

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

HOLIDAY FLAT PART-OWNERSHIP SCHEME

A new holiday or second home scheme has been conceived by a Swiss company in Geneva. Mr. F. Habegger, Member of the London Tourist Board, has given it a close look and suggested that the opportunities offered might interest member of the Swiss Community in Britain. For details readers are therefore invited to contact Mr. Habegger at 01-903 2859 or 01-584 2089. The Geneva company offers the possibility of an inspection flight plus full board in a good hotel for only £39.50. The original scheme offers most of the amenities and advantages of a permanent holiday home abroad, plus facilities in maintenance and shopping and excellent location.

Its broad outline is as follows:

1. For a once-only payment of as little as 1,500 Swiss francs one can purchase an apartment for two weeks in every year (or multiple of weeks) on a 99 year lease readily renewable at no extra cost.
2. The existence of similar holiday hotel clubs in Montana, Sardinia, Athens, Crete and Montreux makes it possible to interchange with any of these centres.
3. Should the apartment not be required for use in any year, it can be let by its owner – or by the hotel for a small charge.
4. Each apartment is extremely well furnished with bathroom, kitchen etc. The larger units have washing-up machines. There is plenty of cupboard space and the apartments are well carpeted.
5. The hotel club apartments offer all the facilities of a first-class hotel with heated in-door swimming pool, shops, restaurants, bars, garages, children's playroom, laundry and maid service twice a week.
6. Payment for the apartment can be made in three different ways:
 - (a) Full payment upon acceptance, then 3 equal quarterly payments.
 - (b) 25% payable upon acceptance, then 3 equal quarterly payments.
 - (c) 20% minimum payable upon acceptance, the balance to be paid in 24 equal payments.
7. Certificates are issued according to the weeks bought and entitle the holder to participate in the meetings on the general running of the hotel club.

The advantages of this scheme can be seen immediately in that it is a way of

guarding against inflation offering guaranteed holidays which, after the apartment if purchased, involves only the cost of travel, food, and a small service charge. In particular, there are no anxieties about the apartment's main-

tenance. When not required, it is a good source of income, and it is a small inheritance to pass on to children or dependants – which in an increasing market in property speculation can only increase in value.



We were pleasantly surprised to learn that our new readers included the Lord and Lady Mayoress of Leeds, Ald. Kenneth Travis Davison and Mrs. Davison. Not only is it gratifying to know that our publication is delivered at the home of a real, live Lord Mayor but, more importantly, that the Lady Mayoress of Leeds is the first Swiss Lady Mayoress in the country. Mrs. Davison was one of Swissair's first six air hostesses before the

war. Ald. Davison met her when they were both skiing at Arosa.

Ald. Davison was first elected to Leeds City Council in 1951 and became an alderman in 1968. During the Tories' control of the Council he was Chairman of the Licensing and Control Committee. Ald. Davison is Chairman and Managing Director of John Davison and Son (Leeds) Ltd, shoe manufacturers.

"LITTLE PARLIAMENT" OF THE SWISS ABROAD MEETS IN BERNE

The spring meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad took place in Berne on 10th March. As usual in spring, delegates were privileged to gather at the Federal Palace. The President, Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan, welcomed over fifty representatives, proxies and members from inside Switzerland. They had come from all parts of the world: from Scandinavia and Canada, from Thailand and Greece. The delegates from Great Britain were Dr. H. R. Bolliger, Manchester, representing the North and Mrs. Marian Meier, London, representing the South of Britain.

The first item of importance on the Agenda was the discussion and acceptance of the annual report, accounts and budget of the Organisation of the Swiss abroad. The year ended with a deficit, though less than half of what had been budgeted. The main income had again been the federal subsidy of 105,000 francs (now to be considerably increased) and the amount received from the *Stiftung fuer die Auslaendschweizer* which administers the money received from First of August Collections (*Don suisse de la Fête Nationale*). The President of

of the latter was present and reported that 120,000 badges had been sold in the Swiss colonies abroad last year (the collection is in aid of the Swiss abroad every six or seven years) and that 3 million francs had been put at the disposal of the Swiss abroad (1.8 m to be used by the Organisation of the Swiss abroad during the next seven years, 300,000 francs by the Solidarity Fund and 900,000 by the Swiss schools abroad). Nevertheless, the budget for 1973 estimates a loss of nearly 60,000 francs.

New representatives and co-opted members were accepted from Portugal, Senegal, USA, Australia and the Philippines. The programme for the 1973 Assembly for the Swiss abroad was outlined. This year's event will take place from 17th to 19th August in St. Gall (details will be published later).

