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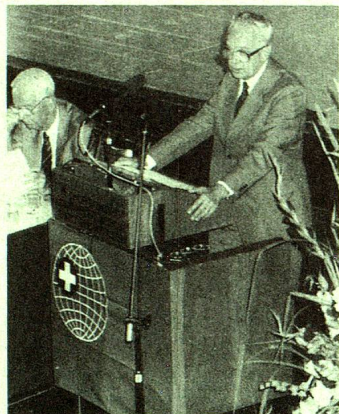
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65th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad (21 to 23 August 1987)

Several highlights

The plenary meeting was marked by full discussion of the main theme. Various qualified speakers gave information about Switzerland's social security system. The participants passed a resolution embodying precise demands in this field (see box) but were also witness to a tangible act of self-help and at the same time a significant deed of social policy: the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad and the Swiss Grütli (sickness insurance fund) were able to sign an agreement whereby the Swiss abroad can take out a risk insurance, for a fairly modest premium, which provides for eligibility for sickness insurance without new reservations, should they return to Switzerland (see editorial on p.3 and advertisement on p. 10). All who attended the plenary meeting experienced another highlight of the Assembly: the witty and trenchant speech of Federal Councillor Leon Schlumpf who extended a hearty welcome to all participants in the four national languages. Leon Schlumpf is due to retire at the end of the year.



Federal Councillor Leon Schlumpf, who is to retire at the end of 1987, addresses the Swiss Abroad (photo: SSA).

Revision of the citizenship act and voting rights

Under the chairmanship of its President, Professor Walther Hofer, the Commission of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) busied itself with a wide range of subjects. In his annual report, the chairman drew attention to the fact that in connection with the planned revision of the citizenship act the Office of the CSA had spoken out very clearly against the waiting period of 12

years for the naturalization of foreign spouses of Swiss living abroad. On the other hand it was noted with satisfaction that the federal government holds a favourable view of the introduction of the right to vote by post.

Place of the Swiss Abroad

To applause, the CSA again pronounced itself in favour of following up the project for a Place of the Swiss Abroad at Brunnen - this, despite the rejection by the people of the central Swiss cantons of the CH 91 concept.

At the suggestion of the Union des Suisses de France, Jacques Dreier was unanimously elected as the successor of Marcel Gehrig, who is standing down. The next Assembly of the Swiss Abroad takes place from 2nd to 4th September 1988 in Näfels (Canton Glarus) and is devoted to the theme: «What Future for the Fifth Switzerland?».

At every turn during the entire Assembly those taking part could feel the hospitality of the

Spring Skiing Camps 1988

In spring 1988, there will again be two ski-camps taking place in Morgins (Canton of Valais). Does your father or mother have a Swiss passport? Are you between 15 and 25 years old? Do you like skiing and meeting people of your age? Then feel free to register for one of the camps indicated below:

Camp 1: 28/3 to 6/4, 1988

Camp 2: 7/4 to 16/4, 1988

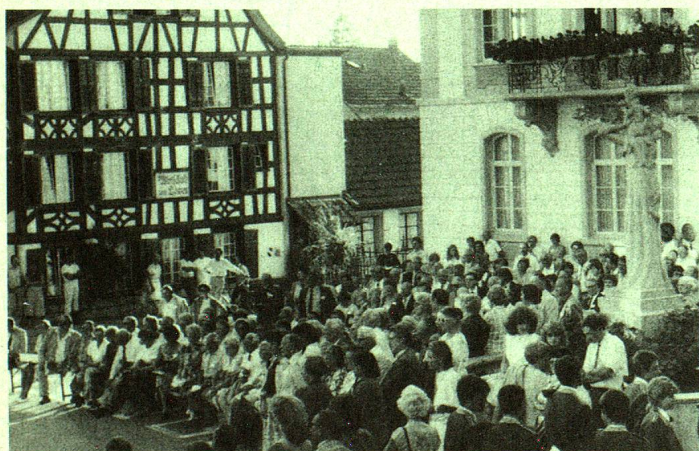
Charges: SFr. 370.- + skiing pass approx. SFr. 200.-

Apply to:

Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad
Youth Service
Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3000 Berne 16

Deadline: 29/2/88

Thurgau. From arrival at the pleasant little market town of Weinfelden to the final ceremony on Sunday at the Charterhouse in Ittingen, the still rural eastern Swiss canton offered so much more than just a beautiful back-cloth for a successful congress. *JM*



August 21st, 1987: the 65th Assembly of Swiss Abroad in Weinfelden is opened in glorious summer weather (photo: SSA).

Resolution

The Swiss Abroad and the Commission of the Swiss Abroad of the NHG (New Helvetic Society), who gathered together in Weinfelden, hold that the situation of our expatriate citizens in the Swiss social and health insurance system is still in need of improvement. They therefore request that the following steps be taken by the competent authorities:

- To create the possibility of paying arrears in the case of outstanding contributions so that gaps in payments into the AHV (old-age and dependents insurance scheme) can be made good.
- To create the possibility of voluntary joining of the AHV for Swiss women abroad whose Swiss husbands are not members.
- To facilitate payment of AHV contributions in countries that impose restrictions on the transfer of foreign exchange.
- To conclude social security accords with a number of further countries, particularly Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa.
- To intervene, in the case of countries with whom social security agreements already exist, if the interpretation of specific provisions does not correspond to the original spirit of the accord.
- To make it easier for all Swiss abroad to transfer from a foreign to a Swiss sickness insurance fund, through governmental and private arrangements.

Weinfelden, 22nd August 1987