

Swiss aid to underdeveloped countries [continued]

Autor(en): **Frei, Rudolf**

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CONTINUING . . .

Swiss Aid to Underdeveloped Countries

By RUDOLF FREI

THE organisation called Swiss Association for Technical Assistance is concerned exclusively with technical assistance. A non-profit institution founded in 1955, it has a membership of 7000 today. In 1959, the funds at its disposal amounted to 450,000 francs, made up of voluntary donations, federal grants and contributions by the Swiss Foreign Aid Organisation. Geographically, its main field of activity is Nepal, where a number of experts are engaged as instructors in co-operation with international and foreign organisations as well as the Nepalese Government. The principal project so far has been in dairy farming, involving the establishment of a central dairy plant, a number of milk depots and several cheese-making plants in various remote mountain regions. At Jiri, in East Nepal, a livestock breeding centre has been set up, in conjunction with a model farm. A project for an ambulant dispensary in which native nurses will be trained is under way.

In Katmandu the organisation has established and is operating a model workshop employing twenty Nepalese. This workshop grew out of the concrete needs of the dairy farm programme, and teaches the Nepalese how to take care of their tools and equipment. The workshop also produces some articles for sale.

At Hafouz—the Tunisian Government's agricultural training centre—the organisation has established a model workshop to teach orphan boys how to operate and repair farm machinery. The Tunisians are thus helped in a small way to manage their farms more profitably.

The organisation's newest project is in Nigeria. Already from 1956 to 1958 some summer courses were held in Switzerland for Nigerian students and some grants were given for study in Swiss universities. Recently, a project has been taken up with

the Nigerian Government for the establishment of a model workshop at Ikenne, in West Nigeria.

In Libya, finally, a member of the organisation's staff and assistant to an FAO expert is engaged in acquainting the farmers with the use of small tools and advising them on farm management in general.

Although the Swiss Association for Technical Assistance is interested primarily in charitable activities, it plays a role in the field of technical assistance too. Its funds also are made up of voluntary contributions and a federal grant; in 1959 they amounted to 880,000 francs.

Recently it has taken up a project for technical assistance in India, in co-operation with a private Swiss citizen and with the Swiss diplomatic mission in India. The project provides for the establishment and operation of two model workshops in the leper colony of Anandwan near Warora in Bombay State. This colony is the work of Dr Amte—a man not unlike Albert Schweitzer—who gave up his lawyer's career to dedicate himself to the care of lepers. With very modest means he has in the course of ten years built up a medical station to which a farm is attached, where every day hundreds come to receive ambulant care, and where 350 lepers are hospitalised. One of the principal problems facing the hospital is the rehabilitation of those discharged as cured, since their environment traditionally rejects them as outcasts.

The Swiss Foreign Aid Organisation took care of the equipment of the two model workshops, where people are being instructed and trained and where various articles are manufactured for sale inside and outside the colony.

The organisation furthermore extends regular aid to the Association of Swiss Jewish Welfare Agencies for the benefit of ORT, a world-wide Jewish welfare organisation domiciled in Geneva.

The Swiss Workers Aid Organisation, which for the past twenty-five years has been engaged in welfare work in Switzerland and abroad has recently entered the field of technical assistance to underdeveloped countries. For example, it financed the establishment of a cheese-making plant in Kozani province, Greece, and made two fairly large contributions to the equipment of two farm depots there. Since in this area the distances from the farms to the market place are enormous, the depots, from which the produce is transported to the market by truck instead of by private carts, constitute a great help to the farmers.

At La Marsa, in Tunis, the organisation has participated in the establishment of a model workshop for Algerian refugee adolescents. In addition to a financial contribution to the construction of the building, it supplied these workshops with tools.

It also supplied a number of measuring instruments to an industrial school at Skoplje, in Yugoslavia, and expects to organise a course there in producing non-alcoholic fruit beverages. This project has been devised in co-operation with the agricultural experimental station at Smederevska Palanka near Belgrade.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

AUCKLAND SWISS CLUB

"I could have danced all night, I could have danced all night, and still have begged for more..." —a well known and popular song from "My Fair Lady" but also a very apt phrase to describe the dance and social evening held recently by the Auckland Swiss Club. Attended by Swiss and friends, the Hall was filled to capacity.

Throughout the evening a New Zealand band provided modern music, but after twelve o'clock our Swiss bandsmen, Charley and Alf, came to light with their wonderful rendering of our own Swiss folk music, and it was this more than anything that really started the feet tapping. Between dancing, entertainment of a high standard was also to be seen and everybody thoroughly enjoyed Mr W. Peters' presentation of "Figaro" and, with the help of his friends, "Gymnastics of 100 Years Ago." Our President, with help from Miss D. Peyer, managed to produce from the dim pages of their memories a few old songs and yodels, which they sang with great gusto, if not with anything else!

Near midnight supper and coffee was served and the dancing finished in the early morning when, with lagging steps, most of us departed homewards, with the hope that perhaps in the near future we would all have the opportunity of attending another such happy evening.

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

The Wellington Swiss Club held a most successful Housie-Housie Evening on June 24th. This was a completely new venture in entertaining for the Club and, judging upon results, provided most satisfactory financial returns too. Despite the weather being rather poor (very unusual for Wellington!), the members turned up in great strength and by 8.30 p.m. there was not a vacant seat in the hall. A "Swiss" atmosphere was created with gay posters and the Swiss colours predominated—tables being covered with snow white paper and at regular intervals bright red candles gave a warm glow. From the very start the evening went with a "swing" and no sooner had one game finished than another one started. Perhaps the prizes were irresistible!

The members of the Committee are to be warmly congratulated on a thoroughly enjoyable evening, including a delicious supper of hot sausages and coffee.

It is hoped by many of the members that a similar evening will be held again in the not-too-distant future.

—M.B.F.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUCKLAND SWISS CLUB

The first of August celebration for the Auckland Swiss Club will take place this year at the Ellerton Road Hall, Ellerton Road, Mt. Eden, on Saturday, August 5th, commencing at 7 p.m. Details of entrance fee and programme will be sent to all members and friends.

HAMILTON SWISS CLUB

Our August celebration will be held on Tuesday, August 1st, in the Riverlea at 8 p.m.

Special entertainment—Berner Platte—and Swiss music late in the evening. Bring your Swiss friends. Please wear your national costume.

TARANAKI SWISS SOCIAL CLUB

The first of August celebrations will be held in the Kapuni Memorial Hall on Tuesday, August 1st, at 8 p.m. Please wear your Swiss costumes and badges. Dancing and cards and free refreshments supplied. Subscriptions are: Gents 25/-, ladies 15/-.

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

Announcement: The 1st of August celebration in Wellington is to be held on Saturday, August 5th, at 7.30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Hall.

CHRISTCHURCH SWISS CLUB

On July 29th the Christchurch Swiss Club will hold its first National Day celebration in the Trinity Church Hall, Manchester Street. The function will be in the form of a simple meal followed by a Social with special consideration for the children. A maximum attendance is expected to gather to foster fellowship, goodwill and friendliness amongst us.