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Portrait

Farmer here, farmer there

«Sveitsin Jussi lomittaa Ilomantsissa»: this was the headline in a Finnish newspaper which reported on the truly out-of-the-ordinary life of «Jussi the Swiss». Finnish television also broadcast a programme about this Swiss farmer, only 28 years of age, who emigrated to Finland eight years ago and who thinks of spending the rest of his life there. Roughly translated, the headline says: «Jussi, the Swiss, farm helper in Ilomanti». His real name is Johann or, more exactly, Georg Johann Aellig; but «Johann» in Finnish, and shortened, is Jussi. Occupation: farmer - trained at the Charlottenfels agricultural school in the Swiss canton of Schaffhausen. Already after the first half-yearly term at the school he went under a young people's exchange scheme for a couple of months to a farm in Finland. Then back to Switzerland where he finished his training course and put his stint at the army recruits school behind him. Then, again straight back to Finland - this time for ever.

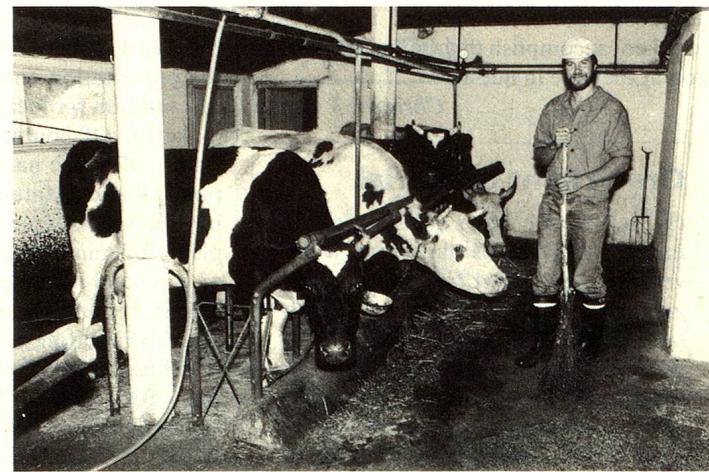
«Here, the farmer, and the farmer's wife, have the State-guaranteed basic right to 18 days holiday a year» says Jussi, when describing the circumstances of his daily life. «And also the right to extra holidays in case of illness, on getting married, and in the event of a death in the family. Not only that, but also two further days holiday on every birthday falling in even years. And, in addition, the farmer and his wife can claim yet another two days holiday every month. Lastly, during their holidays, farmers in Finland have a right to a farm helper - a holiday replacement - free of charge... So that's my life and occupation.»

«At first, my area of activity covered a region of isolated,

lonely farmsteads. Now I am employed in the more confined area of the district of Matalahti, which also pays me my wages. The farmer I'm replacing at the moment does not, himself, have to contribute anything towards his holiday help.»

Jussi's present area of activity lies a couple of hundred kilometres north of Helsinki, in Karelia, on the Russian frontier. The farmsteads each have around 15 to 20 head of heavy livestock and 10 to 20 hectares of land (25-50 acres). Every farm also has some woodland. Recently, Jussi took on a sideline: he buys from various farmers their milk in excess of the quota and turns it into a self-discovered cow's-cum-goat's-milk cheese, which he then sells to the hotels of the area. The business got off to a good start. «Any particular experiences here? Sad ones? Happy ones?», we asked. «Sad» said Jussi during our talk. «If my employment with a farming family is due to a death or an accident in the family. Amusing, if the farmer's wife asks me not to clean out the cowshed while they are away, but, if need be, to change the baby's nappies...»

«Homesick for Switzerland?» «No. Here you've got every-



thing that Switzerland offers - to some extent without the disadvantages: a country of infinite magnitude and virginity, little threatened by the encroachments of tourism and industry». «And the cultural remoteness, the solitude here, high up in central Finland?» «Oh no. They occasionally show films in the village school and every week a library car comes round and I can borrow or order any book I want» says Jussi who, incidentally, has long been speaking and reading Finnish without difficulty. «And if, say a 'state visit' from German-speaking countries is scheduled for the district, they not infrequently call on 'Jussi' as interpreter.»

We asked Jussi if he is a dropout. «No. That I'm not. I have absolutely no negative picture of Switzerland whatsoever in me. But where does there exist in Switzerland any chance of self-fulfilment for a young farmer without his own farm? Here, in a couple of years, and for a fraction of what I would have to pay out in Switzerland, I can have my own farm. But to do so I have first to take Finnish nationality because the Finnish *Lex Furgler* does not allow the sale of real estate to a foreigner»; «And then would you also be needing a Finnish farmer's wife?» «No problem», said Jussi, and winked.

Josef Rennhard, Chief Editor, Schweizerischer Beobachter

Telegrams

■ *Swatch watches* came under the hammer at Sotheby's autumn auction in Geneva last year for an incredible SFr. 14,685.

■ The Theodul glacier near Zermatt has given up the remains of a Swiss mercenary who met his death there some 400 years ago.

■ According to an enquiry mounted by «L'Hebdo», 61.5% are in favour of the creation of a *United Europe*.

■ Roselyne Crausaz (Christian Democratic People's Party) is the first woman to be elected to

the government of a west-Switzerland canton (Fribourg).

■ Two new German-Swiss *Sunday papers*: alongside the «Sonntags-Blick», there is now the «Neue Sonntags-Blatt», published by various regional newspaper concerns, as well as the «Sonntags-Zeitung» of the *Tages-Anzeiger AG*.

■ The first Swiss personal computer, the «Swiss PC», has been developed in Egg (ZH). It is IBM-compatible and attractively priced.

