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recent Motion, which has been handed in to the National Assembly. After the celebration in Savognin the Federal Council had no choice but to accept this proposal.

Another part of the Motion is more difficult to realise: it demands that the Confederation adopts measures to defend the Territories of the language minorities. A laudable project, but how to realise it? Should the State mark out an official Rhaeto-Romanic District, in which the Communities would be forced in the Administration and in the Primary Schools to switch over to the Rhaeto-Romanic language. With a policy such as this, to interfere with the language in addition to everything else, would be extremely problematical in a canton, where the autonomy of the community is sacred. The census of 1980 showed that the Rhaeto-Romanic people, as things stood then, belonged to the minority within their own historical territory.

The survival of the fourth national language is indisputably also an economic problem. One must find a way, on the one hand to resist the rural exodus which drains the mountain villages, without, however, on the other hand setting in motion a tourist overdevelopment (as in Engadine), which has inevitably drawn many Swiss German immigrants.

But even though the systematic measures of the Confederation may only have a symbolic character, it is strictly speaking not so important, then the solution would come, not from outside but, from the hearts of this minority itself: the strategy consists in reassuring the doubtful and disappointed Rhaeto-Romanic speaking people to gain confidence that their language is neither wasted nor condemned to extinction.

Alain Pichard

50 Years of Swiss Radio International (SRI):

New program, old Worries

Gerd H. Padel, former Director of Swiss Radio International gives us, in the following, a short glimpse into the history of this institution. This, however, intends in its Jubilee Year to direct all its power towards the future and present us with its innovations.

The now well-known Swiss Radio International began in 1934 with the attempt to transmit special weekly chronicles for the Swiss abroad over the then newly set-up «Landessender». This was continued with the transmissions of these programs, which were complemented by special contributions over the «Völkerbundsender Prangins». In the hectic years before the outbreak of war, these programs were also transmitted over its own hastily installed short-wave transmitter Schwarzenburg.

Wartime

As the Founder of the Overseas program, Paul Borsinger, once remarked: it was only in 1939 that this institution, which in those days was not yet clearly named and actually without any exactly described status, had matured «de facto», a provisional coming-of-age which like all temporary

measures needed to remain in effect over a longer period of time. This small working team withstood the critical time of the war years. The «Swiss Broadcasting Service, Short Wave Dept» proved itself to be a welcome pillar of support against the tide of perfidious propaganda of that time. This activity very soon needed round-the-clock work. The broadcasts in foreign languages were increased, and in close co-operation with the «Landessender» studios, a world-wide basis of trust was established, last but not least, thanks to the support of men, whose names directly due to this work, achieved world-wide renown, like Prof. J.R.von Salis and René Payot. The initial line of thought of the pioneer Borsinger and therefore quasi the «de jure» recognition as the seventh studio of the SRG, was accorded the official embodiment much later in the year 1953.

Swiss Broadcasting in 1985



However, the difficult years of uncertainty were in no way at an end.

The persistent differences within the SRG regarding the meaning, purpose and organisational structure and the financing of their own international radio transmissions, belonged to the manifestations that characterised the entire development phase of our national broadcasting service.

Inform, but how to Finance?

In the beginning of the sixties, the independent news organisation of the Radio had to make a beginning in the short-wave region, at a time, when the interest in the short-wave services had a new revival because of the new tensions of de-colonisation and the cold war. And in this context, emerged again the controversial question: «Who should pay? The Confederation? The SRG subscribers?» Mr. Gerd H. Padel, the successor of Mr. Paul Borsinger in the administration of SRI and the author of this article, has from the start advocated in collaboration with the National Councillor Mr. Konzett – to make it possible to finance the programs for abroad through subventions from the Confederation, without having to give up the freedom and independence of



The English Service in action.
(Photos: RSI)

production of the programs. The Parliament granted a special yearly credit for extra-ordinary tasks of the short-wave services. An important component of the expansion, thereby made possible, was the formation of the SRG's first own radio news editorship. This 24-hour service and the English editor-ship enabled the SRG, after years, to make a decisive break-through towards total independence in 1962.

If credibility should be and must be the objective of every endeavor

of its policy of information, then these efforts should be so oriented as to conform with the Report of the Federal Council, regarding the policy of security of Switzerland. This contains the key-phrase: «To maintain the confidence of the people... our policy of information should be based on truthfulness. Manipulated information, which conceals or extenuates setbacks and negative developments, have in the long run the opposite effect to what was meant to be achieved.» In the very intensely competitive field of international radio, where propaganda is the rule and uncoloured information the exception, lies the biggest chance for the transmissions of a small neutral country. This can, indeed, only then be realised, when one is ready to also hold one's own technically, in the face of hard competition. ●

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reached for relations between countries, where the further development of International Law can today be determined «de facto».

Joining the UN, therefore, does not mean saying goodbye to the special case of Switzerland. It does *not mean losing our Identity and our own Free Will*. The meaning of membership lies much more in actively maintaining the special position of Switzerland on the world stage and safeguarding her right of existence, also under changed circumstances in her own well understood interest and as a reliable partner in the Community of Nations.

At stake is not the Independence, not the Federal System, not the Sovereignty of Switzerland, but at stake is how we maintain our own Swiss values and interests in the world most wisely and effectively. ●

To all Swiss abroad.

At the beginning of this year, the SRI has decided on a few innovations in the area of her structure and her broadcasting: more stress on information, more reasonable broadcasting times for the overseas areas, introduction of special programs for Europe with repetition of transmissions of our national radio stations. The SRI is, therefore, very interested in learning the opinion of the Swiss abroad regarding the programs, the timing and the quality of the frequencies. It wishes also to make known to the Swiss abroad, that its programs can even be heard over the stations in the different guest countries. Radio stations abroad, which regularly transmit Swiss programs are supplied with transcriptions directly from the SRI.

The SRI does not wish, however, to limit itself. There are certainly several other radio stations, which transmit Swiss programs or produce broadcasts dedicated to the immigrants, which, however, may be unaware of the existence of this new service. It may also be possible that this new service would encourage the Swiss abroad, to produce their own programs, which could then later be followed up by transmission over local stations.

The SRI therefore appeals to all Swiss abroad and asks them, to notify her which transmitter could be interested. Please write to:

Schweizer Radio International, CH-3000 Bern 15.