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RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS
for the Swiss in Europe, North Africa and
the Near East

Every Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, the Swiss short-wave service broadcasts Catholic, Protestant and Free Church services in French, German and Italian alternately on 3985, 6165 and 9535 kHz.

On Easter Sunday (14th April, 1974), for example:

10 to 10.42 a.m.: Roman Catholic service, in French
10.48 to 11.09 a.m.: Roman Catholic service, in German
11.09 to 11.30 a.m.: Protestant service, in French
11.45 a.m. to 12 noon: Roman Catholic service, in Italian

Further details of these religious broadcasts, and a schedule of all Swiss radio programmes for foreign countries, can be obtained direct from the Service suisse des Ondes courtes Giacomettrasse 1 CH-3006 Berne 16

Military Service Exemption Tax

On 14th December, 1973 both houses of the Swiss parliament approved the Federal Act concerning the Military Service Exemption Tax levied on Swiss abroad, who will henceforth be subject to the tax for three years, instead of eight years in the case of those liable for service in the "Auszug" (20-32 years of age) or five years in the case of those liable for service in the "Landwehr" (33 years of age onwards). The Act is subject to the optional referendum until 28th March, 1974, after which date the Federal Council will put it into force if no referendum has been requested. This measure will release from the tax those Swiss who are permanently settled abroad; the unified three-year system will mean that at least 7,000 Swiss abroad will henceforth be exempt. The decrease in revenue is estimated at about 1.5 million Swiss francs.

Switzerland's New Adoption Legislation

On April 1st, 1973, the new legislation on adoption came into force. The numerous and significant changes are aimed at creating a relationship as "normal" as possible between the child and its parents.

The changes in the legislation approved by the Swiss Parliament therefore put the adopted child on the same legal level as the legitimate child.

The legal situation

The new adoption legislation determines that the hitherto prevailing relationship between the child and its natural parents ceases to exist and the child becomes a legitimate child of its adoptive parents. The child acquires their family name, their right of origin and consequently also their nationality. Its succession rights also correspond completely to that of the legitimate child. (The rights of succession in relation to its natural parents cease to exist). A legally completed adoption can be annulled in exceptional instances only.

Who can adopt?

Two of the most important changes from the previous legislation intend to create a normal relationship between child and parents, as mentioned above, and concern the minimum age of the adoptive parents which was lowered from 40 to 35 years. This age limit does not apply to couples who have been married for at least five years. However, it does apply to single parents.

Contrary to the previous legislation, adoptive parents are no longer required to be childless. The attitude of existing children towards the adoption, nevertheless has to be taken into consideration. In cases where the adoption concerns a child of age, the requirement that the adoptive parents have no descendants, still applies. The names of the adoptive parents may not be re-

leased to the natural parents without the consent of the former.

Other important points of this new law prescribe that the child has to be at least 16 years younger than its adoptive parents and that a two year "foster period" has to precede an adoption.

Protection of the natural parents

According to the new law, an adoption is a "definite step" and therefore the rights of the natural parents have been reinforced as well. Consent to an adoption cannot be given before a period of six weeks has elapsed after the birth of the child. Also, an adoption can be revoked within another six weeks. This direction does not preclude the possibility that a child can be given in foster care with his future adoptive parents immediately after birth. The six weeks waiting period is to insure that the consent to the adoption is not given in a precipitate manner. As a rule, both parents have to consent to the adoption.

The Cantons supervise the placement of children for adoption. Adoption agencies have to obtain a federal licence which is only granted to persons with proper professional background.

Transitory rules

For a period of five years after the new legislation has come into force, adoptions concluded under the old legislation may, upon formal demand, be changed to conform to the new legislation.