

Educational scholarship scheme for young Swiss abroad

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of the School with 36 years of service, and congratulated Mr. C. W. Makin, Vice-Principal, who was to succeed him. Mr. Jaccard finally thanked the Trustees, the members of the Council and other committees for the support they had given him during the past year, and particularly Mr. F. O. Hausermann, Chairman of the Education Committee. He also welcomed Miss Brigitte Maier, daughter of Mr. Richard Maier-Neff, Central President of the S.M.S.

Mr. A. Jaccard concluded his welcome address by offering a toast to the Guests and the Ladies.

All members rose up in a rumble of moving chairs and responded heartily to the President's proposal.

Next to speak was our Ambassador, Dr. A. Weitnauer. He extolled the importance of the S.M.S. as a meeting place between youth and the older generations. He stressed that it was essential not to lose contact with young people in the accelerating world of today, and noted the importance of both the Swiss Churches in London and the S.M.S. in this respect. His visit earlier in the week to the S.M.S. School at Fitzroy Square had, he said, left him with a "momentous impression".

Dr. Weitnauer then expressed another idea which had occurred to him in connection with the work of the S.M.S. It was that the source of power in Switzerland lay in the hands of men with a deep sense of duty. It was by performing their duty to society to the best of their ability that the Swiss had reached their position in the world, he said. The S.M.S. had contributed to this by forming countless men with responsibilities in Switzerland. In teaching them the English language, it was also dispensing a knowledge which was vital in the world today.

Dr. Weitnauer concluded by recalling that he was "doubly at home in London" because of his love for the British capital and because of the presence of a Swiss colony.

In his reply for the guests, Mr. Albert Kunz, General Manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office, related three anecdotes standing out among the innumerable experiences which a job like his must bring with it. The first was about a Swiss yodelling team coming from the Swiss backwoods which had been invited to sing at the BBC. When asked to sing only the first two verses of each song, as this would have presented more variety to the English listener, the leader of the choir energetically impressed on the Programme Manager that it was in the statutes of the choir never to cut a song short. (The delightful example of national punctiliousness produced loud laughter among Mr. Kunz's audience). The Programme Manager had no solution but to yield to the choir leader's demands. So the choir sang all of twenty interminable songs in the BBC's

West End Studio. Little did they know that the studio engineer had carefully switched them off at every second verse . . .

Mr. Kunz's second anecdote brought us back to the staging of a "Swiss Week" in the early fifties. The SNTO and the Legation, which staged the campaign in a joint effort, wanted to hang the flags of the 22 Cantons across Oxford Street. They required a set of six official authorisations. They obtained five of them. The sixth, coming from the highest level, was politely refused. At a luncheon with government officials, the Plenipotentiary Minister and Mr. Kunz were told that it was not possible to accede to their demands as this would entitle other less-well-liked nations to ask for the same privilege. Top British officials present at the meeting offered to hand the Legation's letter back and thus eliminate all record of its request.

Having sadly come to terms with this official opposition Mr. Kunz was no little surprised when several large West End stores rang up to ask for Swiss flags. It turned out that a high ranking official had obligingly contacted these businesses, asking them whether they would be interested in supporting the Swiss Week Campaign. So in the end, the shopping streets of London were decorated with more Swiss flags than the SNTO could have hoped for in its wildest dreams. When Mr. Kunz approached the helpful official to thank him, this person phlegmatically answered: "I don't know what you are talking about".

The last, and hilarious story, in Mr. Kunz's bag was that of an April Fool hoax. The BBC approached the SNTO one day for suggestions on a good 1st April spoof. After much brainstorming, the SNTO came up with the idea of a "spaghetti harvest". The idea was tested by hanging spaghetti in the trees of the parks of London, and research for an adequate "fruit" was carried out by applying straight to a spaghetti factory in Soho. The upshot of this careful preparation was a film presented on the BBC "Panorama" Programme on 1st April, presented with professional seriousness by Richard Dimpleby, about the "spaghetti harvest in Switzerland". It was a "scream" and made the headlines of the national press.

In most accurate detail, British viewers were shown overloaded spaghetti trees in the Tessin. They were told the hard facts of an excessive harvest; Spaghetti prices had crashed on the Spaghetti Exchange, spaghetti companies were in dire difficulty, spaghetti farmers were driven to leave their land, but Americans were at last given a chance to learn how to eat spaghetti. The film amused millions of viewers. The SNTO received only one letter of complaint—it came from the Association of Swiss Spaghetti Manufacturers . . .

With this story ended the first half of the evening. Tables and chairs were displaced to clear a dancing space. The band sounded its first flourish and the ballroom floor was quickly full with swirling dancers.

The evening lasted until midnight. One veteran S.M.S. member noted that fewer people were dancing than in previous years. The advancing age of most members, he said, had made them short of wind. After the final dance, we rallied round Mr. and Mrs. A. Jaccard and sang a glorious "Auld Lang Syne". Most patriotically, we sang the Swiss and the British National Anthems. The words of the latter were clearly better known by the attendance.

Mr. Jaccard, who at the same occasion last year had received a large landscape of the Jura as a gift from the S.M.S. for his forthcoming retirement, thanked us all for making the evening a success and bade us a safe return home. The evening was officially closed.

(PMB)

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR YOUNG SWISS ABROAD

This may be the right time of the year to remind our readers of the existence of the "Association pour la formation des jeunes Suisses à l'étranger", whose seat is at the Secretariat of Pro Juventute, 8 Seefeldstrasse, 8008 Zurich.

The aims of this Association, which is subsidised by the Federal Authorities, are not only to provide funds for young Swiss to be educated in Switzerland, but also to advise as to the method best suited to the applicant's abilities and background. Once the best training has been chosen, the "Ausbildungswerk" will plan the whole course of studies or training, as well as arrange for suitable lodgings. Where financial support is needed scholarships can be provided. In addition, the scheme aims at introducing young Swiss from abroad to their homeland by choosing suitable training centres, by fostering relations between the young student and young people in Switzerland and by arranging special meetings and functions at which the young Swiss from abroad will be able to get to know and love Switzerland. By so doing the Association hopes to make a useful contribution towards the rejuvenation of our Swiss colonies abroad. Founded in 1961, it is the joint concern of Pro Juventute, the "Aide aux Suisses" Foundation and the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. The services of the scheme are available to young Swiss between the age of 10 and 25, exceptionally also to older people.

Information and application forms may be obtained from the Swiss Embassy, 16-18 Montague Place, London W1H 2BQ.