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The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED IN 1919 BY PAUL F. BOEHRINGER.

The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

Advisory Council: R. J. KELLER (Chairman), GOTTFRIED KELLER (Vice-Chairman), G. BODMER (Press Attaché Swiss Embassy), O. F. BOEHRINGER, J. EUSEBIO, A. KUNZ, C. NATER, R. M. SUESS, G. E. SUTER.

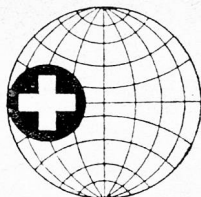
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"FIFTH SWITZERLAND"



With the acceptance by the Swiss electorate of the Constitutional Article for the Swiss abroad, the problem of supplying the *Auslandschweizer* with suitable and comprehensive information on happenings at home has become more acute. On the other hand, in order to reach the aims for which the Article has given a basis, it is also necessary to have more thorough information of the Swiss at home on their compatriots abroad. In order to find out the opinions and ideas of the Swiss communities outside Helvetia, the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne sent out an extensive questionnaire. Roughly 1,000 answers were received, including about 80 group answers, i.e. replies which had been worked out by societies. In addition, a large number of accompanying letters were used in evaluating the answers. Considering the size of the various communities, the interest was keenest in Australia, in the Near East, the Middle East and Africa. 50 answers (including 2 group replies) were received from the Swiss in Great Britain, which put them in third place in Europe and fourth in the world. The largest number was sent in by France (which also has the biggest Swiss population of some 90,000 Swiss), followed by Australia and Germany. It is significant that by far the highest number of group answers (11) came from Italy where the Swiss Community is extremely well organised.

Amongst the sources of information from home, the radio (shortwave transmitter Schwarzenburg) and the "Echo", periodical published by the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, as well as some daily Swiss papers play an important part. Not all colonies have their own papers or regular consular bulletins, but where they are available, they are of considerable importance. Only about one-third of the replies contained a definite yes to the question if the information available was sufficient to give an exhaustive picture of happenings at home and of problems affecting Switzerland. The general opinion is that the present means available should be extended and improved, although from some quarters wishes for various new media were expressed. More English has been asked for, also air-mail delivery. The question should information be sent free of charge or at a subscription rate was answered heavily in favour of the latter. The "Echo" is acceptable in its present form, though one of the desiderata is a column in which the Swiss abroad are given a chance of discussing problems affecting them.

INFORMATION

As regards information about "Fifth Switzerland" to Switzerland, it is surprising to learn that this is much more emphatically asked for than improved information to the Swiss abroad.

The organisers of the enquiry are fully aware that the Swiss abroad are as varied as those inside Switzerland, and that the replies in the different countries were subject to many moods, trends and conditions; generally, however, it is interesting to note that the answers came from the better educated and intelligent strata of the colonies. This is also something which will have to be remembered, because large numbers of readers of the "Echo", for instance, who have not answered, would be distressed if the more popular items were to be dropped simply because the questionnaires did not consider them specially. On the other hand, it is the type of people who took the trouble to answer who are often in a position to play a weighty part in improving the image of Switzerland in their country of adoption.

In France, there was opposition to any new periodical in French sent from Switzerland, for fear that it would be in competition to their own colony newspapers. A similar objection was raised by the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" in Great Britain as regards any news sheet from Switzerland in English. The idea has been formulated at the Secretariat in Berne (by the Editor of the "Echo" Dr. Sylvia Arnold who was mainly responsible for the whole enquiry) whether the local colony papers in English, French, Spanish and Italian could not cooperate with the "Echo" as regards material in their respective languages. The question if and in which way Embassies and Consulates can contribute to better information, will also have to be studied. As regards information to Switzerland, this could best be coordinated by some kind of press service. But there, too, the question of finance will have to be studied.

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During the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano at the end of August, a special meeting was devoted to this question of information. Members of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad had received documentation beforehand, consisting mainly of an extremely well-presented report on the evaluation of the answers to the questionnaire. Dr. Arnold had compiled the 27 pages of data plus 5 pages of statistical tables. And it was she who gave an interesting address to the meeting in Lugano. An animated dis-

cussion followed which clearly showed the divergence of opinions and ideas. Obviously, it is impossible to bring to the same common denominator the wishes of the man who has been in San Francisco for 61 years, the young technician who has only just arrived in North Africa and the man who lives just outside Switzerland's boundaries and runs his Swiss society with the same efficiency as his business. Some of the delegates told of their difficulties and/or successes with their own bulletins or periodicals. A representative of the Church in Switzerland expressed his appreciation of any Swiss Church news published. The delegate for Great Britain made two suggestions, one was to study the idea of creating panels of speakers in the colonies, available to talk about Switzerland to Swiss and above all to foreign groups. The second plea was for handy and concise booklets on specific subjects, police, local government, status of women, etc. (similar to those issued by H.M. Stationery Office), rather than academic essays which are used at the moment.

