

Journée des Suisses à l'étranger and our colony

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JOURNEE DES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER AND OUR COLONY

The meeting called together by the London Group of the N.S.H. on June 28th at the Schweizerbund to discuss questions of interest to our Colony in preparation for the Auslandschweizertagung, to be held in Zürich on August 20/21, was well attended. Amongst those present were Monsieur Bernath and other members of the Legation, as well as the presidents of several other Swiss societies in London, the chairman of the Presidents' Assembly and, on behalf of the West-Riding Swiss Club, Miss Inebnit. The discussion, which was introduced and presided over by Dr. Egli, yielded valuable suggestions and directives to those attending the Zürich Conference.

The most important result of the discussion was a preponderance of opinion in opposition to the new Federal draft bill to revise the existing military tax. While welcoming the proposed abolition of the antiquated tax on expectations and on capital and other improvements, it was held that the doubling of the rate on income made matters worse again. There were strong pleas that no possibility to make it easier for us to bring up our children as Swiss, though born here, should be neglected. The exemption of the Swiss abroad or at least the second generation from military tax would remove not only an old bone of contention but a serious handicap in retaining their attachment to the home-country, untroubled by a tax whose yield hardly covers the cost of collection. Furthermore the legality of its collection abroad does not seem to be above suspicion. For these reasons the majority view

turned against the acceptance of the military tax for the Swiss abroad on grounds of patriotic principle hitherto voiced from our Colony, which positive attitude only three of those present still wished to maintain.

Several speakers pleaded for a renewal of our Colony's appeal to all firms in Switzerland to use all opportunities to employ Swiss representatives and personnel abroad in their own best long-term interest as well as that of our Colonies. Another insistent demand remains that easier conditions should be offered to the Swiss abroad for joining the Old Age Insurance scheme. It was also agreed that a demand should be voiced for increased possibilities for members of our Colony to transfer current savings to the home-country, which right is at present restricted to new arrivals from Switzerland. Generally speaking it was felt that people in the home-country do not always show enough understanding for the needs and interests of the Swiss abroad, nor enough appreciation of the value and importance of the Colonies for Switzerland. All functionaries, directors and the higher ranks of employees should be required to spend two or three years abroad as a condition for further advancement.

Any member of our Colony may still inscribe themselves to attend the conference in Zürich as individual members or be accredited as official representatives of one of our societies, either directly at the Auslandschweizersekretariat, Wallgasse 2, Bern or through the President of the N.S.H., London Group, Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

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