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Protest by peace paper

THE Swiss Defence Ministry has rejected accusations that it deliberately prevented a peace movement journalist from attending a government-organised conference on the country's defence planning.

The movement – the Swiss Peace Council – alleges that a correspondent for its newspaper was denied attendance at the conference in an official attempt to suppress criticism of the government's future armaments policy. The Peace Council accused the Defence Ministry of anti-democratic behaviour and of violating Press freedom.

But, says the Ministry, the Peace Council journalist was excluded from the conference "for technical reasons" because

Switzerland's press, radio and television not only report the news – they sometimes make it as well. This round-up by Colin Farmer spotlights some of the recent happenings back home in which the media made their own headlines.

his application to attend was submitted after the official deadline. The Ministry said the media and interested organisations had been informed about the conference months in advance.

Reporter loses appeal

A JOURNALIST on Switzerland's top-selling daily, *Blick*, has lost his appeal against a fine imposed for publishing extracts from a confidential report on Swiss secret service activities.

Reporter Jurg Zbinden took his case to the Swiss Supreme

Court in Lausanne – the country's highest court of appeal – after being fined the equivalent of £200 by a Zurich court.

He has said he will now consider an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

The case dates back to 1981, when Mr Zbinden obtained the confidential report from a Swiss Member of Parliament. The MP himself – who had said he wanted to draw attention to security leaks in the Swiss Defence Ministry – was protected by parliamentary immunity from facing possible legal proceedings.

Prince Philip said 'no'

VETERAN Swiss sports reporter Sepp Renggli, aged 58, celebrating 30 years with the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, was asked in a magazine article to name his most famous interview partner – and the most uncooperative.

Both, he recalled, were British.

His most famous interviewee was Field Marshal Montgomery, with whom Renggli discussed football.

The most difficult interview partner he ever had was Prince

Philip, whom he met at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki right at the beginning of his broadcasting career.

"In fact", recalls Renggli, "the Prince refused to give me an interview – even though I called him 'Your Royal Highness'."

Row over prices vote

THE Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's management has rejected allegations that its Director General violated SBC programme guidelines in publicly expressing his views on a controversial political issue.

Mr Leo Schürmann, formerly the Swiss government's prices supervisor, had been quoted in newspaper advertisements as opposing the campaign launched by consumer protectionists for permanent price supervision in Switzerland.

The advertisements appeared during the run-up to last November's nationwide vote (see article on Page 10), in which the Swiss electorate approved the proposal for permanent supervision and rejected an alternative government plan for price supervision only at times of high inflation.

An SBC management statement said that the Corporation's programme guidelines referred only to participation in radio and television programmes, and not to the personal freedom of expression outside these media enjoyed by all SBC personnel.

