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69th Congress of the Swiss Abroad

«Fifth Switzerland» – What of the Future?

The 69th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lucerne provided an opportunity to consider the past, present and future of the Fifth Switzerland. Some 700 participants celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

As beffit the importance of this birthday, this year's Congress was a really out-of-the-ordinary occasion. In honour of the large number of participants, the opening ceremony was transferred to the Knie Circus big top. Notable among the speeches of welcome was that by Mrs. Raymonde Berthoud, who is President in Budapest of the first Swiss Club to be founded in a country of the

of which had been military over a long period. Missions and spiritual welfare, people pursuing their occupations, intellectuals and business people were other aspects of the history of emigration.

As seen by the historian, the fate of every emigrant is inextricably bound up with that of his new country. According to Professor Schelbert it is incorrect to look at

Fifth Switzerland was the economic importance of the Swiss Abroad, whose work marked the international presence of our small country.

Mr. Wyder emphasised the cultural presence of the Swiss Abroad, pointing out that many Swiss artists were active in other countries, thus familiarising those lands with Swiss cultural output.

Our country depended on its citizens living abroad working to create a positive image and almost as a counterbalance to our somewhat introverted country.

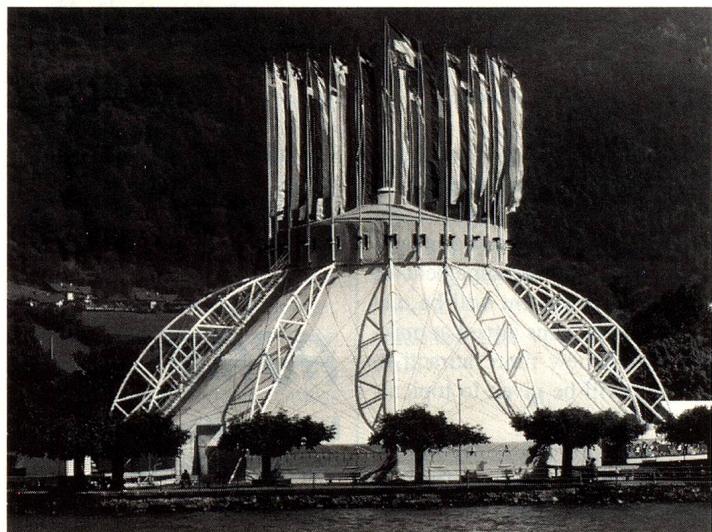
Mr. Wyder also stressed how important it was for the federal government to cultivate good relations with the «Fifth Switzerland». Proof of these unflagging efforts was the federal law aimed at promoting the training of young Swiss Abroad and the revision of the federal law on the political rights of the Swiss Abroad, enabling them to vote by post in Federal matters.

Summing up, National Councilor Jean-Jacques Cevey, Vice-President of the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, pointed to the importance of the Swiss Abroad, who fulfilled a first-class mission all over the world as ambassadors

of our country. Through their untiring efforts they contributed to the creation of the positive image of our country which had become tarnished in recent times – not least because of often tendentious reports in the media. Mr. Cevey called for stronger links to be forged between young Swiss living abroad and their mother country and for funds to be made available for them to be given good training either where they lived or in Switzerland.

The plenary meeting closed with a speech by Federal Councillor Arnold Koller, Head of the Federal Justice and Police Department. Looking back over the past, he struck a favourable balance for our democracy, which throughout its history had been tried and tested time and time again.

For Mr. Koller there was no question of clinging to the notion that Switzerland was a special case. It should not enmesh itself in the closely-spun web of our consultation mechanism with its wide palette of ideas, but should energetically participate in the construction of a new European architecture. For Switzerland the European Economic Area offers a necessary intermediate step



In the Botta tent (our picture) at the Place of the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen, Swiss citizens from all over the world gave a cordial reception on 1 August to all seven members of the Federal Council.

former eastern bloc, following the abolition of the Iron Curtain.

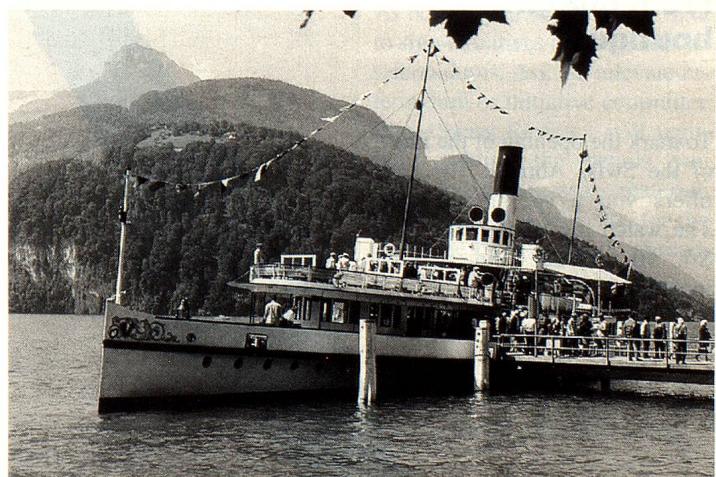
Focus on emigration

Strong emphasis was provided by the address on «Migrations in the Course of Time» by Chicago-based historian, Professor Leo Schelbert. He outlined the history of Swiss emigration, which he placed in a global context. Professor Schelbert made a distinction between various types of emigration, the most important

the emigration phenomenon in isolation from our point of view. Thus, many Swiss were involved – though in most cases indirectly – in the conquest policy of the colonial powers.

