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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.

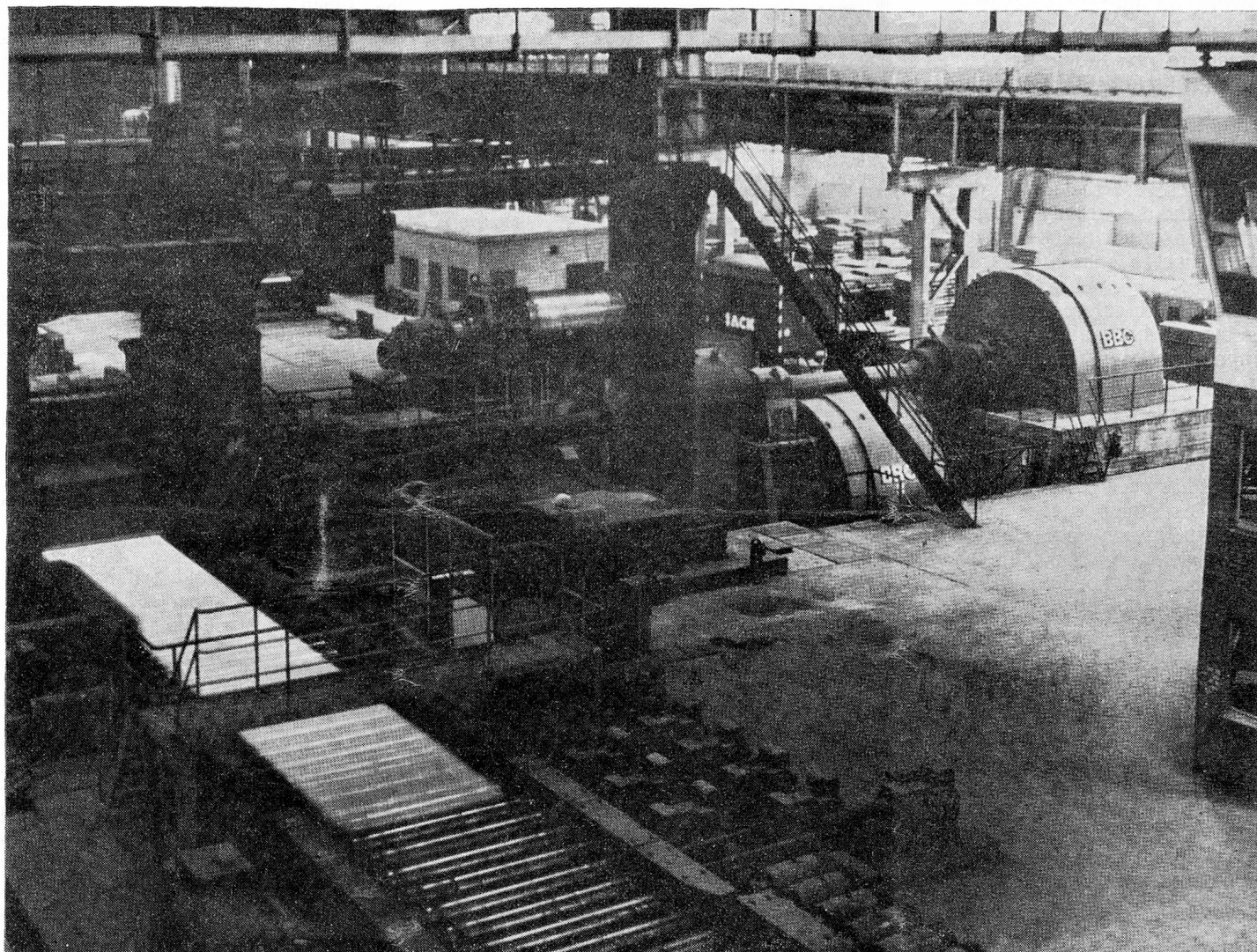
The new system visualises a member estimating himself what he would want to receive in case of loss or livelihood through political strife or war. This cash payment ranges from Fr. 2,500 to Fr. 50,000. Once he has decided on the figure, he has three possibilities: a) a single annual contribution (hundred-fold 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.

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So far for the members who pay annual contributions. Those who chose to make a one-time contribution, will get repayment after three years, and their contribution will carry an interest according to the class they have chosen, i.e. 2%, 3% or 3½%. Under the present system, no interest is payable.

Considering that these rates of interest are *not* subject to the 30% tax (*Verrechnungssteuer*), and that one remains insured all the time as long as one is a member, it is most certainly an excellent proposition.

These are the new proposals. All those who are already members, will be given an opportunity of deciding how they wish to continue within the new scheme. They will not be at an advantage, and therefore no useful purpose is served by waiting until 1974 for anyone not yet a member.

There are at least 50,000 Swiss eligible to join the Fund. At the moment, there are not even 14,000 members. Yet some four million Swiss francs has been paid out to compatriots who lost their means of livelihood through war, political upheavals, nationalisation, etc. This shows that there is a real need for the Fund.

