

A new embassy building in London

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SWISS HOLIDAYS FOR UNITED KINGDOM SWISS CHILDREN

The Foundation "Pro Juventute" in Zurich is again organizing a holiday for children of 7 – 15 years, of Swiss parentage who live in the United Kingdom, provided always that there is a sufficient number of participants.

As usual these holidays will start at the best and most attractive time to enjoy Switzerland, i.e. towards the end of July, and are scheduled to last six weeks according to arrangements made by "Pro Juventute".

As regards board and lodging in Switzerland, "Pro Juventute" offers various schemes, such as:

- (a) Board and lodging at reduced prices of about 14/- to 24/- per day in a recognized children's home, selected by "Pro Juventute", available for children up to 12 years of age, only for children holding Swiss passports.
- (b) A stay of about 4 weeks in various holiday camps, available for children of about 12–15 years of age, only for children holding Swiss passports.
- (c) Free board and lodging with Swiss families for a limited number of children whose parents are unable to pay either the whole or part of the cost. Only children holding Swiss passports can be considered under this scheme.
- (d) Children who are in the happy position of holding a written invitation from relations or friends in Switzerland are welcome to join the party for the journey both ways.

Parents who are not able to pay the whole of the cost, which is kept as low as possible, are entreated most earnestly to contribute as much as they possibly can in order to reduce the strain on the funds of the Benevolent Societies and "Pro Juventute".

In cases where parents would value such holidays for their youngsters but are not in a position to defray the cost of the journey, the Swiss Benevolent Societies would endeavour to provide the necessary funds. This should be stated in the application.

It is expected that many Swiss parents in the United Kingdom will gladly avail themselves of this opportunity of enabling their children to enjoy a healthy and happy holiday in the most pleasant surroundings and scenery of our homeland.

Applications should be sent in writing at the latest by 25th March to:

- (a) in the London Consular District: Mrs. B. Kaluza, 152 West Hill, London S.W.15;
- (b) in the Manchester Consular District: Swiss Consulate, 56 Spring Gardens, Manchester 2.

The parents will then be supplied with all relevant information.

* * *

Mrs. Kaluza would be prepared to organise party travel to Switzerland also during the Easter holiday, provided enough children applied. This would, of course, only be for children who are visiting relations in Switzerland, and has nothing to do with the "Pro Juventute" scheme. But Mrs. Kaluza's kind offer would allow reduced fares, and the children would be accompanied. Anybody interested should apply immediately.

A NEW EMBASSY BUILDING IN LONDON

The Federal Council published a message to Parliament early in December asking for a credit of 11.7 million francs for a new Embassy building in London. The National Council and the Council of States have been asked to deal with this in the March Session, as an immediate start on the building project will be more favourable as regards cost.

Since 1932, the Confederation has been the owner of the three joint premises, 21 Bryanston Square and 16/18 Montagu Place. This includes ownership of ground and buildings.

The premises were large enough to house the residence and to accommodate 25 to 28 members of diplomatic and consular staff. During the war, owing to additional duties representing belligerent nations in other countries, the personnel had to be increased to 85. The residential part was taken over as office accommodation, and the Ambassador and his family had to live at an hotel (Dorchester Hotel). Later the former Japanese Embassy (in Duke Street) was used for some additional offices. In 1954, the residence was moved back to Bryanston Square, and an additional building in Mantagu Place was acquired for the Chancellery.

In the message to Parliament, the Federal Council points out that the old-fashioned premises and the rambling, often makeshift offices, create an impression of poverty "which is not worthy of our official representation". In addition, they make rational management extremely difficult and impede efficiency. Efforts to find suitable new premises have not been successful.

In spring 1961, the Embassy was able to acquire the neighbouring site, and a year later, Parliament granted the necessary credit of nearly three-quarters of a million francs.

After carefully studying the whole situation, it was decided to demolish the present houses and construct a new Embassy. As building regulations are complicated in England, it was considered advisable to employ a British architect. Three projects were submitted, and the London firm of T. P. Bennett & Son has been entrusted with the task.

Residence and Chancellery will be separated. Most of the offices will be in Montagu Place, and the residence will face Bryanston Square. The new building will have four floors above and two below ground. Steel and concrete and bricks will be used for the structure, and modern technical installations are planned. On the ground floor of the Chancellery, there will be a large hall with access to the offices mostly in demand. More offices will be on the upper floors which will include a staff canteen. A conference room will be situated on the ground floor of the residence. The first floor will house reception rooms, whereas the upper floors will be used for residential, guest and domestic staff rooms. The fourth floor of the whole building will be turned into staff flats and form a reserve of dwelling and office accommodation.

The original project in 1962 had been for 8 million francs. The new estimate is based on present prices and wages. The new plans are for a four — and not a three — storey building, and there will be plenty of storage space and facilities for car parking.

As regards furnishing, the present contents will be used and, if necessary, complemented with new furniture.

During re-building, the residence and offices will be housed in suitable temporary premises elsewhere.

[A.T.S.]