

Solidarity fund and information

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SOLIDARITY FUND AND INFORMATION

as Australia. Dr. Alex Lang was present for Great Britain North and Mrs. Mariann Meier for the South. Dr. Weber reminded delegates that the motto depicted on the walls of the venerable Hall applied also to the Commission: *Salus publica suprema lex* or "the welfare of the people is the highest obligation".

The first item of importance on the agenda was the annual report of the Organisation. It gave a fair picture of the activities of the Commission and the Secretariat with its various services. The accounts which showed a small surplus, and the budget which forecast a massive deficit, were accepted. During the discussion it was again stressed that the Organisation's periodical *echo* still lacked subscribers to make it a paying proposition.

The next item was the Total Revision of the Federal Constitution. One-hundred and nineteen answers had been received from societies and umbrella organisations, as well as individual letters, a total of 1,229. Over 50 per cent of the societies had answered, proof that our "Parliament" and its consultative methods was what was needed. A report would be prepared, and a seminar would be held during the Assembly in August, whose theme would be the Total Revision. There is no doubt

that a political interest had been created which should be kept up.

Regarding the citizenship question, it was reported that 223 answers had been received. Never before had so much interest been caused by a single topic. A report had been prepared, and the Study Commission set up by CSA under Mr. Guidi's chairmanship would carry on its work.

The meeting was informed on various matters, double taxation agreements and others on social insurance. The fact that the Swiss abroad concerned had a say in these matters through the Commission was of great importance. The position of the voluntary AHV/AVS was mentioned — by the end of 1977, 80 million francs had been paid in by Swiss abroad and 140 million francs paid out. The importance of the Solidarity Fund, too, was stressed once again — far more should be done in the colonies to make people realise the value of this co-operative insurance.

The 57th Assembly at Porrentruy from 24th to 26th August was discussed. The programme would be much the same as other years. A contest for bow-and-arrow enthusiasts was going to be a novel attraction.

The meeting was informed of the federal plebiscites in 1979. Since it was an election year, the number would be kept down. The two most important would be on the federal finance reform and the atomic energy programme. (*Both have since been voted on, the former was lost the latter accepted.*)

Some readers may be interested that one of the points which was brought up by the member for GB South, regarding the difficulties some young people experience when they want to go to Swiss universities and other higher training establishments, has been and will be pursued by the Secretariat in Berne, so that Swiss from abroad will be given special consideration and not come under any *numerus clausus* which might apply to foreign students; always provided, of course, that their qualifications are up to standard.

The date of the next Commission meeting was given as 24th August at Porrentruy. A luncheon at the "Schlüsselzunft" took place after the meeting. This is an old tradition and a very valuable one, for many important contacts can be established and views exchanged, for which there would otherwise be very little time.

Mariann Meier



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