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restaurant was called, is to disappear, and with it the stained beams, the natural tiles, the little stove in the centre and its long black connecting stovepipe and the round table in the corner at which the great Lenin used to drink his beer. *Tempi passati!*

SWISS ABROAD ITEMS

SWITZERLAND CALLING

Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's European and Overseas Services

The Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's summer 1971 broadcast schedule will include another language programme for listeners overseas. For the first time, a programme in Romansh, Switzerland's fourth national language, will be added to transmissions in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Esperanto.

Once a month, the German transmission will be replaced by a 30-minute programme of music and information from Switzerland's Romansh region. In providing a link between Switzerland and Romansh-speaking Swiss abroad, S.B.C. hope to contribute to the strengthening of a language spoken by only one per cent of Switzerland's population. The programme will be called *La trais-cha rumantscha*.

Among the changes for summer 1971 in S.B.C.'s English programme, there will be a round-table discussion entitled *To be quite frank*, a feature on different aspects of life in Switzerland. It will be broadcast every first Sunday of the month.

French-speaking listeners will have the opportunity of studying Switzerland's political, economic and social scene in the feature called *Au centre du débat*.

The Italian programme will place more emphasis on culture and tourism in Switzerland's Italian-speaking region. Instead of one 15-minute programme on Swiss-Italian dialects and folk music, there will be two features twice a month with the titles *Pagine di scrittori nostri* and *Ticino in musica*.

Anyone interested in receiving free copies of the S.B.C.'s programme guide should apply to *Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, European and Overseas Services, 3000 Berne 16, Switzerland*.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE SWISS ABROAD MEETS IN BERNE

The Commission of the Swiss Abroad met in Berne on 6th March

under the chairmanship of its President, Councillor of States, Louis Guisan. He welcomed delegates from all parts of the world, from places as far apart as Argentine and Thailand. There were a number of personalities from amongst the inland members and others, such as the President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Mr. J.-C. Nicole. Great Britain was represented by the regular delegate for the South, Mrs. Mariann Meier, and the deputy delegate for the North, Mr. O. Hartmann from Edinburgh.

The main business was the acceptance of the annual report and the accounts for 1970. Both were passed after some discussion on the budget. A deficit is again inevitable for 1971; but as the result of the *Bundesfeierspende* (Collection on Swiss National Day) 1972 will again be donated to the work of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, the burden will be eased. On the other hand, the whole organisation is also growing and with it the tasks of the Secretariat in Berne. One of them is looking after communities abroad, and journeys overseas are a costly matter. Yet it was felt that such personal contacts were necessary. The Director of the Secretariat, Mr. M. Ney, informed the meeting of his planned visit to South Africa.

The meeting was told about the position of the Swiss abroad in the forthcoming eighth revision of the Old Age Insurance (AHV). The Commission is well represented on the body studying the revision, by the former member of the Secretariat, Dr. Sylvia Arnold. With regard to legislation under the Special Article for the Swiss Abroad in the Federal Constitution, a draft has been made dealing with the Confederation's responsibilities as to welfare assistance. Such legislation will take time, but progress has been made. Concerning political rights and military duties, a new position has arisen with the introduction of women's suffrage. The problem concerns foreign women married to Swiss living abroad, and it needs careful study.

Assembly of the Swiss Abroad at Brunnen

The delegates were given details of the programme of this summer's Assembly of the Swiss Abroad at Brunnen on the Lake of Lucerne. It will take place from 27th to 29th August. On the first day, there will be a meeting of the Commission with a different agenda. Less time will be spent on administrative matters and more time allocated to the discussion of problems. There will be a meeting of the Council of the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad in the afternoon of the first day. Other participants at the Assembly will have a choice of various visits (cement factory, Kirsch distillery, powerworks, Federal Archives and Museum at Schwyz, etc.) In the evening, there will

be the official opening, followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Solidarity Fund and a question time on general problems.

On Saturday morning will be the first plenary session. The second will take place in the afternoon, when a member of the Government will address the Assembly. A tour of the lake and entertainment will fill the evening.

On Sunday it is hoped to have an ecumenical church service, possibly on the Ruetli, followed by an excursion to the Buergenstock.

The theme of the Assembly will be "The Swiss abroad under the influence of two worlds—that of his homeland and that of his country of adoption". In the next issue of the "Swiss Observer", the theme will be gone into more fully and the questionnaire explained which had been issued by the Secretariat. This document gave rise to detailed discussion at the meeting in Berne, and the final version as accepted by the delegates, has just been sent out.

The next item on the agenda concerned the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad of 1972. It will be the 50th, and special arrangements are already being made to make the jubilee in Berne an outstanding event. Swiss firms and individuals abroad who have something worthwhile to show in connection with their work or occupation should apply immediately to the Secretariat in Berne (Alpenstrasse 26) for detailed information.

Information—Two-Way Traffic

A report on the activities of the special commission on information was given to the meeting. This commission has been working for a few years, ever since the Assembly in Lugano discussed the problem in general. The commission consists of prominent journalists from within Switzerland, representatives of the radio services and of the Federal Political Department, especially Mr. M. Jaccard who is in charge of the Section dealing with questions affecting the Swiss abroad. Three Swiss from abroad are members *ad personam*, one from Paris, one from Milan and one from London (Mrs. M. Meier). The question of information has two main aspects, firstly of how to keep the Swiss abroad informed of what happens at home, and secondly of how to give the Swiss at home the right information about the communities all over the world and about the conditions in which they exist. After much deliberation and study, a pilot scheme has been started in France, and a first special issue of the "Messager Suisse de France" was published in December, which, with the co-operation of the Federal Political Department, was sent to all registered Swiss in France. The result was evaluated, not least of the questionnaire which readers had been asked to send back, and the scheme may be called a success. It will be continued in France four times a year, and

other French-speaking countries will be included. The extension to English and Spanish-speaking countries is being studied.