There is a saying that the mills of Berne grind slowly, and one, much older and perhaps much more apt, that all good things take time to grow. We cannot expect to get the perfect solution to this complex problem. But the work already done at the Secretariat in Berne shows that they are wide awake and will study the many suggestions and wishes most carefully.

As a first step, a working party has been set up by the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, consisting mainly of experts on information (Press and Radio, etc.), who are to study all aspects of the whole matter.

But in order to have a lively two-way traffic of information, we Swiss abroad must play our part, too. As a first effort in this country, we should like to suggest that any information and news of general interest to the Swiss community should be sent to the "Swiss Observer". Furthermore, that material of interest to the Swiss at home, for instance important achievements of Swiss individuals or undertakings, the way certain happenings or measures taken in Switzerland affect Swiss citizens in this country or the Swiss image, certain reactions and considered opinions expressed by nationals of the hostess country, etc., should be made known to the delegates on the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, who are the Colony's representatives, (c/o Embassy, Consulate, "Swiss Observer" or c/o the nearest Swiss society). Maybe there will be a press service or some other clearing house for information one day, but this, at least, would be a beginning.

MM

BRAIN DRAIN IN SWITZERLAND **ETH's President with the Anglo-Swiss Society** **Dorchester Hotel, W.1, 16th October 1967**

The Committee of the Anglo-Swiss Society have made a point of securing interesting speakers, and this practice has been continued this season. After having had such eminent speakers last year as Dr. Victor Umbricht, Dr. Michael Ward, the former Swiss Ambassador Monsieur de Fischer (who spoke on "The Swiss in Great Britain throughout the Ages"), and Prof. Alexander von Muralt, President of the Swiss National Research Council, the speaker at the first Dinner this autumn was the President of the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Dr. Jakob Burckhardt. The President of the Society, the Earl of Selkirk, was in the chair. At the same time, it was also an opportunity for the Society to welcome the new Swiss Ambassador and Madame Olivier Long. Other guests included the Countess of Selkirk and Madame Burckhardt,

the Earl and Countess of Bessborough, Viscount and Viscountess Caldecote, Lord and Lady Jackson of Burnley, Sir Arnold and Lady Lunn, Mr. Gerard Fowler, M.P., Prof. and Mrs. P. M. S. Blackett and Dr. and Mrs. F. E. Jones.

The speaker said that the total number of Swiss engineers and scientists living in the United States was about 2,500. Estimates were that 20% of the young elite from Switzerland's qualified manpower joined the brain drain. Before the Jones Report was published the previous week, Dr. Burckhardt had been under the impression that Switzerland was the greatest exporter of qualified manpower to America.

He compared the brain drain of 1967 with the blood drain of the Middle Ages when the sons of Swiss peasants and squires would go abroad as foreign mercenaries. They were hired by the Bourbons, the Hapsburgs, the Prussians and English Kings. The export of blood was now prohibited by law, but not so the drain of brains.

Dr. Burckhardt said that the Swiss machinery, chemical and building industries were having tremendous difficulty in finding new engineers. In some cases, over 50% of engineering staffs were composed of foreign nationals.

The reasons Dr. Burckhardt gave for the migration of talented men to the United States was the attraction and astonishing sweep of American Science and Development. He demonstrated this by a limerick:

"There were 50 scholars from Berne
Whose rather peculiar concern
Was learning to fly by balloon
Via Florida right to the moon.
Do you think they will ever return?"

He suggested that some of the angry young scientists wanted to free themselves from a university system inspired by the German Humboldt, in which they suffered under suffocating tyranny of the head of their institute, who they were inclined to consider jealous of their brilliance.

They were also attracted by the generosity in financing and procuring of research facilities and equipment, and by personal advantages such as pleasant and cheap housing, an easy-going social life, and an enhanced sense of status.

Dr. Burckhardt said that the big science projects such as the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva were examples of cooperation that could keep brilliant men in Europe, and he called for cooperation in more big science projects of that kind.

This was endorsed by Prof. Blackett, President of the Royal Society. He thought that cooperation of this nature was part of the solution of the problem. Up to the 'thirties, Europe was the home of pure science, and 90% of the Nobel prize winners came from Europe. As an aside he gave the definition of pure science, viz. to satisfy one's natural curiosity at the expense of the Government (a definition which came from an East German radio station).

Prof. Blackett expressed hope that it would be possible to recreate a nucleus of talent as before 1930, but that it hinged on Government expenditure, all said and done.

(We are indebted to "The Times" for the resumé of Dr. Burckhardt's address.)

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Membership to the Anglo-Swiss Society is open to all friends of Switzerland. Application for membership should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Anglo-Swiss Society, 77 Gloucester Place, London W.1. (£1 per annum.)