The founders were not only practical men but also idealists. They hoped that the idea of solidarity would appeal to all Swiss abroad. Perhaps they were mistaken. Although it is to be hoped that the altruistic motive will still play a part with anyone not yet a member. But even if this hope is too optimistic, there will be no more reason for not joining. For where in the world is there a risk-insurance scheme where you get your premiums back?

Please ask for information as to the best possible way of joining in your particular case from: *Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad, Schosshaldenstrasse 14, CH-3006 Berne*. Mr. B. Invernizzi and his assistants will be very pleased to help you. Alternatively you could apply to the Swiss Embassy in London or to one of the Consulates in the U.K.

(MM)

ANOTHER DEPARTURE FROM LONDON

It is with great regret that we report the departure for Switzerland of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Burkhalter and their two little girls.

Gottfried Burkhalter was born in St. Moritz in 1934. After happy years in his native town, including an apprenticeship at the Swiss Credit Bank, he left for Geneva. In 1956 he visited England for the first time. After a spell at the College of the Swiss Mercantile Society, he tried to find employment, but was unlucky due to the Hungarian uprising and the Suez Crisis. So he returned to Switzerland for two years,

working again with the Swiss Credit Bank, this time in Berne.

Finally he was successful in obtaining a job with a firm of merchant bankers in London, and almost from the beginning he took a great interest in the activities of the Swiss Church. Having learnt at an early age the value of service to one's fellow man, he put his time and energy at the disposal of the Swiss YMCA whose President he became after the departure for Switzerland of Messrs. W. Fischer and W. Strub.

It was through Mr. Fischer that he had an introduction to the Swiss Bank Corporation in 1960, and he has been with them ever since.

In 1962 he was introduced to a young Swiss girl whom he married the same year. They set up house in Bowes Park, North London, and soon they got a reputation for friendly hospitality, following the example given to Gordon by his parents. In 1965 and 1967, the Burkhalters adopted two little girls. The current Swiss Adoption Laws did not allow them to settle in Switzerland, otherwise they would have returned before.

The Swiss Adoption Laws will be changed as from 1st January 1973, and thus the Burkhalters have decided to leave for Switzerland. They are living at 4, Hinterkirchweg, 4152 Reinach, and he is working at the Swiss Bank Corporation in Basle where, I am sure, he will be happy. His honesty and integrity and zest for hard work will be appreciated.

But the Swiss community in London in general and the Swiss Church in particular have reason to regret their departure. Both have been very active in all the various spheres of activities of the Swiss Church. He was a member of the Consistoire (from 1963) and Hon. Treasurer in which arduous job he was ably assisted by his wife. Both were active members of the German speaking Parish Council, and Mrs. Burkhalter was one of the founder members of the Mothers' Group. Gordon was also Hon. Auditor to the Swiss Mercantile Society in 1958.

And now Berti and Gordon have gone, and we miss their quiet friendliness, their ever-ready help and invaluable services. Thank you and God speed you!

(MM)

Mrs. Emily Bozzini

We have the sad duty of reporting the death at the beginning of October of Mrs. Emily Bozzini of 20 Conway Street, London W.1. at the St. Christopher Hospice, London. We should like to extend our deep condolences to her family.

AN IMPORTANT VISITOR FROM SWITZERLAND

On Thursday, 16th November, at 7 p.m., the President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and Chairman of its Commission, will give a talk at the Open Meeting of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, on "The Activities of a Swiss Member of Parliament". Dr. Louis Guisan is a member of the Council of States, as well as of a number of important bodies, and his account of the work he does and the various Swiss problems with which he is concerned, will doubtless be of the greatest interest to our Swiss community.

In view of the importance of the speaker, the Ambassador has kindly put the lecture room of the Swiss Embassy (16/18 Montagu Place, W1) at the disposal of the NSH, and whilst members of other societies are always most welcome, a special invitation has been sent to the societies.

In Memoriam

Mr. Leopold Schaer
7th September 1887—
10th November 1971

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

With Christmas already in sight, we shall soon be sending reminders to those of our readers who have received Christmas Greetings in our large December double issue. We shall naturally welcome all newcomers and would ask them to send us their name and address with £2.00 before the end of November.

CULTURAL EVENTS IN LONDON

There were various manifestations of Swiss artistic life in London during September and October. The most important of these was an exhibition at the Annely Juda Gallery in London, in which modern Swiss artists were prominently represented. Most of these artists came from Zurich, a city which has harboured, between the two world wars, the leading non-figurative artists of the time. The leading exhibitors included the late Fritz Glarner, Max Bill, and others such as Camille Graeser, from Geneva, and Hans Hinterreiter, from Zurich.

A Swiss artist married to an Englishman and resident in Britain, Mrs. Marianne Grant, exhibited a series of landscapes on Switzerland in a Mayfair gallery. Within a week of the opening, nearly half of the 30 pictures assembled under the title "Kaleidoscope of Switzerland" had been sold.

Sponsored by Pro Helvetia, an exhibition of "Swiss Graphic Design" was staged in London and Glasgow. It was