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Communications of the Secretariate of the Swiss Abroad



The 52nd Assembly of the Swiss Abroad



The President

dealt with in this field. The Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. Marcel Ney, showed the development of the voluntary old-age insurance (AVS). His talk was illustrated by slides of cartoons and drawings in the course of the decades. Then followed a discussion led by the Deputy Director of the Secretariat, Mr. Lucien Paillard, in which specialists and experts of the Federal Office of Insurance and members of the audience took part. Many questions regarding the AVS could be answered, points which are important for the Swiss abroad. They will be published in the next issue. A question which interested the assembly was that Swiss women abroad married

to Swiss cannot join the voluntary old-age and dependents' insurance without the consent of their husbands; should they not agree, difficult situations arise. A further problem taken up at the plenary session is that of a compulsory sickness insurance in Switzerland, which would also be open to Swiss abroad on their return to the old country. At the moment, however, we are still at the beginning in this matter, and many negotiations will be necessary until concrete solutions have been reached. A first step has been made, but the coming deliberations will require a great deal of time. The Swiss abroad may be sure that their interests will be safeguarded during coming negotiations.

In the presence of Federal Councillor Dr. Hans Huerlimann and his wife, the plenary session of the 52nd Assembly of the Swiss Abroad took place in Neuchâtel. It was chaired by Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan.

The main theme was social insurance in Switzerland and its importance for the Swiss abroad. The President of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad presented a summary of Swiss insurance conditions and problems. Amongst other things, he stated that today nearly 90% of the Swiss population belonged to one or another sickness insurance scheme. Next, the Central President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, Dr. Ernst Basler, addressed the meeting on the difficulties which had to be

Cocktail reception after the official opening

(All Assembly photographs by Rodo Wyss)



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Front row: from right to left

Mr. Marcel Ney, Mrs. Ilse Frei, Madame Hélène Guisan, Brigadier Jacques Bullet, Mr. Jean-Claude Duvanel, President of Neuchâtel, Mrs. Philippe Garraux, Federal Councillor & Mrs. Huerlimann, Mr. Philippe Garraux. Second row: Mr. Anton von Sprecher, Mr. Jean Heer, Minister Gérard Bauer, National Councillor Willi Wenk and his colleague Mrs. Tilo Frey, former Federal Councillor Dr. F.T. Wahlen, Mrs. Ernst Basler, wife of the Central President of the NSH.

Before the address by the Federal Councillor, a member of the Council of the Solidarity Fund explained the new constitution of this insurance by which Swiss abroad can cover loss of livelihood through coercive political measures. Federal Councillor Huerlimann described measures taken since the acceptance of Article 45 *bis* in favour of the Swiss abroad, such as the guarantee to the Solidarity Fund, the federal

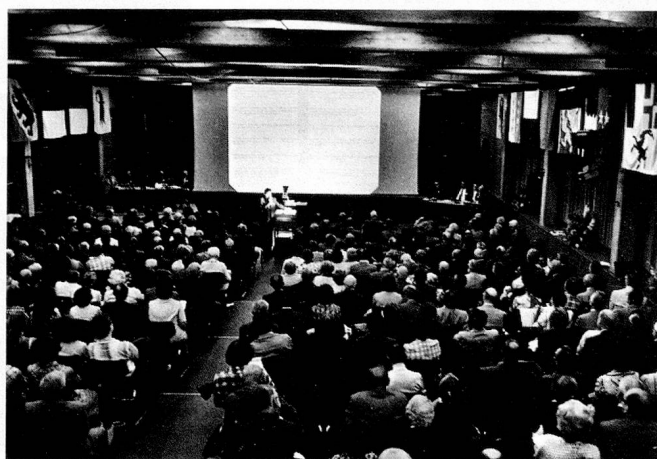
law on social welfare assistance for Swiss abroad, the reduction of military duties, various compensation, information, the preparation of a law concerning political rights, with which the Federal Council will deal in due course. The speaker also referred to the bad state of the federal finances and appealed to the Swiss abroad to make every effort to stabilise the situation, together with their compatriots at home.

Prior to the plenary session, numerous meetings had taken place, amongst them that of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, of the Commission on Information, of the co-ordinating body on information, of the Foundation for the Swiss Abroad, of the Solidarity Fund etc. Decisions were taken which will allow further studies on a number of problems, such as double taxation agreements, cases of expropriation, contracts regard-

Entrance to Cité Universitaire



The Plenary Session



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ing information and problems concerning Swiss schools abroad. On the occasion of the official opening of the Assembly at the Church of «La Collégiale» in Neuchâtel representatives of Canton and City were present who had spontaneously offered to help in making the Assembly a success. It was with great pleasure that we heard the «Suite montagnarde» by Jean Daetwyler, played expertly on the alphorn by Jozsef Molnar. He was accompanied by his wife on the flute and by Bernard Heininger on the organ.

