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Autor: W.R.

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35th " AUSLANDSCHWEIZERTAG. "

Brief reference has already been made to the above-mentioned meeting which was attended on behalf of the London Group of the N.S.H. by their President. Mr. A. F. Suter, member of the "Auslandschweizer-Kommission", accompanied by Mrs. Suter and daughter, was also present. The following topics were fully discussed by the delegates:—

1. *Law concerning financial assistance to Swiss abroad and returning Swiss having suffered war losses.* This thorny problem which has for so many years been the subject of stormy arguments at meetings should now disappear from the agenda, as the measure agreed to by the Federal Assembly, providing financial assistance from a fund totalling Fcs. 129,000,000.—, has by general consent been accepted as an equitable solution.

2. *Payments in advance to Swiss victims of Nazi persecution.* Delegates were informed of the outlines of a law about to be finalised by the Federal Assembly.

3. *Solidarity Fund of Swiss abroad.* Delegates were informed by members of the Advisory Committee of the progress made. The original conception of the fund has now been modified by the proposed introduction of graded annual subscriptions of Fcs. 25.—50.—75.— or 100.—, which would entitle subscribers to assistance in case of loss of means of existence to sums varying from Fcs. 2,500.—/Fcs. 10,000.—. At the age of 65, subscribers would be able to reclaim subscriptions already made, thus acquiring modest savings. In case of damage exceeding funds collected, it is proposed to approach the Federal Authorities for a financial guarantee. Although this proposition requires further study, it has already received sympathetic tentative reception from the Federal Council and about 2,000 Swiss abroad.

4. *Proposed new law concerning military tax.* Delegates were advised of the principal items of this proposed measure of which the most important features would be the limiting of the tax liability for Swiss abroad to 10 years and the abolition of the iniquitous "Anwartschaft/Expectatives" tax. The rates proposed by the Federal Finance Department would be Fcs. 15.— personal tax, 2.4 per cent of the income (less Fcs. 1,000.— for married persons, Fcs. 500.— per child and Fcs. 500.— for insurance payments). It has at long last been decided to detach this overdue measure from the framework of the General Federal Finance Reform (which has so far been rejected by the Sovereign), and to lay it as soon as possible before the Federal Assembly. It was con-

ceded by the Federal experts present that the yield from military tax levied on Swiss abroad was not commensurate with the administrative and physical effort of collecting it, and that the proposed solution constituted only a compromise. In view of the "Veralterung" of Swiss Colonies, it would appear that income from this controversial tax is likely to diminish further.

5. *Proposed Federal Invalidity Law and 4th revision of A.H.V.* This law would be incorporated in the framework of the A.H.V. Insurance scheme and would thus become available for voluntary subscribers abroad to the A.H.V. The proposed premium is 10 per cent of the A.H.V. contribution.

Finally it was proposed by members of the Paris Colony that the existing organisation of the Swiss abroad should be strengthened by the creation by the various colonies of Advisory Councils. This proposal met with some scepticism, and was referred to the "Auslandschweizer Kommission" for further detailed study. Pleas were also made by delegates, notably from London and Hamburg, for increased cultural contacts between home and the colonies by the provision of films, exhibitions, etc.

The meeting was commendably brisk and businesslike, and completed its agenda in excellent time, thus enabling delegates to establish friendly contacts outside the Congress building. It concluded, as already reported, with a most enjoyable reception given by the Cantonal Authorities of Schwyz, and a moving visit to the Rütli, where those present were addressed by Federal Counsellor Etter.

W.R.

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