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MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

The Commission of the Swiss Abroad (ASK) met in Berne for their customary spring session on 6th March. As usual, there were fewer members present than at the summer meeting which is always held in conjunction with the Assembly and timed to coincide with the holidays which many Swiss from abroad spend in their homeland. Nevertheless, there were representatives from as far away as Sweden and South Africa, Morocco and Istanbul. Great Britain was represented by Mrs. Meier (South) and Dr. H. B. Knuchel (North). The cold wintry weather — it was snowing heavily much of the day — did not deter a good many inland members either from attending.

The President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (ASO), Dr. G. Schuerch, welcomed the members from outside and inside Switzerland in the dignified Council Chamber of the "Rathaus" in Berne, which belongs to the Canton and in which the Municipality is a guest.

After a short appreciation of the late Prof. A. Laett, a former President of the ASO and a man who had done a great deal for the Swiss abroad, the minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. The next item on the heavy agenda was the election of a new Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad. Dr. H. J. Halbheer resigned last year after six and a half successful years at the helm, and from amongst fourteen applicants, the Executive Committee had chosen Dr. Edmond Mueller, a citizen of Sion/Valais. He was duly elected by the meeting. (*A curriculum vitae will be published in a later issue of the "Swiss Observer".*)

As from next September, the members of the ASK will start a new term of office (three years). It was agreed that groups of societies (the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain for this country) should announce their representatives before the next meeting of the ASK in August, either by confirming their present delegates or electing new ones. The President of the ASO will be put up for election to the Central Council of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique for another three years. The Executive Committee of the ASK has at present seven members, amongst whom are two from abroad (Lyons and Milan). A third member from abroad (Bregenz) was proposed to the NSH by the Commission.

The next item on the agenda was the preparation of the next Assembly of the Swiss Abroad. This is to be held, if possible, in Zug during the last week-end in August. Owing to accommodation difficulties, the definite date and venue will be announced later. The main theme of this year's Assembly will be "Die Praesenz der Schweiz in der Welt". A questionnaire will be sent shortly to the groups abroad, and the theme will be discussed fully by the various Swiss communities abroad. (*There will be more information later in the "Swiss Observer".*)

It was announced that the collection on the Swiss National Day on 1st August is to be in favour of Swiss schools abroad and the "Auslandschweizerwerk" of the New Helvetic Society. It was agreed that suitable propaganda should be made in Switzerland and in the Swiss Colonies abroad.

The accounts for 1964 were accepted next and the budget put forward for approval. The annual report for 1964 was also accepted.

The two important items which have figured on the agenda of every meeting for the past few years and which are of great importance to the Swiss abroad, are the petition regarding permission for the purchase of land and the new

constitutional article concerning the Swiss abroad. Regarding the former, there was not very good news. The National Council and the Council of States accepted the petition asking for easier legislation for the Swiss abroad who, at present, are treated like foreign nationals living outside Switzerland and have to apply for the same permit when desirous to buy land in Switzerland. The Federal Council in its message to Parliament considered that there were strong legal reasons which compelled Switzerland to adhere to the principle of residence and not of nationality in this case. At the moment, there was nothing more to be done by the ASK in the matter. The same applied to the Constitutional Article regarding which a message was expected by the Federal Council. This — as was explained by Monsieur M. Jaccard at the luncheon — will be the first time that the proposed legislation will deal with people and not things.

It was announced that, following the creation of a Study Group for Helvetic Problems in Paris, two further groups had been started in Strasbourg and Brussels. The Solidarity Fund still wanted more members, and the meeting was asked to make further efforts in inducing Swiss abroad to join this great work of self-help.

The "Parliament" of the Swiss Abroad which is the name often used for the Commission not only meets to conduct business, but also to exchange views and opinions before and after the business meetings. An excellent opportunity is always afforded for friendly intercourse during luncheon offered by the ASO. This time it was at the "Zunftthaus zu Webern", and it hardly needs mentioning that the "Bernerplatte" was superb, even though somewhat too much in amplitude for those of the delegates who are no longer used to the large quantities of food consumed at home! — But as always, the members left at the end of the day convinced that useful work had been done and grateful to the ASO and the men and women in it for their untiring efforts in the interest of the Swiss abroad.

Mariann.

SWISS BANK CORPORATION

At the 93rd Annual General Meeting held in Basle on Thursday, 4th March, 1965, under the chairmanship of Dr. Samuel Schweizer, approval was given to the Board's decision to distribute a dividend of 10% (unchanged), to allocate Fr.2,000,000.— to the Pension Fund and Fr.18,000,000.— to the Special Reserve Fund and to carry forward Fr.6,699,736.72.

The retiring members of the Board, Dr. Rodolphe Stadler, Mr. Hans C. Bechtler, Dr. Eric Choisy, Mr. A. Walter Gattiker, Dr. F. Emmanuel Iselin, Dr. Karl Obrecht and Mr. Charles Türler, were re-elected for a further period of three years. Dr. Max Hintermann, member of the General Management of Swiss Aluminium Ltd., Herrliberg, was also elected to the Board.

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