

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1972)
Heft: 1643

Rubrik: London Swiss Philatelic Society

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION TO SWISS PEOPLE LIVING ABROAD, FOR 1st AUGUST, 1972

Dear Compatriots,

It is my great pleasure to convey to you the best wishes and greetings of the Federal Council on this, our National Day.

This year, the annual meeting of the Swiss Abroad is taking place for the 50th time, and for this reason the commission of the New Helvetic Society has endeavoured to give the gathering a particularly festive air. It is also certainly not by chance that Berne has been chosen as the meeting place. I hope that many Swiss citizens, men and women living abroad, will be able to take part in the congress, which will be accompanied by numerous cultural, musical, folkloristic, military, and sporting events. The subject of the discussions which will be held at the meeting is "The political rights and obligations of the Swiss abroad"; and the opinions of the people attending the congress will be of great value to the Federal Government.

As the Federal Government pointed out in its second report to parliament on policy guide lines for the 1971 to 1975 legislative period, the Swiss people face several very important decisions at the ballot box. It would be going into too much detail to list them all here. But I should like to pick out a few which could also be of importance for you. This year, in fact, the Swiss people will be called upon to vote on a popular initiative for increased arms' controls and a ban on arms exports. There will also be a ballot on a new constitutional basis to provide for the aged. Moreover, the Swiss people will have to express themselves, towards the end of this year, on an agreement to regulate our

relations with the European Economic Community; and at a later date, the question of Switzerland's entry into the United Nations Organisation is to be put before the electorate.

As you can see, participation demands a great deal of political awareness, knowledge and effort from our men and women. The importance of informing the Swiss abroad, who might also be able to exercise these political rights in the not too distant future, is therefore not to be underestimated. In consequence, Federal Authorities, in collaboration with the Commission for Swiss Abroad, have adopted new methods of information. More than half of all the Swiss abroad today are reached by a newly conceived, periodic information sheet which tells them of the most important happenings at home and in the Swiss communities abroad. The Confederation is sparing neither time nor effort—nor expense—to keep in regular contact with Swiss in foreign lands and to maintain their interest in their home country. In addition, the Swiss Shortwave Service, which broadcasts daily to the whole world about events in Switzerland, has also produced a new and more comprehensive means of information. In co-operation with the Secretariat for Swiss Abroad, free tape copies are being made available, each month, to Swiss associations and official representatives abroad of "Round Table Discussions", specially produced for this audience, and dealing with Switzerland's current problems. In this manner, it is also hoped to strengthen further the links between Swiss citizens abroad and their home land.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your families health and happiness for the future, and I thank you for the loyalty you continue to show to our country.

Nello Celio

President of the Confederation

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of this Society took place on Friday, 26th May, 1972 at their headquarters in Swiss House, Fitzroy Square, W.1. Due no doubt to the fact that this was the beginning of the traditional Spring Bank Holiday weekend the attendance proved to be rather disappointing. Nevertheless, the Society's President, Mr. W. Burren, extended a hearty welcome to all present and brought greetings and apologies for unavoidable absence from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Grunberg, and the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. M. Rothlisberger. Mr. Burren then proceeded to read his report on the activities of the Society during the past year, which in fact covered 15 months to the end of March 1972. He particularly referred to the two Annual Dinners at the Dorchester Hotel which took place during this period both of which had been a great success both socially and financially.

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Burren presented the accounts which showed a satisfactory surplus. He pointed out, however, that comparison with previous years was difficult because the Society benefitted from two raffles at the annual dinners as well as an extra auction. It was gratifying to note that due to a substantial increase in the sale of stamps through the Exchange club packets the resulting commission also showed a welcome increase over previous years and Mr. Burren took the opportunity of thanking Mrs. Paschoud for the great amount of work she has done during the period under review. Both the President's report and the accounts were duly adopted.

There followed the usual election of President and Committee and Mr. O. Grob kindly offered to act as Chairman pro tem. He first expressed his and the members' thanks to the out-

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going President and his Committee for the work done during the past year. As Mr. Burren had previously (reluctantly) agreed to serve one more year and the remaining committee members had also declared their willingness to continue in their respective offices, they were unanimously re-elected en bloc and with acclamation by all present.

The meeting ended with a lively auction, with Mr. E. M. Huber acting as auctioneer, which resulted in sales of almost £25, which in view of the small attendance was considered very satisfactory.

