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Training in Switzerland (2)

Not an easy decision

Go to Switzerland for training? Many young Swiss abroad and their parents are faced with that question. After this introductory article our series will describe in two instalments the Swiss education system and its requirements. The final part will consist of practical hints (finance, accommodation and addresses). As the series forms a self-contained whole, it would be advisable to keep the individual articles.

Is one's choice of occupation a decision for life? Until a few years ago the answer would have been an unhesitating «yes». But now, because of mobility and the rapid development of technology and requirements, it is no longer possible to say this without qualification. Today, too, a decision in favour of a particular occupation means the choice of direction and of a sound basic vocational training. However, the latter can be extended and supplemented, indeed altered.

In the choice of an occupation the abilities and interests of the young person should be the first consideration. The occupation's requirements and prospects and those of the sector concerned must also be taken into account.

In Switzerland?

A training in Switzerland: the desire and ideal of many. But ideal and reality do not always coincide. The picture which many young Swiss abroad and their parents have of Switzerland, its training system and its world of work is miles away from the reality of present-day Switzerland. Anyone who wants to avoid unpleasant surprises later would therefore do well to become thoroughly informed on the subject: one to two years before the proposed training period those wishing to train and their parents



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should get into touch with Swiss information offices, especially with AJAS (see box), or visit a vocational information centre when in Switzerland.

And after training?

Does the young Swiss want to return to his country of residence after training or to work in Switzerland? It definitely makes sense, in fact in some cases it is essential, for those who want to work in Switzerland to train there, because certain occupations can only be followed by holders of Swiss diplomas, and people trained in Switzerland are given

preference on the labour market. The position is not so clear-cut for young people who return abroad after training. Undoubtedly a Swiss training is highly regarded in many countries. But a training in Switzerland is adapted to the local economic, social and cultural circumstances. Whether it will prove to be the best thing in entirely different conditions abroad should be carefully considered beforehand. Furthermore, there are some occupations abroad, too, which are open only to persons with the qualifications of the country in question.

All these considerations show that, in the final analysis, a decision as to the best solution has to be made in each individual case.

Difficult «resettlement»

A training in Switzerland should first and foremost be what the young person himself wants, and not his parents. His «resettlement» in a country where the way of life, attitude to school and work, and the climate are often utterly different, combined with his separation from parents and friends, imposes tremendous mental and physical burdens and it is essential for him to be willing to stand on his own feet.

Educational demands, too, are made on the young person. So unless he has been successful at secondary school he should not think of training in Switzerland. The applicant must have a command of German, French or

Training scheme for young Swiss abroad (AJAS)

This series of articles was written in close collaboration with AJAS, an advisory body for young Swiss abroad who want to take a vocational training in Switzerland.

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Italian, although there are not many training opportunities in the Ticino. A knowledge of two of our national languages is often required (commercial training, middle school). Swiss-German certainly makes life easier in German-speaking Switzerland but is by no means sufficient.

These requirements are stringent. Before beginning their actual training, therefore, many of the young people will have to take an intensive language course lasting from three to nine months according to the extent of their previous knowledge. Language courses are offered almost exclusively by private schools in the larger towns. Language and other preparatory courses, like the necessary acclimatization period, can add considerably to the length of training in Switzerland. One thing is self-evident: the better the previous education, the shorter the preparation and, thus, the lower the costs.

(To be continued)

Service of the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

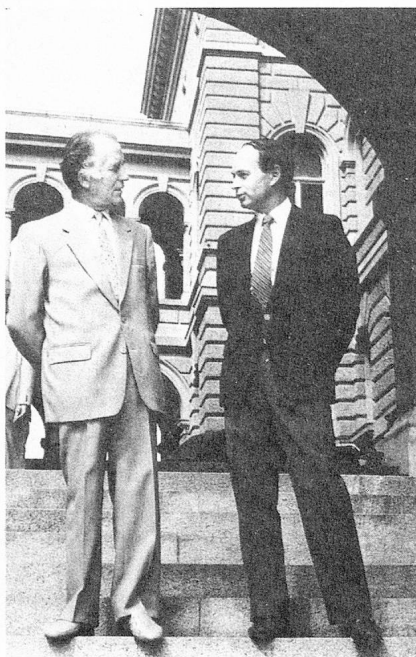
Votation of 28th September

Four times no

All four Federal submissions were rejected by the people in the referendum of 28th September. With 848,284 votes against, and 175,168 in favour, the voters turned down the **Culture Initiative**; likewise, to 537,686 noes and 440,088 ayes they rejected the **counter-proposal** formulated by the Federal Council and parliament. The **Apprenticeship Training Centres Initiative** was clearly rejected, with 1,162,019 votes against to 261,979 in favour. And with 884,991 «no» votes to 550,054 «yes's» the **Sugar Motion** also met with an unmistakable rebuff. The proportion of persons voting, as a percentage of the total electorate, was 34%.

Service of the Swiss Abroad

New Head



(Photo: Alexander Egger)

On 1st October 1986 Minister Walter Fetscherin succeeded Minister Max Leippert, who has retired, as the new Head of the Service of the Swiss Abroad. Minister Leippert is remembered warmly by many Swiss abroad as their initial point of contact with «official Switzerland». We thank him for his untiring commitment in the interests of the Fifth Switzerland and of a well-balanced policy on the Swiss abroad.

Within the framework of his diplomatic career Minister Fetscherin, Dr.iur., served in Warsaw, Moscow and Ottawa, then as Deputy Head of Political Division I and most recently as Executive Secretary of the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) Expert's Meeting on Human Contacts in Berne. We wish him a successful start in his new post.

Editorial Staff, «Swiss Review»

Advance Information:

The Solidarity Fund is going to conclude a collective agreement on sickness insurance with a sickness fund. This will enable Swiss abroad to obtain individual in-

surance on more favourable terms when returning to Switzerland or spending a holiday there. You will be given further details next year. *Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad, Gutenbergstrasse 6, 3011 Berne*

