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STATE AID AND SELF-HELP FOR THE SWISS ABROAD.

An N.S.H. Talk.

Thanks to over 40 years of devoted work by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in Switzerland, its offspring the Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat and its liaison, and supervising organ the Auslandschweizer-Kommission, the problems of the Swiss abroad are receiving more and more attention in the home country. The question of the losses suffered by Swiss nationals in foreign countries during the second World War can now be regarded as settled at a total cost of some 200 million Swiss francs made available through the Swiss Parliament. Since the end of the war quite a number of other gestures of good will towards the Swiss abroad have been made by Parliament. The Old Age Insurance is open to us on terms involving considerable subsidies from our compatriots at home, and still more improvements for us are about to become effective. A new scheme of Invalidity Assurance obligatory to those at home will be made accessible to the Swiss abroad on a similar but voluntary basis. The Military Tax will at last be reformed in such a way as to free all Swiss abroad after a few years of residence outside the home country. On the initiative of the Auslandschweizerwerk, a Solidarity Fund has been inaugurated on a private basis but with the assurance of official help to secure prompt financial benefits to members who may lose their livelihood abroad by war, revolution or other catastrophe, as well as the return of their contributions at the age of 65. Finally, the composition and rules of the Auslandschweizer-Kommission are being altered so as to give the Colonies an opportunity of sending elected representatives and a bigger say in its work on behalf of the Swiss abroad. Dr. H. W. Egli will talk on all these latest developments of such importance to us all at the next meeting of the N.S.H. on 21st April. (For details, see advertisement.)

SWISS HOSTEL FOR GIRLS.

The annual meeting of the Company was held at 11 Belsize Grove on Wednesday, 18th March. In the absence of Mrs. M. Daeniker, Mr. F. G. Sommer, vice-president, was in the chair.

The Assembly approved and passed the balance sheet and accounts for the year ended 31st December 1958. They also heard reports from the Council of Management and the Warden about the problems and activities of the Hostel. We have much pleasure in

reproducing below some extracts from Miss Preiswerk's comments:

... "In the course of the year 1958 the Swiss Hostel for Girls has accommodated 1,574 girls, with a total of 19,742 overnight stays. The majority of our guests, namely 1,426, were again Swiss, the remaining 148 other nationals.

"Of all her manifold tasks, the personal relations with the residents are the Warden's chief concern. As there is no routine for this part of her duties, she has to devote considerable time to it. It is the Hostel's aim to consider not only the moral and physical well-being of its residents, but also to help them towards a better understanding of British ways of life and trends of thought. In this respect we are still seeking for the right solution. We do not meet enough British people and therefore remain a Swiss island in the Metropolis.

"The lectures and talks we organise at the Hostel are greatly appreciated and we wish to express our gratitude to the speakers for their most welcome contribution.

"Special mention must be made of the catering and staff, for which Miss Hagenbuch is responsible and which she handles with great efficiency. To find and keep staff in a place like ours is by no means an easy business. It cannot be done without adapting oneself to present-day regulations concerning working hours and off-time. The girls must be able to attend regular classes in order to improve their English.

"Our monthly dances have become increasingly popular. The times when we were short of boys belong to the past. The girls take great pleasure in decorating the ball-room, and the results are sometimes quite remarkable.

"Once again we had the pleasure of serving as a meeting place for the N.S.H. gatherings. We like to keep in touch with the Colony and appreciate the interest they take in the Hostel."

F.A.

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