It was announced that the two Federal Chambers had accepted the *Fuersorgegesetz fur Auslaendschweizer*, the Bill providing for the Confederation to look after the welfare of the Swiss abroad, without any opposition. The three months' period for possible Referendum being launched will have

to be observed, but the bill should become law by 1st January, 1974. New moves are being made regarding the military exemption tax, which should result in even greater relief for the Swiss living outside their country. There had been some delay concerning the possible granting of political rights to Swiss abroad. The Federal Council had again specifically excluded the Swiss abroad from the tightening of controls regarding the purchase of land and property in Switzerland by foreign national. The report by the special commission on Swiss schools abroad was now with the Federal Council.

The next item under discussion was the double taxation agreements at present pending with various countries, including Great Britain. In the latter case, it was a

question of revision on account of changes in the taxation system and this year's Budget. Considerable discussion took place regarding the revision of the *Buergerrechtsgesetz*, the law governing Swiss nationality and naturalisation. The revision should bring certain facilities, especially regarding naturalisation of young foreigners whose mothers are Swiss, and also where Swiss have lost their nationality or renounced it for understandable reasons.

Under the subject of information, news was given of the successful scheme of informing all Swiss registered abroad, at present operating in English-speaking communities, were now under consideration and the first special issue of the *Swiss Observer* was praised.

The President also informed the meeting of a commission under the chairmanship of the former Federal Councillor W. Spuebler, President of "Pro Helvetia", looking after the image of the Swiss abroad. A questionnaire would shortly be sent out, and societies and individuals were urged to co-operate.

The meeting was followed by a luncheon at which Ambassador Thalmann, Secretary-General of the Federal Political Department and Minister Jaccard, who is in charge of all matters concerning the Swiss abroad, took part.

The Swiss delegate for Great Britain South, in her own right, also attended the Swiss abroad and the special Commission on Information.

M.M.

SWISS SCHOOLS ABROAD

Despite the more or less stationary population of Swiss residents abroad, the number of Swiss schools abroad has doubled during the past fifteen years and their enrolment trebled. Their overheads have increased in proportion and these schools are no longer in a position to survive without increased federal aid. The allocation of regular subsidies has been increased by special subsidies.

This situation is explained by a recent study prepared under the auspices of the Department of the Interior. The study calls for an urgent change of

present aid procedure for these schools' running expenses. Headmasters and teachers of Swiss nationality should be paid by the Confederation according to a scale fixed by the Department; special allowances amounting to 20 per cent of subsidies should allow these schools to equip themselves with modern school-teaching equipment. Finally, the Study calls for a 300-franc allowances for every Swiss child sent to these private schools.

The Study stresses that the schools can foster the cultural presence of Switzerland abroad. They also help to

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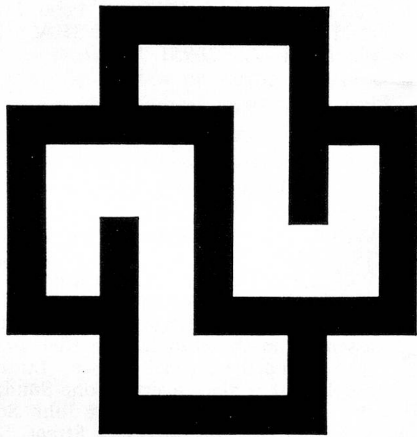
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promote the cohesion of Swiss communities and offer them the opportunity of giving their children an education conforming with Swiss mentality and maintaining links with the Motherland. Moreover, Swiss schools abroad greatly help Swiss firms in recruiting nationals "on the field". This good work can only be maintained with the help of more money. To this end, the Confederation should not only increase its subsidies, but be given a bigger say in the running of the schools.

The Study calls for a Federal Commission for Swiss schools abroad. This body would advise the Government on financial assistance and examine the didactical requirements of the schools.

The Federal Decree of 4th March, 1964 on Swiss schools abroad should therefore be amended. The Government has already received the Study, which outlines a proposed new bill.

At present, 19 Swiss schools abroad are recognised as such and receive federal assistance. Eight of them are in Italy, two in Spain and six in Latin America. The remaining three are in Accra, Bangkok and Singapore. During the 1971-1972 school year, they catered for 5,294 children, including 1,681 Swiss, and run by 254 teachers and headmasters, 160 of them Swiss.

Swiss schools abroad were originally set up and financed by Swiss communities either because of the absence of adequate local schools or because they were eager to preserve their children's cultural identity. With various well-known phenomena setting in (reduction of colonies, assimilation, growth of educational requirements, etc.) these expatriate communities have found it difficult to maintain their schools without support from home. The schools usually rely on donations from local Swiss communities. This just about pays for the wages of teachers barely closing the differential with wages applied in the country concerned. Many of the schools are in a decrepit state and urgently require new furniture. Some, as in Brazil, are brand new and ultra-modern design.

