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# COMMENT

## WITHOUT MUCH CONCERN FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HAPPINESS?

*The Counsellors of Science at the Swiss Embassies in Washington D.C. and Ottawa, Canada, publish a Bulletin several times a year, in which, on some 80 pages, all kinds of technological, scientific industrial, cultural and research news is given in French, German or English. We reprint the following from the Counsellor's Letter (January 1969), in which Monsieur Charles Tavel expresses thoughts well worth contemplating.*

"It is a good time to reflect on the past and to look to the future. No doubt, last years's most significant event has been the quasi world-wide student revolt. Without expressing any judgment on the motives and attitudes of the demonstrators, which have anyway been very different from one place to the other, it remains that the shock provoked by these unexpected events has been basically healthy: it invites us to face the facts, to reflect on the meaning of our attitudes, on our purposes, on the ultimate values which should guide our actions. As long as we feel strong enough to engage in dialogue with the rising generations, and as long as such dialogue remains within the boundaries of legality, as long as we are ready to debate openly and publicly about our strengths and weaknesses, as long as our authorities provide enlightened guidance, we have reason to believe that we are fit to confront the tremendous problems which the development of technology poses to mankind. And there are indications that this is the case."

*Monsieur Tavel then gives some details about the dialogue established between professors and students and refers to the Students' Referendum, some open-minded and balanced speeches by Federal Councillors and points of discussion thrown open by radio and newspapers. He continues:*

"Indeed, we must recognize that the issues at stake mean much more than a simple realignment of our thinking habits. What we have to decide are the ultimate values which will guide our actions. We now begin to realize that the "affluent society", which can be a goal for an underdeveloped country because the people have to struggle for it, threatens to be an element of decadence for those more advanced in the attainment of such a goal. Kahn and Wiener in "The Year 2000" give a stern warning about the "alienation" which might result from the pursuit of egocentric, individualistic and materialistic purposes. René Dubos, in a recent speech, warned once more that the degradation of the environment and the immoderate tapping of natural resources, which are the characteristic of our techno-affluent society, are going to make life more than uneasy for the future generations. "We do not live in an age of science," he said. "We have merely accumulated the use of techniques without much concern for the achievement of happiness." It seems difficult to dispute such statements but there is another vital facet to this problem which deserves to be emphasized: John F. Kennedy stated that fear overwhelms where faith does not exist. There is no doubt that, to be happy, man must struggle on behalf of values which surpass him. He needs to believe in ideals. He must fight for ultimate values. He must be able to make sacrifices for others, he must look ahead, to the future, work for the next generation."

*He says that this is nothing new for the Swiss, it meant going back to their origins. It did not mean breaking with the past:*

"In a way it means restoring the ties to the past. And whereas the prophets of the technological age foresee less work and pains, we might soon discover that work and even pains are a condition of happiness. . . provided, of course, that work means creation. It might indeed very well appear that the real promise of technology will not be to relieve us from our work but to reserve to mankind the creative part of it. And if man is mature enough to devote to the cultivation of his spirit and to the strengthening of his character the time and means that the development of technology will have granted him, then it may be that evolution will be considered synonymous with progress. Not only will a country like ours (because a country like a man must be animated by superior motives) have to struggle in order to safeguard the true values which find their roots in our history. It will also have to be inspired by

Federal Councillor Celio's appeal: "Neutrality and solidarity yes, but also active participation in the destiny of the world".

## ANGLO-SWISS NEWS ITEMS

The Council of the Swiss Winston Churchill Foundation met in Zurich on 3rd June under the chairmanship of its President, Dr. h.c. Willy Bretscher. The recent gift of 20,000 francs from Migros was acknowledged. The Foundation keeps a library of books and documents in connection with the great statesman, and provides the funds for annual Churchill Memorial Lectures at a Swiss University.

Britain completed repayment of a 40-million dollar loan from Switzerland, with a final instalment of nine million dollars.

The Royal Shakespeare Company gave a performance of "Troilus and Cressida" at Geneva's *Grand Théâtre*. It was a great success, the first time that Geneva had a chance of seeing Shakespeare performed by a world company of British actors.

To the skirl of bagpipes, a ceremony marking Scottish-Swiss co-operation took place in the new extension of the Montreux Casino.

Chairman Tom Scott of George Ballantine & Son, whisky distillers, had come from Dumbarton to present a silver quaich to Maison Oehninger, S.A.'s General Manager P. E. Bolle of Montreux.

The event marked the presentation of the Queen's Award for Industry to George Ballantine for record overseas sales during the last seven years.

Recalling that he had recently met Her Majesty at a garden party at the Palace of Holyrood in Edinburgh, Mr. Scott said, "We are particularly pleased to succeed in Switzerland because it is recognized everywhere that the Swiss people are discerning and quality conscious."

Mr. Scott explained that a quaich, a traditional drinking vessel used both in the Highlands and the Lowlands, was originally made of wood.

The British-Swiss Chamber of Commerce met for its 49th A.G.M. in Zurich. It was followed by a luncheon at the Guildhall, at which the guest of honour was the President of the London Chamber of Commerce Mr. Robin E. Brook, C.M.G., O.B.E. Mr. J. O. Roe (Lausanne) was elected new Chairman in succession to the retiring Mr. C. A. Staehelin (Basle).

Prof. Dr. V. Prelog, Professor of Organic Chemistry at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH), was awarded an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University. At the same time, he received the highest award of the American Chemical Society.

Charlie Chaplin's second daughter was married at Corsier to a Greek fur wholesaler. The Mayor gave a reception after the civil ceremony.

(Agence Télégraphique Suisse and "Weekly Tribune".)