

Home affairs

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HOME AFFAIRS.

by MAX NEF.

The emigration of Swiss citizens to overseas countries, is once more on the increase. Up to the end of October 1952, already more than 3,000 such emigrants have left Switzerland. Statistics give separate figures for those Swiss citizens who are apt for military service and who go abroad for a lengthy period. In order to achieve the so-called emigration balance, it is necessary to deduct the number of returned emigrants from the figure for those who have emigrated. Thus, this year, we find that there is a surplus of more than 2,000 Swiss citizens, apt for military service, who have emigrated, not quite one-fifth of this number being without a profession.

Most of those emigrants who have a profession belong to the liberal or scientific professions, and almost as many come from the professional groups engaged in commerce and in administration. There are also a good many men from the metallurgical and machine-making industry. Far and away behind are to be found those whose jobs lie in agriculture and in the hotel industry, and then come small groups from practically all kinds of trades.

A good three-fifths of the emigrants who are apt for military service have chosen European countries for their new place of residence. In regard to those emigrants who have returned to their native soil, the proportion of those who had been in European countries amounts to more than three-quarters.

It is estimated that, at the present time, there are some 200,000 Swiss citizens who are living abroad, of whom about 120,000 are in European countries. In overseas countries there are possibly about 60,000, to which figure must be added some 20,000 Swiss citizens who possess foreign nationality, and therefore, dual nationality. Most of these latter, live in America.

What is very encouraging is the fact that, since the war, the Swiss colonies in overseas countries have increased to a considerable extent. This is due largely to active co-operation on the part of the Confederation. During those years when there was an economic crisis, and more especially during the war, a marked shrinkage occurred in regard to various of our colonies. What was lacking was a new young generation, which could only be obtained through the migration towards them of young people from the homeland.

Our world-experienced merchants form the greater portion of the Swiss colonies abroad. They find a natural support among the old-established Swiss firms, which as pillars for Swiss foreign trade, primarily in respect of exports, but also in part, in that of imports, form an indispensable condition for success. They, in turn, are joined by the members of the technical professions, such as engineers, geologists, geometers, specialists for construction work and chemists. Owing to the high standard of their technical training, these Swiss citizens abroad enjoy a deserved esteem, which contributes towards keeping up and promoting the good reputation which Switzerland possesses abroad. The same applies to those engaged in the liberal professions and in scientific research work.

A short time ago, someone who is very well acquainted with our fellow-countrymen abroad, compared them to a sign-board for their home-land, which serves as a permanent and living guarantee for the quality of Swiss work. It is valuable because in the

present muddled state which exists in the international relations of neighbourly peoples, both abroad and overseas, it does not allow the name of our small neutral country, with its highly developed production of high-quality goods, to fall into oblivion.

The carrying out of such a fine task can, however, only be achieved successfully if contact between Home and the Swiss Colonies abroad is systematically cultivated, if the people within the colony stick firmly together, and, finally, if the technical training of the future emigrant is carefully and systematically directed towards the task he has before him.

A great deal in this direction has been undertaken, since the end of the war, not only by private initiative, but also by the authorities and public offices. An important and interesting extension of Swiss connection with other countries has occurred through our country's collaboration in the so-called technical aid rendered by the UNESCO to under-developed countries. Only a few days ago, measures which have been taken in this direction by the Swiss Government, were made known to the public.

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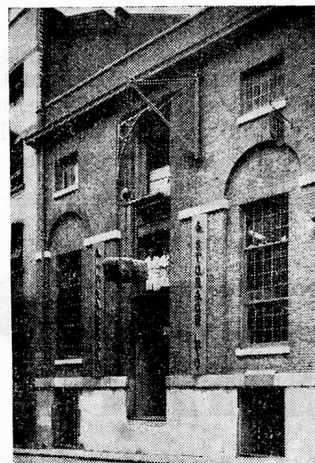
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