

Journée des Suisses à l'étranger

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JOURNEE DES SUISSES A L'ETRANGER.

This year's conference of the Swiss abroad, organised annually by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in Switzerland and the Secrétariat pour les Suisses à l'Etranger, was held at Zürich on August 20/21. It proved a tremendous success. It was the first time since the "Landi" in 1939 that Zürich was chosen as the place of venue. The 400 participants were given a most generous and warmhearted welcome by the authorities of the Canton and town of Zürich as well as the ancient Guilds of this sparkling city.

Our Colony was represented this time somewhat more strongly than in some former years by: Mme. G. Davidson (Liverpool), Dr. H. W. Egli, Miss A. Gretener, Mr. J. Huber, Mme. J. Inebnit and Mlle. J. Inebnit (Leeds), A. Kuebler (Manchester), N. Naef (Bradford), Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Suter, and Miss M. Wolfer.

As a most pleasant overture to the conference the Guilds had invited all and sundry to a dinner in their various "Zunft Häuser". They were vying with each other as hosts to their compatriots from abroad. After the meal speeches were made in the traditional form while the golden and silver "Humpen" full of exquisite wine were circulated.

The work of the conference was this time concentrated in one day. In a general debate lasting from 9 to 1 o'clock delegates from various countries voiced the views and wishes of their colonies in the presence of representatives of all interested departments of the Swiss Government. Much time was again devoted to the question of the military tax, which has been much revived by the publication of the first Government proposals for the longed-for reform of this tax. While the tax on property and prospective inheritance is to be dropped under this draft bill the charge on the income is to be doubled after increased

taxfree allowances. This doubling of the tax with an extension of liability up to 60 years was much criticised by most speakers, many of whom pleaded for freeing the Swiss abroad totally from this tax. This was the point of view advocated also by Dr. Egli based on a discussion of the question at a recent Open Meeting of the N.S.H. in London at which the Presidents of several other Societies of our colony were present. It is hoped that the strong arguments brought forward against the tax on the ground of the existing doubts about its legal correctness as well as especially on behalf of the second generation of the Swiss abroad may be given due consideration in redrafting the bill.

The question of compensation for war damage suffered by our compatriots in Germany, Austria and other countries where no official compensation was forthcoming has entered into a phase of quiet negotiation and discussion between the interested bodies. The suggestion of forming a "Fond de Solidarité" amongst the Swiss abroad to provide against future calamities on the other hand is gaining much sympathy in all quarters and in various colonies although there are grave doubts as to the practicability of such a scheme as elaborated by a special committee in the course of the last few years. The basic idea of mutual self-help amongst the colonies in conjunction with contributions also from Switzerland is so natural that the proposals deserve at least most careful examination before deciding for or against it. Regarding the perennial problem of the maintenance and rejuvenation of the Swiss colonies abroad many suggestions were forthcoming from various colonies. Dr. Egli reminded the conference that the Assembly of Presidents of the Societies in our colony has several years back formulated the most essential request to all Swiss firms to employ as many Swiss as possible in their representation and branches abroad. This appeal has hardly produced any visible result although it was much publicised in Swiss newspapers at the



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RECITAL DE PIANO par notre jeune compatriote Mlle. HEDY SALQUIN
(1er Prix du Conservatoire de Paris)

Hedy Salquin interprêtera entre autre les oeuvres des compositeurs suisses :

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time when it was issued from London. Dr. Egli again pleaded for improved conditions for the participation of the Swiss abroad in the old age insurance as well as for improved facilities of transferring savings to the home country from current earnings. Little hope was held up for any progress in these directions, although much sympathy with our requirements was expressed at the conference. The suggestion that a certain period of living abroad should be made obligatory for officials and business employees as a condition for advancement was much applauded. As usual the discussion at the Journée received considerable publicity in the Swiss press. Although no immediately tangible results can be pointed to yet the participants felt that their expressed views and suggestions will not remain unremembered.

Towards evening the conference members and friends were invited by the Presidents of the City and Canton of Zürich to the Muraltengut for Cocktails. Thereafter the company went by boat to the Au where an evening's entertainment with much singing and dancing was provided by the N.S.H. Group of Zürich.

On Sunday the participants of the conference went by special train to the Wehrmannsdenkmal on the Forch where Federal Councillor Lepori addressed the gathering in all national languages with moving sincerity. As former President of the oldest group of the N.S.H. outside Switzerland our Mr. A. F. Suter spoke on behalf of the Swiss abroad and presented a golden "Vreneli" as a first contribution to

the future Fond de Solidarité. This imaginative gesture was warmly applauded. After lunch on the Wasberg we were given the unique pleasure of an "Alpuzug" staged especially for us by peasant families from Schwyz. They came with everything to a proper Alpuzug: Cows, goats, lambs, chickens, beds and cots, all the cheese and butter-making implements, etc., etc. This delightful spectacle amidst the glorious views from the Wasberg across the Greifensee in brightest sunlight will assuredly be remembered by all those present with greatest sense of pleasure, pride and gratitude. *E.*

Nouvelle Société Helvétique and Anglo-Swiss Society

OPEN MEETING

Tuesday, October 18th, 1955, at 7 p.m.

Monsieur ARMIN DAENIKER
Swiss Minister

will speak in English on:

"SWISS EXPERIENCE IN ACTIVE NEUTRALITY"
as chief of the Swiss Delegation to the Neutral Nation
Commission for the repatriation of Prisoners of War
in Korea. (Films will be shown.)

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