

Pfarrer Hans Spoerri

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PFARRER HANS SPOERRI.

A Swiss, who settles down permanently in London and regularly attends the services and other activities of the Swiss Church here, will in the course of a few years come to recognize — and perhaps even get used to — two rather sad characteristics in its life. On the one hand he discovers new faces in the congregation almost every time he goes to church and gradually gets to know the newcomers, only to find after some months that they are getting ready to leave us again or that their places have already been taken by others who have in turn made London their temporary home. This very real problem of a largely "floating" congregation is not made any easier by the other peculiarity of our Church: the not quite so frequent, but still too numerous, changes of ministers and assistant ministers. Their wish to occupy a pulpit in Switzerland again sooner or later, and to follow the more conventional paths of their profession there, is always motivated by a variety of excellent reasons, spiritual and material, but it results in a lack of continuity here, which for the London Swiss has obvious disadvantages.

Such a turning-point has again been reached in the German-speaking congregation of our Church with the departure a few days ago of Pfarrer Hans Spoerri to take up the appointment in Rueschlikon to which he was elected early this year. Six years is by all standards a short span in the life of a church, but Mr. Spoerri has put his heart and soul into them, so that his period of office will always be remembered, both by those who had the privilege of listening to and working with him in his public or official functions as well as by the great numbers, young and old, whom he was able to help in eye to eye talks on their own personal problems and sorrows. A lot of a pastor's work goes on behind the scenes, bringing God's word to the sick and dying or to a soul in distress, but at times a sound word of commonsense is called for in other cases, and Pfarrer Spoerri has the knack of finding the right word in the right place. At less formal gatherings and outings, especially amongst the young, even his boyish laughter was like a tonic.

The central feature of his ministry, both in time and importance, was the opening service in March 1955 at St. Mary Woolnoth Church in the City, which — thanks largely to Mr. Spoerri's untiring endeavours and perseverance — had been made available to our congregation for Sunday services. At last we had a church of our own again and this at once made itself felt in larger attendances, but in due course St. Mary Woolnoth also became our home for our weekly prayer and discussion meetings, as well as for our Friday Lunch-hour services jointly with the French-speaking congregation of the Swiss Church and both the French and German Protestant Churches in London. With all these sister churches and particularly also with the Anglican Church of St. Mary Woolnoth, who gave us our new home, Mr. Spoerri created a real bond of fellowship, not only at ministerial but also at congregational level.

Soon after the geographical change-over our minister also suggested certain changes in the order of service on Sundays, which were gradually introduced and periodically reviewed, so that our lay members of

the Consistoire now have a fixed and important part in it.

The difficulties of the London Swiss to attend Sunday services in the City are well-known (if at times exaggerated), and for this reason Pfarrer Spoerri attempted to bring the Swiss Church to them by expanding the existing and introducing new district meetings during the week at regular intervals at various places in and around London, which serve a definite need and are generally well-attended.

Mr. Spoerri was hoping to be able to introduce his successor before leaving London, but the search has proved to be extremely difficult and prolonged, and although negotiations are now well advanced, no appointment has yet been made. The post of assistant minister (Vikar) too could only be filled temporarily for short periods after the departure of Mr. Furthmueller in Spring 1957, and during the last few months Mr. Spoerri has carried on single-handed, which naturally cast a heavy burden on him. Fraeulein Pfarrer Doris Voegelin, who was elected to the post of Vikarin by the Consistoire, has taken up her duties on 15th August; she has already made her mark in the life of our Church, especially as soon afterwards Pfarrer H. Spoerri was laid up for a fortnight as the result of an accident. For the next few months, until a permanent successor is found, Pfarrer Emil Spoerri — who has come to our rescue before — has kindly agreed, and has been appointed by the Consistoire, to act in place of Pfarrer Hans Spoerri; he has taken over a fortnight ago.

To Pfarrer Hans Spoerri and to his wife we express our sincere thanks for the devoted work which they have given to our Church and to the Swiss Colony in London and which, we believe, has been richly blessed. We wish them and their two children, who were born in London, God-speed and His blessing in their new sphere of activity in Rueschlikon. And even when they have settled down to the daily tasks in the "old country" again, they will certainly think at times of the London Swiss and their Church, and perhaps even be filled with a little nostalgia. . .

M.

SWISSAIR INTRODUCE DC-6A CARGOLINER ON NORTH ATLANTIC.

On 1st November 1958 Swissair will introduce their new Douglas DC-6A Cargoliner into service on the North Atlantic with twice-weekly flights over the route Switzerland-Manchester-New York.

The company is thus re-introducing the call at Manchester which was discontinued last year. Except for the first flight which will operate to a special schedule, services will leave Switzerland on Thursday evening and Sunday morning and Manchester on the same days at 22.25 and 11.35. In the reverse direction they leave New York at 22.00 on Tuesday and 23.55 on Friday, calling at Shannon. A stop may also be made eastbound at Manchester if required.

Swissair's DC-6A is equipped with two specially large loading doors for bulky cargo. The aircraft is fully pressurised and therefore particularly suitable for the transport of animals. Its cargo capacity is 10½ tons. It will be used exclusively for cargo services. The DC-6A Cargoliner will have the registration letters HB-IBB.