19.5 millions to Israel, and the rest to Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. The accused had furthermore attempted to obtain an export license for 10 million francs worth of unexportable arms. Dieter Buehrle, the head of the Buehrle concern and son of its founder, was not among the accused but has been the aim of a complaint for his lack of control over the activities of his company.

## THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULTURE

A report has just been published by the Agricultural Division of the Department of Economy in Berne. This report doesn't actually tell the farmers of Switzerland what they have to grow and produce, it barely sets forth a number of recommendations which they

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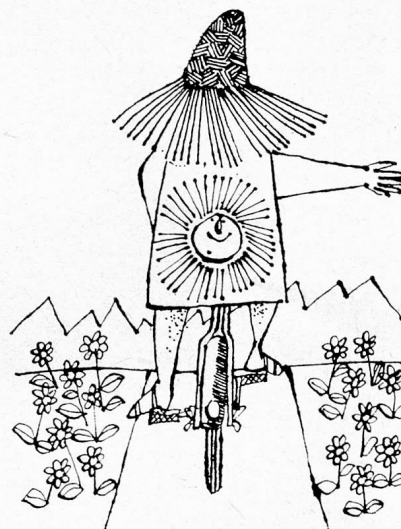
should follow for their and their country's benefit. Speaking of the "guiding features of agriculture between 1970 and 1975" the report recommends a maximum production of 26 million quintals of milk for 1970. The Swiss people hardly increase their consumption of milk year by year whereas their bounteous cows yield more milk year after year (an annual increase of about 1.5 per cent in fact) with the result that, for a long time, there has now been a surfeit of milk. Under the circumstances, the number of cows in Switzerland will have to be reduced by 5,000. The market for meat appears in a more favourable light as Switzerland had still to import 29 per cent of its beef last year. The acreage devoted to meat cattle will have to be increased at the expense of fields hitherto given to the nourishment of milk cows. The report concludes by warning that: "In order to attain the objectives which have been fixed, it is necessary to orientate agriculture in a prospective and judicious way. In so far as this is the job of the State, it must do so in full awareness of the proven methods dictated by agricultural prices, economic policy and market regulation. It is also necessary to co-ordinate production with consumption better, but this task falls on the interested partners and the professional organisations".

## THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

### VISITS BERNE

Mr. Varahagiri Venkata Giri, President of the Republic of India, visited Switzerland on an official visit. He was received by Mr. Tschudi, the present President of the Confederation, at the "Bernerhof" in Berne. In the course of a speech pronounced on that occasion, Mr. Giri praised the work of Swiss experts in Kerela and expressed his respect for Swiss neutrality, adding that India too was trying to foster peace in the world by her policy of non-alignment. He was then invited to the National Council, where he was warmly received by a standing ovation from the delegates. The ceremony was simple, in the Swiss style, but what it lacked in pomp, it gained in mutual sympathy. Mr. Giri was not only representing the most populated democracy in the world in one of the smallest ones, he also stood for Ghandi's legacies and his ideals, for which there is a great admiration in Switzerland. Making a journey to the shores of the Lake of Thun, Mr. Giri said that he would like to spend his years of retirement in Switzerland.

ROAM THE CONTINENT —  
REST IN SWITZERLAND



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## THE CHURCH OF GENEVA HAS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Although it cannot be said that the churches of Geneva are in a financial crisis, their livelihood has been diminishing lately. This is due to the fact that, in the face of constantly rising prices, the income from the "ecclesiastical contributions" has remained stagnant. Geneva hasn't got the ordinary ecclesiastical tax because its churches have been separated from the State for the past 25 years. They live on the generosity of their members and on free contributions levied with the income tax of voluntary contributors. For those who are willing to pay their ecclesiastical contribution, it amounts to 16 per cent of income tax and 6 per cent of wealth tax. The list and denomination of contributors are submitted to the three recognised churches entitled to their proceeds every year: the Protestant, the Roman Catholic and the Old Catholic Churches. If the list contained every tax payer, then the Protestant Church of Geneva would be getting 13 million francs a year and the Catholic Church about 8 million. They get in fact 4.3 million and 2 million respectively, which shows that only 35 per cent of tax payers are willing to donate ecclesiastical contributions. The Consistoire of the Protestant Church of Geneva has recently revealed the 1970 budget. It is of 6 million francs—one million more than last year and will only be balanced (other sources of revenue taken into account) if the income from ecclesiastical contributions rises to 5.5 million francs. The pay of pastors and other servants of the Church has had to be increased recently to keep pace with the increased cost of living. Let's hope that the generosity of the faithful will not lag behind this universal economic phenomenon!

## THE "TRAM DEMONSTRATORS" SENTENCED

At the end of last year Basle students staged a demonstration against the increased prices of the city's trams. More than that, they claimed free journeys for students. Two of their leaders have just been sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment for breaking the peace and disorderly conduct. The two accused refused to consider themselves as "leaders", maintaining that the demonstration had been entirely spontaneous. Demonstrations were not forbidden in Switzerland, said the Magistrate. They could even be organised without a special police authorisation. It was just a question of disrupting the orderly life of the public. The demonstration, which had culminated in a "sit-in" halting traffic and trams, exceeded the bounds of what the law could tolerate.

