

Departure of Dr. A. Lindt

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DEPARTURE OF Dr. A. R. LINDT.

August R. Lindt of the Swiss Legation will soon be leaving this country to take up a new post as the official Swiss observer attached to the United Nations in New York. At the same time he will remain the Swiss representative to UNICEF, — what a horrible word for such a humane and useful organisation! —, the United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund. The Swiss Colony in London, which during the last six years has got so used to August Lindt that he seemed to have become an integral part of it, will, no doubt wish to congratulate him on his appointment, which incidentally also entails advancement and promotion in his career.

August R. Lindt, who was born in Berne in 1905, is not what the diplomatic jargon terms as "de carrière." After his studies at the universities of Berne and Geneva, he first tried his hand for a relatively short while at banking. But very soon he turned to journalism and quickly made a name for himself as roving correspondent for various well-known European and American newspapers. He travelled in such countries as Manchuria, Palestine, Jordan, West Africa, North Africa, Rumania. With his book "In the saddle through Mandschukuo", which proved a great success, he became internationally known. His description, in the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", of the heroic stand of the Finnish people and army against the Soviet onslaught during the first Soviet-Finnish winter war, was a masterpiece of descriptive journalism which roused an enormous wave of sympathy and admiration for the Finns wherever it was read. Lindt's style in writing matches his style in speaking: short, to the point, decisive, sometimes nearly clipped. For the presentation of the Finnish epic, which I remember reading with emotion, it proved just right.

During the war 1939-45 Lindt, a simple soldier, together with a handfull of patriotic friends of his — among them the present Editor-in-Chief of the "Basler Nachrichten", — did a very important, if unobtrusive, job on the Swiss home front. He belonged to "Heer und Haus" and in that capacity talked to groups of soldiers and civilians alike, keeping up and kindling anew, where this was necessary, the will to resist. During the dark days of Hitler's sweeping victories all over Europe, this was no mean job. It needed a strong personality and a still stronger faith in the final triumph of right over might. It needed tact as well as persuasive power to administer those sometimes badly wanted "injections of concrete." How many people Lindt did persuade, how many doubters he did put back on the right road, will never be known: but the more spectacular the German successes in the field were, the more important Lindt's work became in a different field.

After the war Lindt went to Germany, first on a special mission of the "Don Suisse", then for roughly a year as special delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In November 1946 he became attached to the Swiss Legation in London, first, succeeding Dr. Eric Kessler, as Press Attaché, later with the rank of a Counsellor of Legation. In 1948 he became Switzerland's representative on the Executive Board of UNICEF, then in 1951 and 1952 Chairman of the Program Committee. Now, during the current year, he is the Executive Board's chairman, which

constitutes a distinction both for his — our — country, and for himself.

For one yet young in body and mind, Lindt has had a remarkable career. There is no knowing where it will end one day. His many British and Swiss friends in London will miss him, while wishing him all possible success and satisfaction in its next stage. During his stay in London he has collaborated actively with various Swiss societies and institutions; for one period he served as a member of the Executive Council of the N.S.H. During the latter part of his stay at the Legation in London he concentrated on his work as political counsellor, leaving — rightly — the corps of London correspondents of Swiss newspapers to take care of themselves; he was, however, responsible for a number of visits of British journalists to Switzerland, knowing, of course, that no Press Attaché could put the case of Switzerland as convincingly as Switzerland herself. If, after his departure, the office of Press Attaché is not formally re-staffed, this does not matter greatly, as there are other gifted men at Montagu Place who are amply qualified to keep the flag flying and to look, if need be, after the good name of our country. Lindt has now become, I understand, definitely "established" in the Swiss Foreign Service. This means that a good man is won for the Service and lost for the Press. How true it is that "le journalisme mène à tout, pourvu qu'on en sorte."

Here, then, are the best wishes from one who, so far, is still in it.

Gottfried Keller.

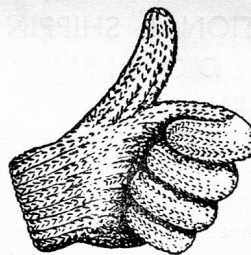
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