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SITUATION NORMAL - A WOMAN SPEAKS

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

One of Switzerland's leading women was invited to speak to the Anglo-Swiss Society in early November. Mrs. Lise Girardin, three times Mayor of Geneva and first woman member of the Council of States, was invited to speak at the Society's Dinner at the Portman Hotel on November 6th to mark the International Women's Year.

The speaker, who had been unfortunate enough to lose her parliamentary seat at the recent federal elections, made a clear exposé. before a well-attended gathering, of the situation of women in Switzerland today.

She remarked that women had different communal and cantonal rights in various parts of Switzerland. On the federal level, they have enjoyed the same rights as their menfolk for several years and the proportion of female MPs (12 out of 200 in the National Council, or about 6 per cent) was the same as in other countries, Britain among them.

Inequality was more apparent in the field of civil rights. For example, a foreign woman that married a Swiss had a right to Swiss nationality and had no problem in finding work in the country. When a Swiss woman married a foreigner, the latter was not even entitled to a

resident's permit, let alone a Swiss passport.

Swiss women were also victims of discrimination in marriage. The 1911 law on marriage, still valid today but hardly implemented, reflected a patriarchal outlook to society and allowed a husband to dispose of his wife's property. A wife was supposed to support her husband and her family and may not take up outside employment without her husband's consent.

Present procedures on abortion varied greatly from canton to canton. Mrs. Girardin said that it was far easier for a woman to get an abortion in liberal Geneva than in conservative and Catholic

ACROW - BEST HALF-YEAR RESULTS EVER WITH RECORD EXPORTS

The Group results, unaudited, for the six months to 30th September, 1975, with comparative figures for the previous year, are as follows:-



W. A. de Vigier
Chairman - ACROW GROUP

	1974	1975		
Turnover	£38,327,000	£51,126,000	up	33.4%
Exports	£15,061,000	£28,091,000	up	86.5%
Profit before taxation	£ 2,310,000	£ 3,003,000	up	30.0%
Taxation	£ 1,357,000	£ 1,682,000	up	23.9%
Profit after taxation	£ 953,000	£ 1,321,000	up	38.6%
Interim dividend	7%	8%	up	14.3%

INTERIM DIVIDEND

The Directors have declared an interim dividend of 8% (last year 7%). Dividend warrants will be posted on 6th April, 1976, to shareholders on the register at the close of business on 5th March, 1976.

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

The Chairman, Mr. W. A. de Vigier, states that for the first time sales in the first half have topped the £50,000,000 mark. The Group will now be proceeding with the modernisation and extension of five U.K. factories to increase capacity to meet the challenge of the 1980s.



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Fribourg. The debate on a new federal law was still being pursued and a popular initiative for total freedom in this domain was in conflict with the "time limit solution" proposed by the government.

Another area where women's rights have yet to be vindicated was work. Women have now obtained a guaranteed wage while absent from work during pregnancy. But although Switzerland has endorsed the "equal pay for equal work" principle, there is still a gap between theory and practice. In public administration, women get the same pay but far lower chances for promotion. The result is that, in the public and private sectors, women are in the main paid 30 per cent less than men.

Mrs. Girardin stressed, however, that women should not only be concerned with matters concerning them specifically. They should get involved in all the major and wider issues affecting the nation. The speaker noted that women now had a chance to be heard at the highest level. She said that women MPs, benefiting from their small number in Parliament, were always listened to with great attention when they rose to speak during debates.

Referring to the institutional problems of Switzerland, Mrs. Girardin suggested that there might be an "excess of democracy" and noted that a great many women never took the trouble to vote, despite their new-won rights. She nevertheless predicted that women would in future come in greater numbers to the polls.

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN SKI!

The Scandinavian tourist industry has launched a drive to lure the Swiss away from their own ski slopes.

The Norwegian Tourist Office and SAS (Scandinavian Airlines) have announced a Christmas-to-March programme of eight-day Langlauf ski-ing holidays in Norway, with weekly flight departures from Zurich, Geneva and Basle.

Langlauf — cross-country ski-ing — is one of Europe's fastest-growing winter sports activities. It is less dangerous than downhill ski-ing, the equipment is less expensive, and relatively little or no instruction is needed. It is also an ideal sport for all members of the family.

Said Mr. Frank Nilsen, SAS District Manager in Geneva: "We Scandinavians can teach the Swiss nothing about downhill ski-ing. But when it comes to Langlauf, I think we can show them a trick or two.

"We launched the idea in France three years ago — and already this winter 2,000 Frenchmen have booked Langlauf holidays. If this success is repeated with the Swiss, the idea may be extended to other European markets as well."

Price for the eight-day arrangement is from Sw.Fr. 1,230 per person — including the return flight, full hotel board and accommodation, and the services of a qualified Norwegian ski instructor if needed.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

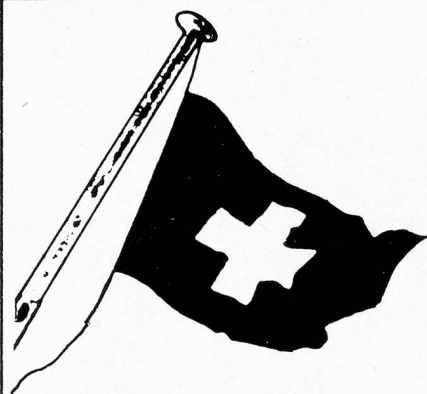
Going to Switzerland soon? Then don't forget to ask the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, London W1V 3HG (phone: 01-734 1921) for your copy of *Ancient Castles and Historic Mansions in Switzerland* and *Historical Inns and Castle Hotels in Switzerland*. They are both well worth having.

WGS

SOIREE FAMILIALE

A social evening open to all Swiss and their friends will be held at *John Southworth Community Centre, 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1, on 24th January, 1976. 7.30-8pm Cocktails at the Bar; Buffet-Dinner & Dance.* The function is organised by the Swiss Churches. No tickets are required but those who would like to partake should inform the Rev. U. Stefan (340-9740) or Father Bossard (222 2895) not later than 18th January in order to facilitate catering.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY:
Annual Dinner and Dance,
Dorchester Hotel, London, W1,
Saturday 31st January 1976.



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