

A farewell to Gottfried Keller

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A FAREWELL TO GOTTFRIED KELLER



As Publisher of the "Swiss Observer", Honorary Secretary of its Advisory Council as well as a personal friend of many years standing I feel that I cannot possibly let Mr. and Mrs. Gottfried Keller's forthcoming departure from the United Kingdom pass unnoticed.

Gottfried Keller—Fred to his friends—has spent 38 years in this country, all of them as the London Representative of the Swiss News Agency and 35 of them in the additional capacity of London Editor of the Basle daily newspaper "Basler Nachrichten." He has twice held the responsible office of President of the Foreign Press Association: first during two difficult war years, and then during a stretch of five years after the conclusion of hostilities. On retiring from those arduous duties "back to pure journalism", as he was wont to say, he soon became active again in a totally different field; he founded and presided over a local Tennis Club in Hampstead, which has grown from an initial membership of 40 to over

300 today. Of that club he is still an active member as well as an honorary life member.

Fred is also an honorary life member of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, on the Executive Committee of which he has served for many years, most of them as Vice-President. During the whole of the Second World War he gave informative lectures to the N.S.H., which regularly drew large audiences in spite of air raids and in appreciation of which he was unanimously elected to honorary membership for life.

Fred Keller also served the Colony as a member of the Committee of the Anglo-Swiss Society during two years, as well as the Executive Council of the Swiss Hostel for Girls.

It is, however, in the Inner Councils of the "Swiss Observer" where Fred Keller has rendered such sterling service, that I got to know him and the working of his mind really well. From the days of the creation of the Advisory Council, soon after the war, up to a few weeks ago Fred has unstintingly given much of his time to "Swiss Observer" work. He has been one of the Council's most active and industrious members, having been entrusted—or should I say saddled?—with overall responsibility and control over editorial policy.

He has been its Vice-Chairman and during the last two years its Chairman, but more than that he has also been a lively contributor of articles which he partly signed with his own name and sometimes with a pen name. He has attended innumerable Council meetings and missed very few, if any. His contributions, also those behind the scenes—and those were many—were always constructive and precise, always positive and often characterised by courage of conviction. What, after deliberation, he saw as the right course he carried through. With a mixture of tact and firmness he has been able to overcome so very many difficulties.

Together with myself he has also acted as a negotiator when it became necessary to devolve certain financial responsibilities to a benefactor who has so kindly undertaken to underwrite the Colony paper's further existence. After his recent decision to retire from "Swiss Observer" work, the Advisory Council has, in order to express its gratitude to him, unanimously elected him to be an Hon. Vice-President. To this I would like to add my personal thanks and appreciation and wish him and his wife, Mrs. Gertrud Keller, many happy and carefree years in Switzerland. May continued good health be theirs and good fortune attend all their endeavours.

Fred will, I know, not be idle—this would just not be in his character

—, as he plans to write a book about some of the many interesting contacts he has made here and aspects of life in Great Britain.

In concluding this appreciation I would like to add that Fred has, to my knowledge, never once in his long and successful career misused any information entrusted to him confidentially or "off the record". Of this he can be very proud.

We shall miss you, Fred.

Oscar F. Boehringer

(continued from page 1)

no longer represents the overspill of an excess population which the country cannot feed or employ, but the transfer of a limited population embodying a wide range of professions. This quality emigration not only reflects Switzerland's present economic context. It also serves out trade interests and our international relations".

This assertion remains true today. The Federal Council is fully aware that each of you, whatever your station in life, contributes to the esteem in which your country is held in the world. The efforts undertaken by all of you as loyal guests in your country of residence and as ambassadors of your country of origin thus play an invaluable role for us in Switzerland.

Let us look at the relations between the Swiss abroad and their motherland. These relations have known deep changes throughout history. What, over the years, were their demands of their motherland? Fifty years ago, the main demand naturally related to financial aid. In one year, Switzerland spent 1.6 million francs in assisting its national victims of war. This was a considerable sum at the time. Another important request, which was at the centre of the first Assembly's debates, was for increased help to Swiss firms and promotional organisations abroad. This led to the Federal Council noting in its Annual Management Report the necessity of strengthening links between Swiss businessmen abroad and organisations at home. The growth of official contributions in the economic field was achieved thanks to the gradual extension of the Swiss diplomatic network. There are actually 155 consular regions and 85 embassies run with the help of economic specialists. This should not make us forget the role played by Swiss chambers of commerce in defending our economic interests. Our diplomatic representations have strengthened their co-operation with these institutions. The Confederation has also shown increasing interest in the various bodies set up by the Swiss abroad and it is partly thanks to her help that they have managed to continue their activities. I am