

1st August celebration

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that it was possible to carry out the work in the so-called people's democracies too, in an absolutely neutral manner, owing to the presence of Swiss delegates. When later on the governments of those countries adopted the attitude that foreign help was no longer necessary, we naturally at once complied with the wish thus expressed.

The amount collected in 1949 was devoted to similar purposes to that of 1948. In addition, the "Schweizer Europahilfe" was also in a position to carry out various measures to help the aged and the sick. Thanks to the co-operation of the International Committee of the Red Cross it was possible, for instance, from December, 1948, to May, 1949, to give a daily meal to 100,000 old men and women in Berlin. In addition, a sum of 500,000 francs was devoted to helping refugees in Germany, Austria, and Greece.

The measures to relieve material distress were completed—in connection with the work of the "Schweizer Spende"—by assistance towards the moral recovery of the peoples who had suffered from the war. Most important in this connection was the endeavour to enable doctors, nurses, children's nurses, teachers and social workers from war-damaged countries to receive the necessary completion of their training. Particularly successful in this respect were the various courses for foreign children's doctors given by the Zurich pediatrician, Professor Franconi, and the training which various Italian doctors received in lung surgery—a most important medical art, which was previously scarcely known in Italy. The high value to be attached to this form of assistance is to be seen not only in the reforms directly due to it in the various countries, but is also shown by the fact that these measures served extensively as a guide in the establishment of a plan by the Social Activities Service of the European Office of the United Nations—namely, the plan to organise in this field too an exchange procedure which would make it possible for individuals and groups to pass periods in other countries in order to study social welfare. Mention should also be made in this connection of the work (which was assisted by a contribution from the "Schweizer Europahilfe"), of the SEPEG, the "Semaines Internationales d'Etudes pour l'Enfance victimes de la Guerre" (International Study Weeks for Child Victims of the War), in particular the SEPEG Conference held in Naples in 1949, which led to an entirely new orientation of Italy in the campaign against youthful delinquency—an evil from which the south above all has suffered to an extent which we can scarcely imagine. How great the need of youth is, at the present time, not only in Italy, but in nearly all European countries, was shown with appalling clarity at a SEPEG-week held in Basel last September. This need is mainly due to the fact that it is everywhere impossible to find jobs for young people leaving school. Anyone who had the opportunity of hearing the various talks given at that meeting realised once again the privileged position in which Switzerland finds herself in this respect also; and must, at the same time, have become convinced that it is, for our country, an imperative human duty to give further help, regardless of what has already been done.

We shall be very substantially strengthened in this resolve to press on with Swiss relief abroad when we learn of the exceptionally difficult situation in which those who are old and out of work still find themselves in many war-damaged countries, and especially when the conditions prevailing in greater Berlin and the Eastern Zone of Germany are described to us. There is a particularly pressing and urgent need for help to tubercular and pre-tubercular sufferers. The distress in Eastern Germany today is little less than that which still existed in Western Germany a year and a half ago. It is due in no small measure to the fact that about three-quarters of the population lives in the districts to the south of Berlin, where there is little agriculture and that there is the very greatest difficulty in obtaining essential supplies from the north owing to the lack of transport.

The decisive factor, however, in favour of continuing—and at the same time intensifying—Swiss relief work is the fact that an as yet entirely unsolved problem is becoming ever more pressing—a problem which not only represents an immense sum of the direst human misery, but which, moreover, threatens increasingly to grow into a grave danger for the whole of Western Europe—the refugee problem.

If this problem is mentioned to you in connection with Swiss relief work abroad, you may perhaps object that one can hardly expect Switzerland to take on the refugees as well, and in particular you will probably express the view that to relieve the distress of the refugees is entirely beyond the resources of our small country, that it really is a task which should be tackled by the great Powers, particularly as it is primarily of a political character, and that nothing very substantial could be achieved by charitable measures alone.

Allow me to say this to you in reply. If we disregard the conditions in Palestine and the Far East, and consider only those conditions which exist nearer to us, in Europe, we can distinguish four categories of refugees: the displaced persons, the people driven from the East, the Greek refugees, and the political emigres from countries with Communist regimes.

(To be continued.)

1st AUGUST CELEBRATION

The Consul and Mrs. Blanchard will receive the Swiss Colony on the 1st of August, from 8 p.m., at their home, 16 Wesley Road, Wellington, C.I. (at the top of Bolton Street). Everyone should bring good humour with them, and any musical instruments they may have, or social games, in order to make the party gay and amusing. A buffet supper will be served. Individual invitations will be sent, but in case of omission, please accept this as an invitation to come.

The 1st of August badges have arrived and are for sale at:

The Swiss Consulate,
P.O. Box 386, Wellington.
Mr. E. Merz,
P.O. Box 85, Auckland.
Mr. R. Stuckie,
Springdale, Waitoa.
Mr. Walter Risi,
"Renwick Farm," Ohangai, Hawera.

The price has been fixed at a minimum of 2/- but as the proceeds of the sales, this year, will go to needy mothers, any additional amount would naturally be welcome.

The "Helvetia" bulletin sends its greetings to the Helvetia Farm in Pukekohe, and its congratulations to Mrs. J. Schlaepfer, 88 years old, and a great-great grandmother. She settled on a 447-acre farm in 1886, where, now, one can sometimes meet a gathering of four generations of her descendants. We wish Mrs. Schlaepfer and her relatives continued happiness and good luck.

NOTICE

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