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SWISS CRIMINAL LAW.

An N.S.H. Discussion.

The talk on the main features of the Swiss criminal code and the experiences in application since 1942, given by the Chief Justice of the Canton of Zürich, Dr. Jakob Heusser, at the last meeting of the N.S.H., would have deserved a bigger audience. The question of the best way of dealing with criminals by court sentences engages the attention of all serious-minded people in every country. And to know a little more about how Switzerland is solving the question is surely of much interest to us. Dr. Heusser was in a position to speak from the most intimate acquaintance with the problems in question and from direct experience in the course of many years in office as judge. The big innovations of the Federal Criminal Code were the abolition of the death penalty in the few Cantons that still had it, the introduction of "suspended" or conditional punishment, milder punishment for juveniles and increased emphasis on the reforming functions of punishment as opposed to its deterrent effect.

All these reforms have worked satisfactorily according to Dr. Heusser's view. Contrary to a much canvassed opinion the frequency of cases of murder has not increased in the Cantons that had to give up capital punishment. The system of reforming and educational punishment in lieu of plain prison or hard labour has proved successful so far as it can be applied. But there are not enough reforming institutions yet. Far from being too mild a form of punishment, criminals often beg judges not to send them to these reformatories. Corporal punishment has been abolished more than a century ago by the Federal Constitution. Swiss justice is, however, as Dr. Heusser admitted in the course of a lively discussion, too cumbersome and slow in trifling cases, and there are not the same safeguards in favour of the suspected and accused as for instance in this country. Some recent cases of particularly brutal murders have brought about an agitation for capital punishment and against premature conditional release of dangerous criminals for good behaviour in prison.

H.E.

A GREAT WOMEN'S CENTRE.

On Tuesday, April 28th, 1953, the Y.W.C.A. Central Club, Great Russell Street, W.C.1. celebrated the 21st birthday of its establishment.

H.M. Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who had performed the opening ceremony in April 1932, when she was Duchess of York, was present, and had graciously consented to receive purses "as 21st birthday presents".

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, presented a purse to the amount of 50 Guineas on behalf of the Swiss Government. This gift is a testimony of the gratitude felt by Switzerland for the great assistance the Y.W.C.A. often gives to Swiss Girls in London.

It may be remembered that at the time of the inception of the Central Club, members and firms of the Swiss Colony, including a few donors from Switzerland, subscribed the sum of £1,000.0.0 towards the building and furnishing of the "Swiss Parlour", in recognition of the Y.M.C.A.'s work for the many Swiss girls in Great Britain.

A CORRECTION.

In the 3rd paragraph of the article "Swiss Mercantile Society. The S.K.V. 80 years old" published in our last issue, a printing error has occurred for which we apologise to our correspondent.

Line 4 & 5 should read "more particularly in the relationship between *employee* and employer, and not *unemployed*." Ed.

ANGLO-SWISS CORONATION BALL FRIDAY, 5th JUNE, 1953

The Anglo-Swiss Coronation Ball, organised by the Anglo-Swiss Society of Great Britain, will take place at

LONDONDERRY HOUSE,
PARK LANE, LONDON,

on
FRIDAY, JUNE 5th,
from 9.0 p.m. to 2.0 a.m.

Dancing will be continuous in the Grand Ball-room, with a Running Buffet in the Dining Room and a Bar in the Library.

Non-members of the Anglo-Swiss Society will be warmly welcomed at this Ball.

Tickets at 27/6 each, inclusive of buffet, soft drinks and coffee, can be obtained from:—

THE ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY,
HILL HOUSE,
17, HANS PLACE, LONDON, S.W.1.
(KNI 1331.)



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