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The reconditioning service (or "rebuilding" service, as the firm prefers to call it) is an equally important line of business. In a relatively small workshop, highly specialised British craftsmen, with a special training in Switzerland behind them, take old machine-tools to pieces, re-machine the used components and put them together again so that the refurbished machines are in a practically brand new condition. Mr. J. P. Seiffert told me that machines were being sent from the continent, and even Switzerland for rebuilding because of lower costs and the Matchless standards of workmanship. Reconditioning may require three months' work and cost up to £3,500, but this outlay may prove preferable to spending twice that amount on a new machine.

Most of the customers of the firm are in the high technology branch of industry, particularly the aerospace industry. Matchless have sold several spark erosion machines to Rolls Royce, where they are used for the machining of turbine blades.

Mr. Seiffert said that the Swiss still had a clear lead in expensive and highly precise machine-tools.

"The British have made tremendous progress in the past", he said, "but Swiss machine-tool makers are still ahead. Fortunately".

(PMB)

WHY A FIRST OF AUGUST DAY?

Is a National Day Celebration desirable?

It has become fashionable to subject Swiss National Day Celebrations to derogatory criticism. Some people even ridicule them and point out the typical *Festredner* who insists on talking patriotism with great pathos and misplaced sentimentalism. Anybody who visits a 1st August Celebration in Switzerland realises that this caricature of a speaker belongs to the past; yet the idea persists that the majority of the Swiss people are against celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Switzerland. But that does not correspond to the truth.

The *Schweizerische Bundesfeier-spende*, the Swiss National Day Collection, asked the Swiss Association for Practical Social Research to carry out an extensive public opinion poll, and the answer has been astonishing. 90% of all those consulted in the German-speaking part and 95% in the *Suisse Romande* objected vehemently to the proposal to scrap all National Day Celebrations. Even of the young people consulted, 83% were in favour. Quite a few would prefer popular jollification to rather solemn festivities,

but whatever opinions are as to the character of a National Day commemoration, it has been shown conclusively that the Swiss want it, and that once again a few opponents to a certain cause get far more publicity than the silent majority of loyal supporters.

62 years of Swiss National Day Collection

Nearly 700 years ago, the first Confederates rallied and promised one another help and assistance in danger and need. By that act of solidarity they attained their aim: independence and freedom. With it they created the basis of the Swiss state of today.

This thought of mutual aid motivated Albert Schuster of St. Gall to bring into being the *Schweizerische Bundesspende* 62 years ago. He was convinced that the Swiss people would be not only willing but even anxious to put their hands into their pockets to help good cause. From 1910 to 1960, special cards were sold, since 1923 the 1st August badges and since 1938 "Pro Patria" postage stamps have been sold each year, and so far, 68 million Swiss francs have been donated to special social and cultural causes, 31 million alone during the last ten years.

During the questioning, people were asked their opinion as to the desirability of the Collection. 80% consider it as "necessary and useful even today".

The purpose of this year's collection

Two years ago, the money collected was in aid of women's organisations in the service of the people, and last year to help the health of the nation. This year, the collection will be in aid of the *Swiss Abroad*. Every six or seven years (since 1924), institutions supported by and for Swiss living outside their homeland have received considerable contributions from the *Bundesfeierspende*. The last time was in 1965 when 2,395,000 Swiss francs were distributed.

Three main groups will benefit this year: the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad with their Secretariat in Berne, the Swiss schools and the Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad. Much has been said in "The Swiss Observer" about the work of these organisations, and there is no need to stress that they could not exist without the help of the National Day Collection every few years. For they are private organisations and their activities are increasing all the time.

The 50th National Day Badge

In the course of half a century, these badges have provided welcome work to needy industries and large groups of disabled people, so for instance embroidery, straw plaiting and woodcarving industries. This year, the badge has been made by invalids,



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partly in the German-, partly in the French-speaking parts of Switzerland. It is a large red cross, with a white cross superimposed and the centre forming the Swiss cross on its red background. Whilst the individual pieces are of manufactured plastic material, the badge has been assembled by invalids working at home.

The four stamps (with surcharge) show historic metal exhibits from Swiss Museums. They can be bought in Switzerland only.

The badges will be on sale at meetings of Swiss societies in the U.K. and at Embassies and Consulates, and, of course, at First of August Celebrations.

(MM)

REQUIRED: PERFORMERS WITH TALENT

Grosses Kramgassfest vom 25. August mit Auslandschweizer Je-ka-mi, anlässlich der 50-jährigen Auslandschweizertag in Bern.

Wir suchen

K E I N E S T A R S

für das grosse Jeder-Kann-Mitmachen der Auslandschweizer am bunten Kramgassfest in Bern vom 25. August 1972. Wir suchen amateure (einzelnen oder in Gruppen) die musizieren, singen, tanzen, schauspielern können. Wir möchten mit diesen spontanen Darbietungen das Band zwischen der Fünften Schweiz und dem Heimatland stärker knüpfen. Wer sowieso am grossen Kongress 50 Auslandschweiz in Bern vom kommenden August teilnimmt, oder vielleicht am 26. August nach München zur Olympiade reist, ist herzlich eingeladen am unkonventionellen Je-ka-mi teilzunehmen. Das Organisationskomitee offeriert Gratisunterkunft. Wir bitten um eine Anmeldung bis spätestens 30. Juni 1972 an das Auslandschweizersekretariat der Neun Helsischen Gesellschaft, Alpenstrasse 26, Bern.

Anmeldeformular:

Name
Adresse
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Art der Darbietungen und Dauer
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53rd "COMPTOIR SUISSE"

The general trend in Switzerland's economic situation is reflected by the two big Swiss national spring and

autumn fairs, both of which—each in its own particular way—bear witness to a spectacular growth: Basle, by opening up a number of its sectors to products from abroad, and Lausanne, by welcoming to the Palais de Beauvau this year four foreign displays in official government pavilions.

The chief aim of the Lausanne Fair continues to be the presentation of the leading branches of Swiss production and the display in its 38 sectors of the latest products of light industry, agriculture, trade and craftsmanship. But its guest of honour pavilions will house the national displays of three large countries from Asia, Europe and Africa, i.e. India, Poland and Senegal; while the growing emphasis on trade with the two Americas will be featured in an official exhibition of the Caribbean Common Market, organised for the first time not only in Switzerland but also in Europe.

A genuine and lively national event, offering interesting glimpses of openings onto European and overseas markets, the 53rd Lausanne Fair grants visitors from abroad a number of facilities, about which information may be obtained from Switzerland's official agencies in all countries.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

The novel Anglo-Swiss Society meeting of 13th June, which was held in the Houses of Parliament, was a great success. Over 160 members and guests attended and the Secretary of the Society had sold out nearly all her tickets. Members gathered for a bustling and lively reception in the Cholmondeley Rooms of the House of Lords, where they were greeted by the Society's President, Lord and Lady Selkirk. This vast room leads directly onto the terrace overlooking the Thames and, thanks to a warm and welcoming sun, most of the Reception took place outside.

Earlier, the Anglo-Swiss Society had held its AGM in one of the Committee Rooms upstairs. Lord Selkirk presided under the stately glance of Queen Mary, whose massive portrait hung from the wall of a neo-Gothic chamber adorned with a lordly royal coat of arms and furnished with heavy leather chairs. The main item discussed was that of life membership. A proposal to introduce life membership at the cost of £20 was turned down as uneconomical, but the matter will be raised again next year.

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