(EMH)

Changes at the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad: youth camp organiser resigns

Those who took part in the 1971 Hebden Bridge Landsgemeinde and recent Annual Assemblies of the Swiss Abroad know Mr. Tony Rihs, Editor of the "Weltschweizer" and leader of the regular youth camps organised by the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. In the last issue of the "Weltschweizer", Mr. Rihs takes leave of his readers after four years of enthusiastic service to the young Swiss abroad.

Before leaving a job which he has carried out with so much proficiency, Mr. Rihs, a former secondary school teacher, managed to realise two plans he had at heart: he made a film of the Youth Service which will doubtless be shown to Swiss people all over the world, and has sponsored the distribution of a certificate of citizenship. This keepsake will be handed by official Swiss representations abroad to all 20-year-old young Swiss. We wish Mr. Rihs every success in his new career.

The idea of air ticket reductions for pensioners

A reader from Blackpool wrote to us asking why Old Age Pensioners were not awarded reduced fares on air journeys to Switzerland. I asked this question to Mr. John Elliot, Public Relations Officer for Swissair in London.

He explained that Swissair, as a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) couldn't take the unilateral decision of cutting down its fares for a certain category of passengers. It had to fall in line with the other members of IATA, who would have to agree unanimously on

such a measure. Secondly, Swissair would have to obtain the agreement of the governments of those countries served by the routes with price reduction. For the Switzerland-Britain routes, the company would require the authorisation of the British Government.

Mr. Elliot said that the question of reducing fares for old people had occasionally been raised at IATA meetings but never discussed seriously. There are too many obstacles against their introduction, one being the vast variation in income of old people and another being the shifting definition of old age pensioners. Some people are pensioned at 60, others at 70. This also varies from country to country. Thus the idea of "pensioner" wouldn't be an adequate criteria to work on.

Compatriot awarded Freedom of the City of London

We should like to congratulate our compatriot Mr. J. Eusebio, who has recently been conferred the Freedom of the City of London. It is believed to be the first time that a Ticinese has been awarded such a distinction, a nice gesture after some 45 years foreign banking in the City, where Mr. Eusebio's father also served for about thirty years at "Diviani's" in Newgate Street. This restaurant had a famous "Coin Suisse" of which the "Swiss Observer's" founder, the late Paul Boehringer, was a founder member.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

A. Boog, 90

Mr. A. Boog, of 48 The Boulevard, Pevensey Bay, Sussex celebrated a great day on 22nd July, when he was 90 years old. We should like to congratulate him warmly and wish him and his family many more enjoyable years. May we include in our wishes Mrs. Boog, whose birthday will soon be celebrated. She will be 81 on 20th September.

Many of our readers remember Mr. Boog as President of the Union Helvetia in London. He came to this country in 1915 and worked in the catering trade all his life. He joined the Union Helvetia the next year and was Steward of the Club before becoming its President in 1945. He was at one time a member of the 1st August and Fete Suisse Committees, and also an enthusiastic gymnast.

DIAMOND WEDDING

Another proof of the longevity and vitality so often found among our compatriots of the London hotel trade was the Diamond Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. F. Delaloye, of 15 Bartholomew Villas, London N.W.5, which they celebrated on 27th July. We should like to wish them many happy returns for the future.

Other anniversaries

Other readers have just celebrated their birthdays or will celebrate them in the coming summer months: Mr. J. Zimmermann was 82 on 21st July and Monsieur l'Ambassadeur B. de Fischer (Berne) was 71 on the 22nd. Mr. J. Vogel was 91 on 28th July and Mr. V. Bataillard will also have celebrated his 91st birthday on 2nd August. He and his wife will have been married for 53 years on 11th August and we should like to congratulate them doubly.

Mr. B. Truninger of Zurich will be 65 on 4th August and Dr. H. Rast 81 on 6th August. The same day, Mrs. A. Schmid, formerly of the Glendower Hotel, will have her birthday while her husband will be 86 on 2nd September.

Mrs. A. Bachofen will be 72 on 10th August and Mr. F. Good will reach the same age on 15th. Mr. and Mrs. H. Sauter will have been married for 51 years on 22nd August. Mr. G. Godet will be 81 on 28th August.

Mr. C. Fairweather will celebrate his 82nd birthday on 7th September and Mr. I. G. Michel will be 64 on the 8th of that month. Mr. P. B. Haberstick will be 73 on 9th and Mrs. Towers, 74 on 10th September. Last but not least, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Fuchs will celebrate their 53rd wedding anniversary on 15th September.

Congratulations and best wishes to all!

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