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A REPORT ON THE ANNUAL DELEGATES MEETING OF THE "PRO TICINO" ASSOCIATION AT MONTREUX, SUNDAY, 27th JUNE, 1948.

Like Ruskin, one was almost overwhelmed by the grandeur of the Bernese Oberland landscape; the majestic mountains of the Jungfrau, Eiger, Mönch group, the smooth lakes of Brienz and Thun with their little paddle steamers carrying trippers on this warm, sunny Saturday afternoon which had succeeded two days of unbroken gloom. It was with the utmost reluctance, therefore, that we had slipped away from the "Tellspiel" at Interlaken to board the chocolate-coloured Spiez-Zweisimmen railway on the first stage of the journey towards the "Pays Romand". This line follows the Thunersee as far as Spiez, and then wends its way up the Simmenthal, a long fertile valley with a striking likeness to our Valle di Blenio. At Zweisimmen we changed on to the narrow gauge (rack and pinion) Montreux-Bernese Oberland railway, which negotiated a rather steep climb to Gstaad (about 3500 feet) — descended even more steeply into the Pays d'Enhaut (Canton Vaud) along the river Sarine, and soon after entering on Canton de Fribourg territory turned into the narrow defile cut out of the sheer rock by the L'Hongrin stream, to climb again to about 4000 feet, where it entered the Col du Jaman tunnel. The descent on to Montreux from Les Avants, down the steep flanks of the towering Rochers de Naye, amid vineyards, in the failing light of a wonderful summer evening was an unforgettable experience.

As a contrast to Interlaken, the meeting of the "Pro Ticino" Association at the Hotel Terminus was convened for 10.45 a.m. only in order to allow delegates from different parts of Switzerland to travel on the same day. This presented us with an excellent opportunity of contacting informally other delegates before the start of the official part of the proceedings. Sig. Carlo Lorenzetti, President of the local Branch (Sezione) a busy man in charge of all the arrangements; Sig. Mario Musso with Signora Angela Musso-Bocca, who need no introduction, representing the Sezione di Zurigo; Sig. Franco Fumagalli, the bearded Presidente Centrale, and Sig. Germano Padovani, Segretario Gene-

rale. Of the "Sezioni all'estero" apart from London, had sent delegates, Milan, Lyons and Luino. The Buenos Aires representatives were expected but failed to put in an appearance.

While the unavoidable absence of Sig. Enrico Celio, President of the Confederation can be readily understood, it is a pity that all five Ticinese Consiglieri di Stato had excused themselves, not only, but contrary to previous years, had not even sent representatives at this Parliament of the Ticinesi living outside the Cantonal borders.

After the usual preliminaries, the Presidente Centrale had to ward off an attack upon the alleged wooliness of Central Committee policy which was delivered by Signora Musso-Bocca, Ticinese authoress and inspector of "Pro Ticino" schools. She insisted that she was going to resign from her office as the Comitato Centrale had refused to publish her latest report and she had been given no satisfactory explanation for this refusal. In the absence of his committee colleague in charge of cultural and school matters (Federal Judge, Dr. D. Pometta) Sig. Fumagalli pointed out that the Committee had given this matter full consideration. Signora Musso's report had advocated paid school excursions, which recommendation the Committee was unable to endorse owing to the drain on central funds; they had no alternative, therefore, but to ban publication of the report in the "Bollettino sociale". With this explanation Signora Musso declared herself partly satisfied, but the President readily accepted a recommendation upon a motion of Sig. Ernesto Ballinari (Berne) that the whole question of the resignation be reconsidered by the Committee.

On moving to the next item on the Agenda, Sig. Scossa (Milan) drew attention to the absence of a proper report on the Branches abroad. The President informed the meeting that his newly-appointed colleague, Sig. Garbani-Nerini (Paris) had hoped to attend, but had been kept away owing to illness. Nevertheless, while excusing himself for his inability to be present, he had pointed out that none of the Sezioni in question had so far sent him their annual reports as they should do under the terms of association, and this prevented him from submitting the required report.

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Approved without any discussion the report on business activity, namely the running of "Grottini Ticinesi" at the "Comptoir" at Lausanne, and at the Bâle "Mustermesse".

With regard to the Association's monthly publication "Ticino", the Hon. President, Sig. Felice Giannini, stated that in order to publish in full all the contributions received more space was required, but this was only to be had at the cost of a further drain on central funds as the bulletin already showed a deficit. On this point Sig. Eusebio (London) suggested that if more pages were added, greater advertising space could be sold particularly to export firms, as the "bollettino" was also sent abroad.

The auditors' report, for which the Baden Branch were this year responsible, was unanimously approved.

After brief discussion the meeting passed a resolution drawing attention to the lack of importance given to the teaching of the Italian language in other Swiss Cantons generally, and recommending that the authorities concerned take appropriate measures to further the study of the third national idiom.

Varying points of view also emerged with regard to the drawing up of a set of rules for a Central "Pro Ticino" Holiday Home Fund. It was eventually agreed that the plan be submitted for examination by a special commission and reported upon at the next annual meeting. A hearty vote thanked the Ladies section of the Zurich Branch for their donation of Swiss Francs 8,000 towards this fund.

The official part of the proceedings over, the delegates were offered the 'apéritif' by their hosts, the Montreux Branch. There followed an informal banquet to which some 300 delegates and friends sat down to enjoy minestra, escaloppe de veau, fried potatoes and beans, salad and ice cream. The toasts were drunk in white wine (vin d'honneur) presented by the Urban District Council of Montreux.

First speaker was Sig. Lorenzetti who welcomed the Delegates and introduced the representatives of the local authorities. Particularly worthy of mention is the fine eulogy of Montreux, its turquoise lake, its towering mountains, and on this day its speckless blue sky by Monsieur Albert Meyer, chairman of the U.D.C. He went on to praise the Canton Ticino, its natural beauty, the patriotism of its people and spoke of his wartime experiences there as A.D.C. to General Guisan.

It being such a perfect day, no further speech-making was allowed, the delegates took leave, and streamed out into the town to enjoy the scenery, and even more the cooling breeze off the "beau Leman". We found Chillon Castle jutting out into the calm waters, with its historic connections and Byronic reminiscences and enchanting place. Alas, the hot weather was of brief duration; when we left early the following morning the sky was simply pouring so that little did we see of the fruit growing Rhône Valley in the Valais, or of the Glacier near the Furka Pass which we crossed on the Furka-Oberalp railway (another narrow gauge, rack-and-pinion construction). From Andermatt we descended to Göschenen by the Schöllenenbahn, and the SBB took us through the St. Gotthard tunnel into the "bel Ticino", where the sun was shining brightly but a breeze blowing ever so chilly.

J.E.



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