

# "Auslandschweizer" in the government

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Parties when they propose members to the Government as well as prior to a reshuffle. Again we quote Peter Durrenmatt: "The responsibilities at the moment are not clear. The governmental parties which have no contact with each other, are glad to leave the decisions to the Federal Council which, in turn, acts in order to keep the interior peace and to cause the least friction and afterwards when the results are accordingly unsatisfactory, the Press of the governmental Parties revolts against the system". The writer concludes by saying that it is at this point that the will to reform should start. It should at long last become possible for the leaders of the various Parties in the Government to sit together and discuss such important problems as the election of Federal Councillors and the distribution of departments and to fix the responsibilities.

—The Swiss Observer

### "AUSLANDSCHWEIZER" IN THE GOVERNMENT

It may be interesting to recall that a number of Federal Councillors had at some time lived abroad and were in fact Auslandschweizer. The periodical of the Swiss abroad, "Echo", had an interesting survey in its last issue showing that the majority of the eighty men who have governed the Confederation since 1848, had spent some time abroad before being elected to such a high position. Already in the first collegium, there were not only men who had studied abroad, but two genuine Auslandschweizer: Friedrich Frey, born at Lindau, who worked in Paris, and Stefano Franscini who was educated in Milan where he was a teacher for a time. Federal Councillor Ruchonnet (Vaud) whose mother was English, spent part of his childhood in England and later worked in a London lawyer's office. One of the best examples is that of Emil Frey (Baselland) who worked on a farm in USA for many years, took part in the American War of Secession as captain and became the first Swiss ambassador in Washington from 1883 to 1888.

Many more examples are given in the said article in the "Echo", and it makes interesting reading to hear of how men gathered valuable experience abroad before reaching prominence at home. It is also significant that quite a number of French-speaking Federal Councillors had at one time studied in Germany or Vienna, so in our own time Councillors Pilet, Petitpierre and Bourgknecht. Our present members Federal Councillors Spuehler and Tschudi studied in Paris. It is not accidental that one of the greatest promoters of the Constitutional Article for the Swiss Abroad was the former Federal Councillor Wahlen. He had spent nearly two decades of his active life outside Switzerland, seven years in Canada and ten in Washington and Rome (FAO). This is a most incomplete reference to an interesting survey which illuminates the important fact, that to live and work abroad broadens the mind and enables men (and women) to study and absorb matters which at one time or another may help them to serve a wider community.