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A COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD.

The London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, encouraged by the success achieved at last year's *Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger*, started very early this year to prepare for the forthcoming *Journée* at Interlaken (25th—28th June). The President's report on these preliminary activities delivered to the Open Meeting, of 18th May, revealed that the Council had devoted much of the time of its meetings to this purpose and that, through the initiative of the N.S.H., a *Journée des Suisses en Angleterre* had been arranged. This first gathering of its kind was held at Swiss House on 17th April under the Chairmanship of Dr. H. W. Egli. It was attended not only by the representatives of the Swiss societies of London, but also by delegates from Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Bradford. There agreement was reached on the general policy to be followed at Interlaken and on the items to be proposed for the Agenda.

It was now left to the Open Meeting to discuss these proposals. They were not all new ones. On the contrary, it was considered important that the requests and suggestions submitted to the Swiss Authorities at the 1947 *Journée* should be followed up. These are:—

- (a) Right to take part in votes and elections to be granted to Swiss living abroad during a stay in Switzerland;
- (b) New legislation about dual nationality;
- (c) Modernization of the system of assessment for the Military Tax.

One new proposal, the formation of a comprehensive organization of the Swiss abroad, underwent a thorough and lively discussion. The Meeting strongly supported the suggestion that this item should be included in the Agenda of the *Journée* at Interlaken.

The Council of the N.S.H., after consultation with the representatives of the Swiss societies of London and of the Provinces, had agreed on a *resolution* on this proposal being submitted to the *Journée* for acceptance, and the Meeting fully concurred. It reads as follows:

"The *Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger* 1948 — in order to strengthen the influence and power of the Swiss abroad for their own sake as well as that of the home-country —

- (1) welcomes and supports the proposal of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain for the formation of a comprehensive Organization of the Swiss Abroad;
- (2) recommends to the Colonies in every country most urgently to form permanent Councils in each Colony as a first step towards the realisation of point (1), the Colonial Councils to be formed either by special elections or by permitting the presidents, secretaries, etc., of each society and institution to function as delegates, the Councils meeting at least twice a year;
- (3) recommends colonies with special affinities by reason of language, geography, etc., to form Group Councils, composed of delegates from the Colony Councils and meeting at least once a year;
- (4) recommends to form a Grand Council of the Swiss Abroad, composed of delegates of the Group Councils, meeting at least once a year in conjunction with the *Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger*;
- (5) urges the establishment and maintenance of the most intimate contacts between the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and *Secrétariat des Suisses à*

l'Etranger, which should become and act as the *Secrétariat* of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad and be financed by it as far as possible;

- (6) authorizes the following delegates to negotiate with the S.E.E. concerning the new basis of co-operation between the Organization and the S.E.E., the detailed agreement to be submitted to the Grand Council," at the next meeting for approval.

The Swiss Colony on Great Britain will be represented at Interlaken by fifteen delegates, to whom we wish every success in moving the resolution.

There are many good reasons for the desirability of such an Organisation. It is an old complaint of the Swiss Abroad that they do not have enough influence in the home-country to ensure that sufficient consideration is given to their wishes, needs and complaints, and to their suggestions and advice. The military tax is only the most striking of many examples. For how many decades have we complained that the military tax, in its present form, is antiquated and irritating, and suggested that it should be speedily revised, if not eliminated, in the mutual interest of the home-country and the Swiss abroad. To this day nothing positive has been done in this matter.

This is, however, largely the fault of the Swiss abroad themselves, as they have never taken the necessary steps to speak with one voice and to assert their views effectively. The formation of an Organisation of the Swiss abroad is obviously the only way to remedy this situation, an Organisation formed by the Swiss

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abroad and thereby capable of speaking authoritatively on their behalf.

But not only for the better care of our own interests should this Organisation be formed, but also as a means of enabling the Swiss abroad to be of the maximum usefulness to the home-country, by becoming a living link between the Swiss at home and abroad, helping to cultivate patriotic feelings, lending to the home-country its assistance and advice based on the intimate knowledge of the foreign countries, which so many Swiss politicians, parliamentarians and even business people are lacking.