Entertainment

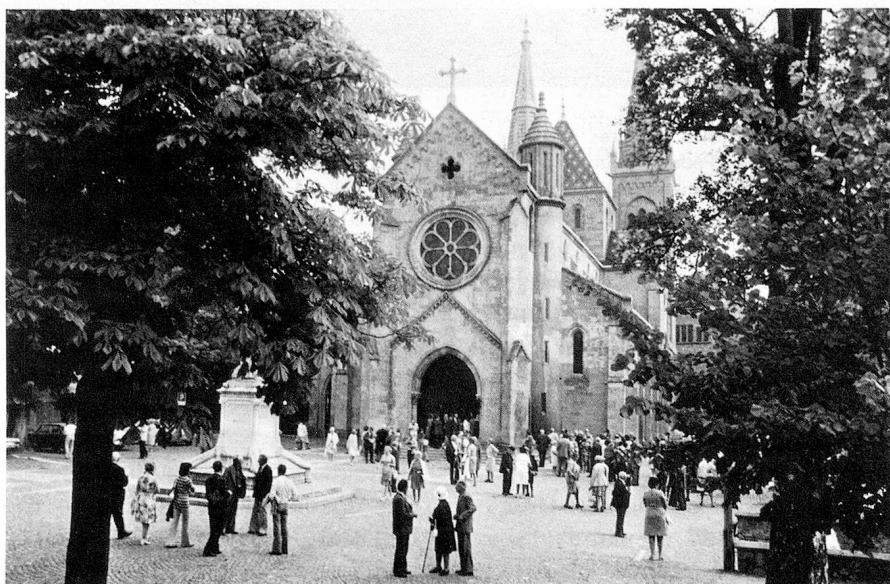
The Assembly, however, did not consist of work only: an excursion on the lake took our visitors to Le Landeron *via* the Thielle Canal. From there, they went by coach to Cressier where they dined and enjoyed musical entertainment, as well as a comic performance by Alex Billeter, Manager of the Neuchâtel Tourist Office. Later there was dancing for those who liked it.

After the ecumenical service at «La Collégiale» on Sunday morning, there was a drive through the Neuchâtel Jura to Les Geneveys-sur-Confrane. An excellent leg of ham cooked in peasoup regaled the Swiss from other countries and their friends from within Switzerland, and the picnic was enjoyed all the more because of the graceful songs and dances performed by the «Chanson de Neuchâtel». The Assembly of 1974 has passed, and already we are looking forward to the one in 1975 which will take place in Basle. It will be a very versatile event, for its motto will be «The Swiss abroad as Ambassadors of Culture».

Lucien Paillard



Sightseeing in Neuchâtel



Prior to the Ecumenical Service

On with the peasoup!



(All Assembly photographs by Rodo Wyss)

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Co-ordinating information



The famous ham



During the picnic



Can you recognise yourself?



The «Chanson de Neuchâtel» in action



Messrs Simon and Ney sign
the information contract with Great Britain

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Switzerland from Day to Day

24th April

The first of four volumes of the «Encyclopaedia of Switzerland to-day» was presented to the press. This work is unique of its kind and shows Switzerland in its many aspects in the 'seventies'.

The PTT services announced that postal rates for abroad would increase as from 1st July.

25th April

The Federal Council decided to increase the subsidy to the farmers by 7.5% as from 1st May.

27th April

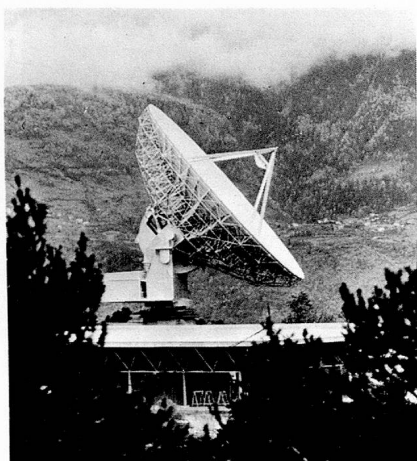
The world boxing championship in fly weight at the «Hallenstadion» in Zurich ended in a victory by Chionoi of Thailand who beat the Swiss, Fritz Chervet.

28th April

After having announced a 17.5% increase in the price of beer, the prices and wages board published an increase of 10 cts per bar of chocolate as from 1st September.

