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an interesting and pleasant day for all our members, who were most thankful to our Committee for having given us the opportunity to have a closer look at this product of human imagination, creative ability and technical achievement.

E. Berner

## CITY SWISS CLUB OCTOBER MEETING

Like the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, in the previous month the City Swiss Club devoted its October monthly meeting to the political rights of the Swiss abroad, a subject which was illustrated with great fluency and competence by Dr. H. R. Bolliger from Manchester.

The Speaker explained why he had advocated, before the 50th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, a rejection of current proposals allowing Swiss abroad transiting in the Motherland to vote on federal issues. He dwelt briefly on the main arguments—which have already been described in previous issues—namely, the problems of inadequate information and “geographical unfairness”.

He explained at some length why some foreign Swiss communities, mainly the Swiss of France, were more eager than others to partake in Swiss political life. With the help of slides showing graphs and charts taken from an economic survey by the Club of Rome, Dr. Bolliger undertook to demonstrate, in a most enlightening and original manner, how the essentially varying life-styles of Swiss living abroad, and particularly overseas, would affect their voting.

Dr. Bolliger's argument was that, whatever their remaining ties with the Homeland, the Swiss abroad were conditioned by their surroundings and could not really live and feel as the Swiss at home on national issues. Among various examples, he screened a chart showing the variations of calorific and animal protein intake among populations of the world and argued that even such considerations had a bearing on behaviour, particularly political behaviour, not forgetting that some of our compatriots overseas live on a very different diet. Regarding the problem of information, the Speaker illustrated his point mentioning the case of personal colleagues who had proved their ignorance of the second reading in the Commons, a bill altering local government boundaries. He underlined the implications of a similar law in Switzerland in taking as example the uproar which moving Biesfelden from Basle-Country to Basle-Town would create. The Swiss abroad would more often than not be unaware of the importance of such a law, and would therefore not really be fit to vote on it. Dr. Bolliger said that national political activity, which he considered as one of

the main themes of daily conversation in Switzerland, could not possibly carry the same interest abroad.

During the lively discussion that followed, the general consensus of the meeting proved to be very much in support of Dr. Bolliger's point of view, and several speakers rose to state that they had more interest in British current affairs. Nevertheless, the problem of information on Swiss matters was raised forcefully and it was recalled that the “Swiss Observer” would soon be conveying official and more detailed information from Berne.

The attendance was particularly important and there were about 40 members and guests present.

(PMB)

## Press Attache in Saigon

Mr. Carlo Jagmetti, Press Attache at the Swiss Embassy in London, has left his post for a two month stint at the Embassy in Saigon, where he is to fill a temporary vacancy. We wish him an interesting—but hopefully not too eventful assignment. Mrs. Jagmetti will remain in London with her children. We hope that their long wait will not be too trying.

(PMB)

## Swiss school reported in the Guardian

The *Guardian* of 24th October had a feature on *Noah's Ark*, a charitable trust devoted to the care and education of severely retarded children, founded and run by our compatriot *Miss Alice Hoffman de Visme*, whose venture we reported in the “Swiss Observer” of 23rd July, 1971.



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The article, written by Maureen O'Connor, points out that the children under Miss Hoffman's care have all been rejected by other institutions “ostensibly designed to help them” and expresses tremendous admiration for the love of her small and proficient staff.

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## IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOLIDARITY FUND

At the General Meeting of the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad (Berne, August 1972), the Council presented a plan of proposed changes in the structure of the Fund, which should be passed at the AGM next August and put into force in 1974.

The main change is that members will have a chance of not only increasing their contributions, and thus their benefits in case of need, but that they should also forego their interest in favour of solidarity.

The new system visualises a member estimating himself what he would want to receive in case of loss or livelihood through political strife or war. This cash payment ranges from Fr. 2,500 to Fr. 50,000. Once he has decided on the figure, he has three possibilities: a) a single annual contribution (hundred-fold payment in case of need), b) double (fifty-fold payment) c) four-fold contribution (twenty-five-fold payment). Under a) one has to pay 24 years until one may have a 100% repayment of the contributions, under b) one pays 10 years and under c) five years. Now, if one remains a member after the required number of years, repayment may amount to 135% and more.

Two examples: Mr. X pays Fr. 200 annually for 20 years, total Fr. 4,000. At the end of that time he receives back Fr. 4,920. Yet all the time, he remains insured against loss of livelihood. In such an event, he would be paid an additional Fr. 10,000.

Mr. Y pays an annual contribution of Fr. 400 for 20 years; total Fr. 8,000. At the end of this period, repayment would amount to Fr. 11,120. Should he meet with misfortune according to the rules, he would not only get his payment contracted for, but an additional Fr. 10,000.