

Readers' letters

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READERS' LETTERS

THE very interesting article about Sri Lanka and the Swiss development aid does deserve a very careful reading — and it is most distressing that the only big question, whether the country's shaky political system be capable of coping with such a traumatic leap through time, remains a big questionmark.

No Swiss on that First of August was prepared to hazard an answer. But some kind of answer must be found if the effort to carry on helping be continued. It will be sufficient if we find the answer to another question: What else should be done to reduce the risk of the country's eruption into the most terrible violence?

Development aid is a good thing, but the people concerned remain at the receiving end. How can these people get the confidence that they are able to give us something too? How does this development aid become a two-way traffic, a deed of gratitude on the part of the Swiss?

I keep asking myself: Why have these people survived in such poverty for thousands of

Sri Lanka needs answers

years? The answer seems clear: It is undoubtedly their deep religion. Of course, religion has not solved agricultural and development problems. It even often stood — as we see it — in the way. All the same, it gave meaning to their lives, a purpose, a sure way of survival.

If we succeed in letting them give us in return for our aid a deeper sense for religion and their way of life, we would probably understand better why Christ kept blessing and praising the poor. I certainly take my hat off to this Swiss who became a Buddhist, and even more than the monks. He certainly is a man who will do a lot to reduce the risk of violence and is assisting the development aid more than we dare to think.

Another question, "Why has the technical and scientific

progress brought us people of the West to the brink of suicide?" deserves equal consideration. There is certainly plenty of scope for giving and receiving with both, Sri Lanka and Switzerland. — **Fr. Paul Bossard, Swiss Catholic Mission, London.**

WITH reference to the correspondence in the July issue of your magazine concerning bilingual upbringing of children of parents from different countries, may I, as the non-Swiss half of such a marriage, express a concern which I feel and about which no-one I have spoken to so far is able to reassure me.

It is this. When my daughter learns to articulate words which sound like for example Sali (for I understand what was originally Salut) or a phrase which sounds like 'lueg emol' (which is St. Galler dialect for a phrase which translates as "look" emphatically) is she learning "slang"? By this I mean words of a character such as a badly brought up Glaswegian might use instead of Oxford English.

I appreciate that Swiss has developed differently and in dialect its stage of development appears to be similar to that which Scotland enjoyed in the 17th and 18th centuries. There were then distinct dialects of English spoken in the different regions and that used in the Edinburgh area achieved prominence because of its use by the law makers in Parliament House.

The shift of Parliament to England in the 18th century probably accounts for the standardisation of English thereafter and the downgrading of local dialect in the eyes of the élite who were educated in England or by English tutors.

My question simply put is this. Is there a standard form of Swiss dialect which my daughter and I might learn to be understood all over Switzerland or at least the German Swiss part and which the hearer will not consider to be slang or the speech of an uneducated person? — **T.B. Cruickshank, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire.**

THANK you for publishing Peter Selby-Huber's article in your August edition. It brought back many happy and nostalgic memories of happier times just after the war.

I met my late wife Odette (nee Longeray) who came from Geneva, in London, where she was employed at what was then the Swiss Legation. Later she came out to Greece where I was still serving with the British Military Mission. We were married the following year and returned to England.

From then onwards we too travelled across France to Switzerland every year until my dear wife died just three weeks after our return from Geneva in 1974. Our first few trips were by motor cycle (a BSA 500cc side valve), sometimes crossing the channel by Silver City Airways, other times by boat.

Like your correspondent we thoroughly enjoyed the many and varied experiences.

I am happy to say my in-laws keep in touch from Geneva and, together with the Swiss Observer, I retain the link which will always mean so much to me.

Thank you Mr Selby-Huber and may you and your family have many many more happy trips to and from dear old Switzerland. — **Eric J. Morton, Seaford, Sussex.**

Bazaar appeal

THE consistoire of the Swiss Protestant Church in London is holding a bazaar on November 1. This is a bi-annual event and the proceeds go to the Swiss Protestant Church and to the Swiss Catholic Mission.

In an appeal for support the Consistoire says:

“For the Swiss Church this income is vital to see it financially through the next two years. We have explained and asked for covenants and we have made appeals in the past, the results were not always encouraging.

May we appeal to you again, if you do not see much of interest to buy at the bazaar or if you cannot come please do not just forget about it — send us a donation or take out a covenant. The Swiss community is shrinking, the church building is crumbling, but the Swiss church still fulfils a need especially for the elderly and young.

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