## THE NEW AIR SUPPORT FIGHTER

Some seven months ago we wrote of the difficulties in choosing a new air support plane to succeed the old *Venoms* of the Swiss Air Force. The choice has apparently not yet been made and

the Air Force is still hesitating between the French *Milan S*, the American *Corsair II A 7D* and the Italian *Fiat G 91 Y*. The Anglo-French Jaguar is never talked about anymore and the possibility of its being chosen must presumably be ruled out.

When the problem of a replacement aircraft made the headlines last Autumn, the *Fiat* and the *Corsair* stood in a better position than all the other candidates (there were seven of them). Now it seems that the cheaper but more lightly equipped and less sophisticated *Fiat* has given way to the *Corsair*. As the *Milan S*, an improved version of the *Mirage 5* (currently embargoed from Israel) is once again in the forefront, the final lap will be fought between the *Corsair* and the *Milan*.

The *Corsair* can carry a heavier load of bombs and rockets but is subsonic. The *Milan* on the other hand is supersonic, but its increased speed is achieved at the cost of payload and armament. The Air Force wanted a subsonic aircraft from the outset. There is a great difference in design and designation between an interceptor, which chases other aircraft and flies at supersonic speeds, and a ground support fighter, whose task is to support combat troops on the ground and which does not need to fly faster than sound to do so.

A supersonic machine like the *Milan* has the advantage of escaping from enemy interceptors. Its afterburner can give it a tremendous burst of power thanks to which it can behave, if need be, as an interceptor fighter. The official policy has so far been to separate the role of interception and ground support: the 57 "Mirages 3S" can be entrusted with the first and a subsonic machine can support troops on the ground provided that it is protected from faster aircraft by the *Mirages*. There have however been very strong pressures within Air Force circles to adopt the *Milan* definitely. It is felt that the Swiss Air Force will dispose of so few ground support machines that it is best to make them the least vulnerable and still compatible with their purpose. A slow moving air support aircraft, however perfected and sophisticated, will have less chance of survival than an agile supersonic fighter. There is also a strong attachment for Dassault aircraft. Their qualities have been amply demonstrated and our air defence has now relied on them for the past ten years. Besides, the *Milan* has peculiar little fins which jut out of the fuselage and which retract at supersonic speeds. This is an invention shared by the aeronautical workshops of Emmen and the Dassault Company. These firms have the property of making the aircraft both more manoeuvrable and stable in subsonic flight.

It must be pointed out however that the two aircraft which were officially retained by the Federal Council were the *Fiat* and the *Corsair*. The

*Milan* is very much talked about only because it is a well known and favoured machine among military circles. No word has officially been uttered that could make one say that the Government had opted for the *Milan*—the plane just remains a strong potential candidate.

The head of the Military Department, Mr. Gnägi, brought up the problem again at a recent gathering of the Association of Officers. From his address it could be concluded that the experts had definitely favoured the *Corsair* with respect to the *Fiat*, but that both its cost and maintenance by far exceeded the credit of 1,300 million francs allocated for the new aircraft in 1967. The decision has therefore not been taken yet. The Air Force badly needs a new ground support aircraft to replace its 20-year-old *Venoms*. A group of experts have studied the comparative values of the *Corsair* and the *Fiat*, making full use of computers and modern analytical methods for the past two years, and have still not made up their minds.

## HARD LUCK, PETER BONETTI

You may have remained totally disinterested in the World Cup and deliberately plugged your ears in front of the hullabaloo that was staged over and around it, you can hardly have ignored that England lost to West Germany in the quarter-finals. What a tragedy for England, the former Cup-holders! As England's number one goalkeeper, Gordon Banks, had fallen ill on the night before (and, incidentally, the day after having been awarded an OBE) it was for his substitute, Peter Bonetti, to defend England's colours in the blistering mid-day heat of the Mexican town of Leon on that fateful Sunday. Peter Bonetti is a Swiss-British double national and his parents come from Ticino. We interviewed him in the April 24th issue of the *Swiss Observer*. Alas, he let three goals slip in on that fateful match against the West Germans. Goalkeepers are in a very vulnerable position as they tend to get all the blame for the goals which they concede, even though these goals may be the result of a weak and uncoordinated defence. Nobody has in fact blamed Peter Bonetti alone for what happened, but all football commentators agree that he was not in his best shape. Had he played as well as on that glorious Cup Final against Leeds, he may well have stopped one or two of the three goals which England allowed. Bonetti probably knows this as well as anybody else and this must have made his moral agony all the worse at the end of the game. It must be hard for a world class keeper who had given only one goal in the six victorious international games of his career to let three in the match which counted the most!