

Société des secours mutuels des Suisses à Londres

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owe her a real debt of gratitude for all she has done for the Welfare Office. The question of her replacement presents a problem.

It was also towards the end of the year that Mrs. Thomas announced her impending resignation due to her husband having accepted an appointment in Switzerland. Mrs. Kaeufeler has kindly agreed to take over the Honorary Treasurer's duties when Mrs. Thomas formally resigns at the Annual General Meeting. We are also very much indebted to Mrs. Thomas for keeping the accounts over a number of years.

The Committee continue to follow with interest the progress of the "Au Pair Charter". It has now been revised and the final version is open for signature by the members of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. At the end of the year however the Representative of the United Kingdom had not yet put down his signature.

The Welfare Office continues to depend for its maintenance on the annual Federal subsidy received from Berne, the annual contributions of the Amies de la Jeune Fille and Pro Filia in Switzerland and the Swiss Benevolent Society. Certain sections of the Schweizerischer Verband Evangelischer Frauenhilfe have in recent years sent contributions; donations are occasionally made from private sources. The Swiss Hostel again provided accommodation for our office free of charge.

With regard to the activity of the Welfare Office Mrs. Kind reported that the number of girls who were in contact with or assisted by the Welfare Office in 1969 amounted to 476 as against 546 in 1968. There seemed to be no specific reason for this decrease.

There were some very quiet weeks at the office, with perhaps one or two telephone calls a day. On the other hand July/August and November/December were extremely busy. On one day in July four girls were repatriated: one from Holloway Prison, one with an escort from a mental hospital, one from the Swiss Hostel and one within hours of the discovery of a theft. Tick-

ets had to be provided and travel arrangements to be made here and in Switzerland.

The girls' problems and questions were generally the same as in previous years. It is still not easy for many of them to adapt themselves to domestic work as a means of earning their living, and sometimes it is made more difficult for them by employers who do not think it necessary to give an Au Pair enough food or decent accommodation, to say nothing of due consideration.

The daily work continued along the lines described in detail in last year's report. As in previous years the solidarity and kindness among the girls themselves played an important part if one of their compatriots, hitherto known or unknown, was in need. Among the Welfare cases there was an increase in Court cases, mostly thefts from stores and offences against the Dangerous Drugs Act were slightly more numerous, which is not surprising with drug-taking spreading in both Switzerland and this country.

The number of pregnant girls known to the Welfare Office was again lower. Half of them hoped that the Welfare Office would help them to obtain an abortion, for which purpose they had travelled to London. The Welfare Officer is concerned about the new Abortion Act. It seems that a foreign girl's diagnosis—that she is in need of an operation—is accepted unquestioningly by some London doctors, whose addresses are easily available provided a foreign girl carries sufficient cash with her. Some of the girls who came to the Welfare Office had adhered to the original decision but others changed their mind after only one talk with the Welfare Officer and returned to Switzerland to face a future with a child.

Financial assistance was given to 52 girls (10 rail tickets, 20 air tickets, £148 in cash). Repayment was again very good.

The Committee are extremely grateful for the assistance given to the Welfare Office by the Swiss Embassy,

in particular Consul F. Adams and Vice-Consul Ch. Abegglen, by Miss H. Siegrist, Warden of the Swiss Hostel, by the Ministers of the Swiss Churches in London and by the Swiss Benevolent Society. They also very much appreciate the support of the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" and the services rendered to them by the Auditors.

May 1970.

The Committee for 1970 is as follows:

Madame R. Keller, Honorary President, Mrs. M. H. Ellis, M.B.E., Honorary President, Mrs. O. Grob, President, Mr. J. Zimmerman, Vice-President, Mrs. H. Knoll, Honorary Secretary, Mrs. M. Kaeufeler, Honorary Treasurer (Pro Filia), Mrs. R. Baumann (Amies de la Jeune Fille), Mrs. E. R. Cottet (Swiss Hostel), Mrs. G. Gysler, Consul F. Adams and Dr. Ch. Bruggmann (Swiss Embassy), Father P. Bossard (Swiss Catholic Mission), Rev. M. Dietler and Rev. A. Nicod (Eglise Suisse), Mrs. B. Kind (Welfare Officer).

A few copies of the Jubilee Report are still available and may be obtained from Mrs. B. Kind, Welfare Officer, 31 Conway Street, W.1.

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