The Swiss abroad feel a stronger need than ever for the spiritual backing of the far-off homeland and for closer contacts. The times are desperately serious. Switzerland should no longer leave the Swiss abroad to themselves nor neglect their value to Switzerland. They are the best friends of Switzerland — always. They need sympathetic understanding and handling and support as regards the cultivation of the love of the home-country amongst those born abroad. Who knows whether Switzerland will not one day be glad of every good friend in the world? Many Swiss abroad have intimately experienced the first and the second world war, from both of which the home-country was happily spared. The Swiss abroad could therefore make up for this certain lack in the treasure of experience of those at home, if not through representatives in Parliament then by means of the Organisation of the Swiss abroad. We should like to crown the noble work for the Swiss abroad begun by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique at home by increasing the interest and the influence of the Swiss abroad themselves.

H.M.

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S W I S S A I R .

The New Summer Time-table.

From 18th April, the following connections to and from the Swiss airports will exist:—

BASEL: London four times weekly (Swissair); Paris week-days (Air France); Brussels week-days (SABENA); Amsterdam via Eindhoven week-days (KLM); Zurich four times weekly (Swissair); freight and mail service three times weekly to London and five times weekly to Amsterdam (Swissair).

GENEVA: London five times weekly (Swissair) and daily (BEA); Paris twice daily (Swissair and Air France); Brussels week-days (SABENA); Copenhagen direct with connection to Oslo, Stockholm, Malmoe and Gothenburg once weekly (SAS); Frankfurt-Copenhagen with the connections as mentioned three times weekly (DDL); Amsterdam five times weekly (KLM); Barcelona twice weekly (Swissair); Barcelona-Madrid-Tangiers three times weekly (Iberia); Madrid-Lisbon twice weekly (Swissair) and three times weekly (KLM); Athens-Istanbul once weekly (Swissair); Jerusalem-Cairo once weekly (Swissair); Nice twice weekly (Air France) and three times weekly (DDL); Rome-Tunis twice weekly (KLM) Tunis-Kano-Léopoldville-Johannesburg fortnightly (Swissair); Shannon-Gander-New York fortnightly (Swissair); Lisbon-Dakar-Recife-Rio de Janeiro-Montevideo-Buenos Aires once weekly (SAS); Zurich four times weekly (Swissair).

Apart from the above, the following connections of T.W.A. exist:—

Three times weekly to the Far East, four times weekly to the Near East and seven times weekly to North America.

ZURICH: London direct once daily, from 1st May twice daily (Swissair); London via Basle four times weekly (Swissair); Paris once daily (Swissair) and three times weekly (Air France); Brussels twice daily (Swissair and SABENA); Copenhagen-Stockholm twice weekly (Swissair) with connections to Malmoe-Gothenburg and Oslo; Frankfurt-Hamburg-Copenhagen daily (DNL) with the same connections; Amsterdam twice daily (Swissair and KLM); Eindhoven three times weekly (KLM); Prague twice daily (Swissair and CSA) with connections to Warsaw, Brno, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade, Sofia and Bucharest; Prague-Warsaw once weekly (Swissair); Geneva-Barcelona twice weekly (Swissair); Geneva-Madrid-Lisbon twice weekly (Swissair); Lyons twice weekly (DNL); Marseilles 3 times weekly (DNL); freight service Zurich-Basle-London three times weekly (Swissair).

With the partial opening of the Zurich/Kloten airport intended for 14th June, connections to and from various airfields abroad will be somewhat improved. From that date, Berne should also be included in the international air traffic network, as Swissair intend to open a service from Berne to London, to be operated three times weekly.

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FREE MEALS ON SWISSAIR AIRCRAFT.

With the entry into force of the summer time-table, refreshments will be served free of charge on all Swissair lines. Drinks (with the exception of tea and coffee) will be charged to the passengers.