Youth Service

As time was rather short, a report by the leader of the Youth Service, Mr. Toni Rihs, was not given at the meeting, but sent to delegates with their minutes. A few points deserve special mention. The date of the next summer camp will be 18th July to 7th August. The Canton of Grisons will be explored, and the Swiss Club in Liechtenstein has invited members to a visit to the Principality. All young people between 15 and 25 may join. They should apply as soon as possible.

There will be a special meeting of young Swiss at Brunnen, and if there are any groups not yet in touch with Berne, they should write immediately. The "Weltschweizer", a well-conceived and efficiently-edited magazine for the young Swiss living outside Switzerland, has information of special interest for youngsters. It is free to people under 25, although donations are always welcome. A film about the Youth Service is nearing completion; it will give a good idea of this excellent service, an important part of the work of the Secretariat in Berne. It also includes looking after young from abroad while on military service in Switzerland. They often find things difficult, and this particular service is very valuable.

Free holiday in Switzerland

This did not come up at the meeting in Berne, but since the whole matter concerns the work of the Secretariat and the Commission, it will be mentioned here. The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad (see issue of 22nd January for details) has launched a contest. All members of the Fund, including those joining during 1971, may take part. All they have to do is to enrol one or more new members. According to the number and the amount of the annual deposits of the new members enrolled, the participant has one or more chances. The prizes range from a fortnight's holiday in Switzerland for two people to large awards in cash and kind. The Embassy and the Consulates will send information on the Solidarity Fund and details of the contest on request.

(MM)

SWISS "EUROPA GATEAU"

The Netherland Foreign Minister, Mr. Luns, visited Switzerland recently and addressed the Central Switzerland Sections of the "Europa Union" in Lucerne. The occasion was Europe Day, and to celebrate the event, the Lucerne *pâtissier* Raymond Bachmann created a special gâteau decorated with the ring of stars, the emblem of the Europa Union. The creator will give

the recipe free of charge to pastrycooks all over Europe, provided the gâteaux will be decorated with the same emblem (to be manufactured industrially in order to save time and effort on individual decoration). Thus the Swiss gâteau is to make a contribution towards European unity.

(Tagesanzeiger)

ART AND ITS INFLUENCE IN FILM PRODUCTION

The following is a "manifesto" by a faithful reader, Mr. Pierre Savoie, who is an artist well known to the Swiss of London and who here answers an article on the Swiss Cinema which appeared in our 12th February issue.

Art, in all its varied forms, has a definite relation to our feelings; it is a source of happiness and contentment, and is part of life itself. Almost every member of the community is at least a potential art lover in one form or another and is endowed by nature with some talent for appreciating the beautiful. The expression of beauty is one which cannot be definitely stated in words; but while divergence of opinion may occasionally occur, there must be a basis whereby a standard of taste is obtained and where one can define with certainty what really is beautiful.

Beauty in moving pictures is a supreme essential appealing for simplicity, truthfulness and sincerity, so that the mind is made to appreciate its influence and the heart to feel its charm.

The broadening vision and larger conception of motive in art which we are witnessing today is testimony to the fact that we have reached a new era of artistic endeavour. For art we conceive to be expression, the expression of something which has touched the emotions. Whatever our conception, it is clear that only an art which can be not only a faithful recorder, but an interpreter of life, can be of uplifting service to us.

Such forms of art as painting, architecture, music, dancing and the cinema, enjoy a common language of expression understandable by all nations and readily lend themselves as ambassadors of culture.

Moving pictures are the most powerful and far reaching art media ever placed at our disposal. They provide both entertainment and education, and a far more expressive thought transmitter than a painting or a statue and is far more comprehensible to the general public.

The success of film production depends entirely in the presentation of pictures in close harmony with the tastes and aspirations of our time. Sincere art reflects the spirit of the age in which it is produced. In our complex civilisation, with all its stir and turmoil, there is much to be expressed and, given a chance, many talented Swiss

artists eager to express their ideas and feelings. In the first instance it should be realised that of all things the story counts most and that a good story has also a considerable box office value. When the theme of a story is seen too easily interest ceases and the picture is of little entertainment. Poor stories make poor films, and therefore poor returns. It is the gradual development of a good narrative that makes us read the book to the last page.

Given a good story, Swiss artists and producers will not fail to play their part with sincerity and create films which will hold their own against the best productions of any country. Sincerity in art is a solid foundation and the best assurance of success. A film which appeals, not to vision alone, but to the emotions also, is a work of art and it will be all the more successful by retaining Swiss national characteristics.

Past experience, though on a small scale, clearly shows that, backed with faith and trust and a reasonable amount of expenditure, Switzerland has all the talent required for the production of great and even epoch-making films.

The particular rigid form of Swiss cantonal film censorship, which varies in severity, demands more flexibility; but so long as playwrights and producers bear in mind that most cinemas shun films with an element of vulgarity and obscenity, they have a great future before them.

The Swiss film industry—call it what you may—needs creative minds that disdain mediocrity, but strive for beauty, originality and perfection. It must be up to date in our sentiments and cultivate whatever is artistic in our nature, and it must be of the best if it has to give happiness to others.

Could a Swiss film, like other products of world-wide repute "made in Switzerland", infuse all the art sensibility, traditions and ideals so dear to us? Yes certainly, I am sure it could.

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