Now that only a third of their children are Swiss, the vocation of these schools has switched from being a purely Colony concern to becoming the spearhead of Swiss culture abroad.



ASSISTANCE TO SWISS ABROAD

The new bill on assistance to Swiss abroad referred to in connection with the meeting of the Commission for the Swiss abroad (p. 16) was passed in March by the National Council. It puts an end to the inequalities resulting from the cantonal and communal origin of individual aid to Swiss residents abroad. The federal state will now take this assistance in hand. However, cantons will be held to reimburse Berne for the money paid out to foreign states (particularly Germany) for assistance given in accordance with bilateral conventions.



Healing of Miracle?

Dear Mr. Béguin,

A sentence in your issue of 9th February, 1973 has puzzled me. In the report on Pastor Dietler's Farewell Service it is said: "Whatever one may think of the theological orthodoxy of healing by laying-on of hands, it certainly exerted a powerful attraction on the parishioners of the Swiss Protestant Churches". I do not think that this should imply that our parishioners are so uncritical that they fall for any out-of-the-way attraction, but it must surprise any theologian trying to take the words of Christ seriously.

If we open the Bible, Gospel of Marc 16:18, we come across the last words of Christ to his disciples - and the last words of any living person are usually regarded as very important in his own eyes. They read as follows: "These are the signs that will be associated with believers: In my name they will cast out devils, they will have the gift of tongues, they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison, they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover." A Christian may well try to interpret these words according to his own perspective, wide or narrow, but can he think whatever he likes about them?

The expression "Miracle" can be misleading. In today's language it implies some sort of hocuspocus or superstitious magical beliefs. Neither Christ nor his disciples were "magical-workers" in this (distorted) sense. Christ did perform miraculous deeds and signs for those who had had faith in him and so did his apostles and their successors. They were, and still are, signs that he is alive and that his power in our world is a reality, even today.

Many doctors will agree with my experience that most of our diseases are the symptoms of the ills of a disordered and unbalanced mind. If God has become man in order to make good what man has destroyed through foolishness and evil, and has restored the balance between man and his Creator (he has done even more than that), should anyone be surprised that faith in him can also restore health of mind and body? This may be a "miracle" in the eyes of the unbeliever, but it is straightforward logic to anyone who combines real belief with some insight into the workings of the human mind.

Father Paul Bossard

Swiss Churches

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: à l'Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les dimanches à 11h15 et 19h00.

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième 18h00.

REUNION DE QUARTIER: huit veillées en automne et au printemps: voir "Le Messager".

CLUB DES JEUNES: tous les dimanches de 12h00 à 22h30, tous les jeudis de 15h00 à 22h30.

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2e mardi du mois. LUNCH, tous les dimanches à 13h00.

VISITES: sur demande.

PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 8 Park View Road, London, N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

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SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION: John Southworth Centre, 48 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HA.

Sundays: Holy Mass at 6.30 p.m. with sermon in German, in the Club hall, ground floor.

(2nd floor at the same time, Protestant service in German).

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: by appointment.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: Notre Dame de France, 5 Leicester Place, W.C.2, on Sundays, 10.00, 11.00, 12.15, and 6.30 p.m.

SWISS CATHOLIC YOUTH CLUB: Open every Sunday from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. (48 Great Peter Street). Discussions, dance, lectures (with members of other denominations), Sunday services and refreshments. See programme "Die Stimme."

During the week: open according to programme of the English Youth Club.

RESIDENCE OF CHAPLAIN: Bossard, Swiss Catholic Mission, 48 Great Peter Street, (2nd floor), London SW1P 2HA. Telephone: 01-222 2895.

* * *

SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2, every Sunday at 9.45 a.m. Sunday school takes place on the first and the third Sunday in the month for children of all age groups. Children assemble in the church with their parents who attend the normal Service. Liturgical Service takes place every second Sunday in the month. Services also at John Southworth Centre, 48 Gt. Peter Street, S.W.1 every Sunday at 6.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION: every first Sunday of the month at evening service at John Southworth Centre. Every second Sunday of the month at morning Services at Eglise Suisse. On major feasts at morning and evening services.

CONSULTATIONS: every Wednesday 4-6 p.m. at Eglise Suisse.

DISTRICT GROUP S.E.21 and SERVICES OUTSIDE LONDON: see "Stimme."

"KONTAKT" (Youth Group): every Wednesday 4-10 p.m. at Eglise Suisse. Supper at 7 p.m. Programme at 8 p.m.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE: every first Tuesday of the month from 12 noon onwards at the Eglise Suisse.

MOTHER'S REUNION: third Wednesday in the month, 1-1 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Eglise Suisse.

VISITS: by request.

MINISTERS: Pfr. U. Stefan, 1, Womersley Road, N.8. Tel: 01-340 9740.