

# Welfare Office for Swiss girls

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1971)**

Heft 1623

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

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The following day we embarked at the same place and set out for the Rutli, blessed by fine weather. After the short climb to the Rutli plateau, which even he most aged managed to overcome, we gathered around a speaking platform covered with a Swiss flag and reard Mr. Alfred Weber, President of the National Council. His most rational disquisitions on the constraints of a consumer civilisation were followed by prayers by Professor Paul Kamer from Zurich and Mr. Pierre Schönenberger, minister at Brunnen. We sang two bilingual hymns for which were issued the words and said a prayer.

The blessing was followed by the walk back to the boat. Its paddle wheels churned the blue waters vehemently and the juggernaut sailed on a gusty lake towards the Bürgenstock. We were there in an hour-and-a-half. It needed three or four climbs of the aged funicular to convey all the assembly to the Park Hotel. We had a wholesome Bernese meal in the vast dining room of the hotel which overlooks the lake below. We were entertained by yodellers and accordionists. After coffee and brandy we then left to enjoy the sunny afternoon as we chose until the time of departure of the boat for the return journey. One possibility was to take a walk along *Felsenweg*, a giddy path hewn from the rock by Bücher and Dürer nearly a hundred years ago. At one point the way is barred and one has to take a lift built against the rock wall, whisking people up 150 metres in a few seconds.

When the boat headed back for Brunnen, many participants had left already. A farewell reunion was held in the Park Hotel and this closed the 49th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad.

An occasion like this presents the opportunity of meeting all sorts of interesting people. There was a mighty accumulation of life and experience at Brunnen on that last week-end of August. To relate the many reminiscences from abroad which I have heard would take too long. However, one character will be remembered by all participants. He was Mr. Marius Golay, a greying Genevese who had left a routine job on the local water board to try his luck in the Congo.

He had gone there posing as a water prospection expert and worked on a dam in the jungle before branching off into catering. He eventually managed a series of restaurants and hotels, winding up as master of a restaurant owned by the Union Minière mining company. He had been condemned to death three times, had horrible tales of tribal feuds and cannibalism to tell, had known the bloodthirsty negro-hunting mercenary Colonel Schram—but all this had not prevented him gathering a handsome nest egg conveniently tucked away in a Luxembourg account. With it he planned to

open a caravan site and a restaurant in Switzerland and end his days in more peaceful surroundings.

He had landed in Brunnen quite by chance, cruising across Switzerland in a Peugeot 204-estate in the company of his three pythons. The largest was 11 feet long and potentially nasty. It was left hibernating inside a jute bag in the car. But Mr. Golay trundled the smallest of the family in his rucksack and danced with it before a bemused audience on the lawn at the Bürgenstock top station.

Many participants appeared to have met each other on several similar occasions before and that is why these three days were so lively and friendly. I must encourage all our readers contemplating on giving the Assembly for the Swiss Abroad a try. It is a most enjoyable function and expertly organised.

In this respect all praise is due to the sterling work of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. All its staff are young and smiling. They work in a marvellous family spirit. They, more than anybody else, contributed to make the 1971 Assembly a great success.

Next year will mark the Jubilee of these annual events. The 1972 Assembly will be centred on the theme of the political rights of the Swiss abroad. It will be held in Berne and this festive Jubilee occasion is planned to last a whole week.

(PMB)

## WELFARE OFFICE

for

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**REUNION DE COUTURE:** le 2<sup>e</sup> mardi du mois.

**LUNCH:** tous les dimanches à 13h00.

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**PASTEUR:** A. Nicod, 7 Park View Road, London N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

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**SERVICES IN GERMAN:** at Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, at 10 a.m. At St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

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