1st May

At Geneva, the Swiss football team was beaten by Belgium 0:1.



2nd May

The first Swiss earth station for satellites was officially inaugurated at Loèche in the Valais. Working with the satellite Intelsat IV, the station links Switzerland with USA, Canada, Brazil and Israel.

9th May

The Commission of Experts appointed by the Federal Department of Justice and Police, to deal with the total revision of the Federal Constitution had its first meeting in Berne.

11th May

The Swiss Newspaper Publishers' Association announced an increase in the price of newspapers as from 1st July. This is due to a general increase in the cost of living and the rise in the price of paper.

12th May

The cyclists' «Tour de Romandie» ended in a victory for the Dutchman Zoetemelk.

15th May

Nearly 4000 old-age pensioners from all over Switzerland demonstrated in Berne in favour of an increase in their pensions. The pensioners demanded of the Federal Council the adjustment of the pensions to the cost of living and a minimum of 600 francs a month for a single person and 900 francs for a married couple as from the beginning of 1975.

19th May

At Loèche, the Swiss team of archers gained the «Casque d'or» trophy from the Italian holders.

22nd May

A rock face of several tons collapsed onto the Gotthard railway line between Faido and Lavorgno (Ticino). Fortunately, there were no victims.



Rita Pfister (Keystone)

29th May

The Swiss Office for the Prevention of Accidents announced that traffic accidents had been less numerous by 6% during the first four months of 1974 than in the same period of the previous year.

In an opinion poll in Switzerland it was established that the majority of Swiss families wanted two children, and a strong minority three.

For the first time since the war, a dirigible aircraft, coming from Lyons, passed over the skies of the Suisse Romande to land at the airport of Berne.

1st June

The manager of an art gallery opened a permanent exhibition for inventors, the second of its kind in Europe, after Sweden.

2nd June

The Spanish Embassy in Berne was attacked with explosives. There were no injuries, but the damage was considerable.

5th June

A phantastic discovery by a Basle

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Federal Councillor Pierre Graber is received in Peking by his colleague Tscheng Peng Fei (Keystone)

schoolboy enabled archeologists to establish that 400 000 years ago, prehistoric beings lived in Switzerland.

12th June

The centenary of the Federal Constitution of 1874 was celebrated solemnly in Berne.

16th June

The discus thrower Rita Pfister (Zurich) established a new Swiss record with 54 m 30 cm.

21st June

The Belgian Eddy Merckx won the Tour de Suisse (cycling).

23rd June

By 36 802 yes to 34 057 no, the people of the Jura answered in the affirmative the question «Would you be in favour of a new Canton?»

24th June

The National Council approved the new federal law concerning help to the Swiss schools abroad. The voting was unanimous at 135 in favour.

28th June

The famous rock singer Johnny Hallyday gave a song recital to the 200 detainees at the Bochuz penitentiary.

30th June

The electors of Zurich rejected a wealth tax proposal. The Initiative planned tax relief on small and middle incomes by raising taxes on high incomes.

4th July

The new «Mr. Price», Mr Léon Schlumpf (49) from the Grisons, was appointed in place of Mr. Léo Schuermann to take over the difficult post of watching prices, wages and interests.

9th July

Wanting to continue its policy of stabilising the foreign population, the Federal Council published new regulations regarding a definite maximum of entry permits for workers, both seasonal and trainees.

The four Swiss test pilots sent to the United States by the Federal Military Department, in order to

make the first tests with the Tiger F II-5E, announced their satisfaction with the aircraft and said that the Tiger would be suitable for the purpose for which Switzerland wants it.

11th July

A team of six volunteers of the Swiss Aid Corps departed for Senegal and Mali where they will spend three months on behalf of FAO.

12th July

An opinion poll made by «ISO-Public» in Zurich showed that inflation has become the primary preoccupation of the Swiss.

20th July

It was announced that Federal Councillor Graber would inaugurate an exhibition by 200 Swiss firms in Peking. This would be one of the biggest shows of its kind abroad and would take place from 7th to 27th August.

23rd July

The net result of the Pro Patria stamps and the First of August badges of this year would go partly to needy mothers and partly towards old people's homes and helping the chronic sick.

4th August

The racing driver from the Ticino, Clay Regazzoni, won the Grand Prix of Europe and Germany at the Nürburgring. He drove a Ferrari.

6th August

An agreement was concluded between the Government of Hanoi and the Swiss Federal Council, according to which the Confederation would send to North Vietnam materials, machinery and experts necessary to install a factory for prefabricated panels needed for the reconstruction of houses destroyed in the war. Thus 1000 houses could be built by 60 workers in 3 days.