■ The number of *Federal government employees* has gone down slightly (by 0.3%) in the

past three years. Of the 135,000 state civil servants, a total of more than two-thirds work in the PTT undertakings (42.4%) and for the Swiss Federal Railways (27.6%).

■ *Flurin Maissen*, the militant and vital 80-year-old Benedictine father from Rumein in the Grisons, is awarded the «Grüner Zweig» (Green Bough) of the WWF, which for five years has been given for services to the protection of the environment.

■ Success of the *separatists* in the communal parliament of Moutier, the capital of the Bernese Jura: The proportion of

Bischof's photographs

The Zurich Kunsthaus showed the work of the no doubt most renowned Swiss photographer of our century, Werner Bischof (1916-1954). The exhibition demonstrated the development of Bischof from the functional photograph to the reportage. The Zurich-born photographer gained world-fame especially by his reportages on a famine in India, the Korean War and Indo-China, among others, for «Life» magazine (Photo: «Korean War Orphan», 1952).



A clear «yes» to tenants' protection

On 7th December, 1986 the Swiss voters approved the constitutional article for the safeguarding of tenants' rights by 64.4% ayes. The new article enables, at legal level, safeguards against improper rents to be extended throughout Switzerland and the protection of tenants against misuse of terms of notice. The Initiative «for an equitable charge on heavy transport» was however turned down by a large majority; it had aimed at the imposition of a levy related to performance instead of the present lump-sum tax.

autonomists to pro-Berne-adherents is now 23 to 18. The new president of the Commune also belongs to the separatists.

■ From April 1987 scheduled Swissair flights to Atlanta, USA.

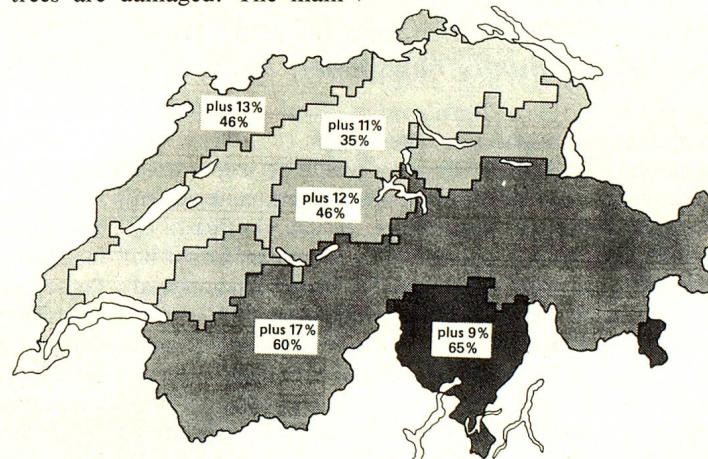
■ The first technology centre of Switzerland has been established in Berne: the «BE-Tech» is a joint-venture project of the canton of Berne and private companies.

■ Pupils speaking a foreign language are to be found in two out of every three classes of the obligatory school grades in Switzerland, and every sixth pupil is a foreigner.

One tree out of two is damaged

According to the 1986 Sanasilva forest-damage report, the proportion of pollution-blighted trees in Switzerland has increased from 36 to 50 per cent. In the Alps, where the woods perform a vital protective function, even 6 out of 10 trees are damaged. The main

cause of the onward march of forest mortality which, according to the statistics, threatens primarily larch, fir, pine and spruce trees, is reported to be «civilization-caused air-pollution in all its manifestations». (Map: EAFV)



Der Weg zur Gegenwart

1986. 248 S., 350 sw- und 50 Farabb. Gebunden. Format 23,5 x 27,5 sFr. 48.-/DM 59.- ISBN 3-7643-1744-2

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Birkhäuser
Verlag
Basel · Boston · Stuttgart

Book reviews

All the books reviewed below can be ordered either from the publishing house mentioned or from the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16.

Der Weg zur Gegenwart

Die Schweiz im neunzehnten Jahrhundert

By Georg Kreis. Publishers: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1986, 248 pages, large-format, 50 colour plates and 310 b & w illustrations, SFr. 48.-

Recent history is currently «in». This is a very good thing, for the nineteenth century, reviled by many, in point of fact laid the foundations of modern-day Switzerland.

This work of the Basle university lecturer Georg Kreis, «The Way to the Present (Switzerland in the Nineteenth Century)», formed the documentation for a twelve-series Sunday evening TV programme of the German-Swiss television. The text is original, succinct and clear and the many pictures are excellent, so that the book is a good substitute for all who missed the TV episodes.

M. N.

Der Geist des freiwilligen Dienstes / L'Esprit de Milice

Published by Sauerländer, 1986, 111 pages, paperback, SFr. 25.-

The Year-Book of the New Helvetic Society which, every year, consists of contributions in German and French, is this time devoted to the militia system in Switzerland, to the principle of voluntary service and, to a large extent, also to the gratuitousness of «civil» service in the public good, for which our country has so much to be thankful. We have lived, and we still live, on people who act beyond the call of mere duty. Such commitment, even labour of love, is however increasingly threatened, primarily by the general lack of time. Yet in view of present-day constantly-reduced working hours and the abundance of labour-saving devices on offer, this circumstance is due rather more to the modern, counter-productive rat race than to any real shortage of time.

Personages of great experience such as Federal Councillor Delamuraz, States Councillor Hänselberger and the President of the NHC, Schnyder von Wartensee, are the authors of the individual contributions. Many interested readers for this new Year-Book should certainly be found among the ranks of the Swiss abroad, who do much militia service.

M. N.