Importance of the Fifth Switzerland

Among the points made by Rudolf Wyder, Director of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, speaking on the purpose of the



For their traditional Sunday outing the Congress participants went by lake steamer to Brunnen. (Photos: U. Ammann)



along the path to integration in the EC.

The anniversary Congress was completed by the evening banquet and the trip on the steamer «Schiller» to Brunnen where lunch was served in the Botta tent at the Place of the Swiss Ab-

road. Later, in the Brunnen sports centre, participants were able to see the projects submitted by one hundred Swiss architects living abroad in connection with the competition for the definitive design of the Place of the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen.

Youth Exchange 1992

Started in 1990, the programme of exchanges between young Swiss living abroad and in Switzerland is becoming increasingly popular.

Under the programme young Swiss living abroad spend six-week holidays in the homes of Swiss families in Switzerland, and vice-versa. However, participants from Europe can choose a form of exchange under which both young people each spend three weeks simultaneously with each other's family. Depending on inclination and interests, the youngsters attend holiday courses, take one-week sample apprenticeships or settle preliminaries for their university studies. This offer is for young people and their families from the following countries:

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain and Sweden.

Dates: 4.7. – 10.8.1992

Conditions: Age about 14–20. For overseas applicants 16–20. Mother or father must be Swiss citizen.

Cost: Sfr. 400, excluding travel. This includes information camp, individual vocational and training trial periods, evaluation day, supervision.

Registration: By end of March 1992. Forms obtainable from local co-ordinators (see local pages of your «Swiss Review»).

From our gift boutique:

To mark the opening of the Place of the Swiss Abroad. The SSA offers you a special souvenir. The watch illustrated here costs Sfr. 50, postage and packing included.



Swiss Abroad Council meeting in Lucerne

Preceding the 69th Congress of the Swiss Abroad the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in the chamber of the Canton Lucerne Parliament. Presided over by Professor Walther Hofer, the Council was informed, among other things, about the right to vote by post, for the introduction of which the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad had worked untiringly. It is thought that this facility will come into force in the middle of 1992 after the necessary administrative changes have been made.

A further item before the meeting was the agreement between the Solidarity Fund and the Grüttli Health Insurance scheme on full health care insurance for Swiss Abroad who wish to come to Switzerland for treatment.

The Council was also informed about the expansion of the Swiss Review, which will appear eight instead of four times annually from 1992. A rearrangement of the editorial content will be one of the innovations aimed at making the Review more attractive. Priority will be given to topicality and a new look.

The Council also officially recognised five new Swiss clubs in France, Italy, Portugal, Taiwan and Hungary.

Research, discover, invent...

...the traditional Pestalozzi Calendar for 1992 is now available. An annual for young readers complete with its treasury of stories. Packed with interest for all.

As every year, obtainable from the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16 for Sfr. 13.35 (price in bookshops: Sfr. 17.80) plus postage

New Year Ski Camp 91/92

Skiing will be made fun for young Swiss of both sexes. Variety will be provided by alternative programmes (cross-country skiing, snowboarding, curling, ice skating, etc.) which will also ensure that weaker participants are not overtaxed.

This means that the camp will be suitable for good skiers and beginners alike.

Date/Place: Thursday to Saturday morning, 26.12.91–04.01.92, Im Boden, Splügen, GR.

Cost: Sfr. 600 including skipass and hire of skis.

Camp Director: Edith Locher, physical training and sports instructor, Youth Service leader.

Conditions: Age 15–25. Mother or father must be Swiss citizen.

Registration: Closing date 16.11.91. Forms obtainable from Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16. Number of participants limited to 55.

AJAS

Information and advice about:

- the various training courses and opportunities in Switzerland
- requirements and conditions for training
- training centres and locations
- financing of training
- accommodation
- other advisory offices
- things to be borne in mind when planning a stay (such as dates, language, etc.)
- how applicants can/should go about preparing for training in Switzerland (for example, careers advice, choice of job, choice of training course and local training centre, financing, applying for grants, preparation, language, accommodation, etc.)
- Please write to: AJAS, Alpenstr. 26, CH-3000 Berne 16