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Decisions of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad

On Friday the 21st of August 1981 the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, presided over by former National Councillor Dr. Alfred Weber, assembled in the parliamentary chamber of the Canton of Solothurn at the city hall in Solothurn for its regular autumn session. Among the numerous delegates from four continents one noted in particular the Honorary President of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad Louis Guisan, who recently celebrated his seventieth birthday, and Paul Schaffroth, the President of the New Helvetic Society.

With satisfaction the delegates approved the appointment of four new domestic members of the commission. Under the condition of approval by the Central Committee of the New Helvetic Society, the following four parliamentarians have been elected members of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad: *Mrs. Esther Bührer*, Senator from the Canton of Schaffhausen, former teacher at the Swiss school in Bogota.

Mrs. Hedi Lang, National Councillor from Wetzikon, Canton Zurich, former member of a primary school board.

Mr. Odilo Guntern, Senator from Canton Valais, attorney and notary, member of the Swiss delegation to the Council of Europe.

Mr. Claude Bonnard, National Councillor, lawyer, former member of the Government of the Canton of Vaud. With this strengthened delegation one hopes to intensify the contact to the chambers of Parliament.

Furthermore, the Commission of the Swiss Abroad took note of the planned abolition of the federal subsidies for the Swiss schools in Florence, Genoa and Naples. Disappointment was expressed clearly about this. One expressed the hope that the 1,4 million Swiss francs saved in the process would be used for other Swiss schools abroad. The commission, however, was sceptical that the Government would use this amount for anything but saving. Nevertheless the commission refrained from making a protest resolution since it is of the opinion that this would only have a negative effect on the coming talks with Federal Councillor Hürlimann, the Head of the Department of the Interior.

In addition, the Commission of the Swiss Abroad was informed about the results of the survey on political rights. One was very satisfied about the level of participation of the Swiss abroad. It was pointed out that similar surveys in Switzerland had similar levels of participation. Although only a small percentage of the Swiss abroad answered the survey, one felt that the results gave a clear indication of opinion among the Swiss abroad. One was especially happy about the fact that the younger generation, in particular the age group 34 to 39, showed above average participation.

(For the results of this survey see page 11)

