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following figures on record: in 1966 149 shoe factories occupied 14,900 people; in 1970 127 shoe factories occupied 12,000 people; in 1971 117 shoe factories occupied 10,800 people; and in 1972 109 shoe factories occupied 9,800 people. The trend is clear, and the reasons for this adverse development are manifold. To begin with currency changes and devaluations have had the effect that products from the USA, from Italy and from the United Kingdom have become between 20 and 30 per cent cheaper than equivalent Swiss ones and these latter accordingly more difficult to export into the above named and other countries. Then there is the free trade with the nine EEC countries which reduces the import duty on various products and it is worth mentioning in passing that the shoe industry was not able to obtain preferential treatment, as the paper industry did. According to published statistics even developing countries like Senegal or Taiwan (Formosa) have of late become serious rivals. Only a very few years ago Senegal exported Fr.1,000

worth of shoes to Switzerland, but today the figure amounts to Fr.2 million. On top of all this several Latin-American states have of late considerably restricted the export of raw material and have started to manufacture shoes and other leather goods themselves.

A consoling factor in all this: practically all male and female workers who have lost their jobs through closure of their plants, factories and workshops have been absorbed in other industries and the number of unemployed people is still infinitesimal.

* * *

During the month of March a lot of voting has taken place all over Switzerland, and particularly in the canton of Zurich. While not going into details of all the elections which have been held in towns and boroughs, two political proposals which had to be accepted or rejected are nevertheless

worth mentioning. One was for the voting age in the canton of Zurich to be reduced from 20 to 18. Not only all the cantonal authorities, but also practically all the political parties – with minor exceptions – had recommended adoption of this change. But the population voted the proposal down by 213,045 against 69,564 votes, i.e. 3:1.

The second proposal concerning better protection for tenants of rented flats was adopted by 163,163 against 115,267 votes, although it emanated from the three cantonal left-wing parties (Socialists, Communists and Progressive Organisation Zurich, known as POZ) and although both the authorities and all the centre and right-wing parties had strongly recommended its rejection. The attitude of the voters is no doubt a sign of a healthy democracy: they have shown clearly that they have a will of their own and that they are not inclined to be led or guided by whatever the authorities or the political parties may say.

Gottfried Keller

NEWS from the COLONY

Swiss Carnival in Liverpool, 23rd March

When the Committee suggested that the old Swiss Fasnacht should be celebrated again this year, this was enthusiastically welcomed. Our members, Mr. R. Zueger and family, previously of the Hotel St. Hilary, Wallasey, now offered us the amenities of the Dresden Hotel, Bromborough. Our room was strikingly adorned with Fasnacht caricatures, coloured streamers and balloons. The tables echoed the same cheerfulness with squeakers, brilliantly coloured streamers, funny hats and coloured napkins. Swiss Polka music hailed the arriving guests and quickly everyone was toasting each other. A Pirate, a Queen of Hearts, a hefty Austrian hunter complimented a trendy Hippy family. After the President's short welcoming speech, three judges set out to award well deserved prizes for the three most original groups and costumes. We all agreed heartily with their decisions. A most congenial atmosphere was created with a thoroughly Swiss meal. As always a glass or two of Fêchy loosened the tongues and gladdened the hearts of even the most timid ones. By the time meringues and other delicacies arrived everybody was immersed in a Fasnacht spree and ready to romp and dance through all sorts of record music. This may not have been our biggest party, but by far the gayest one. It was quite as convivial as the genuine Swiss Fasnacht over the water. Everybody was very reluctant to leave and go home, where next morning the everyday worries and chores were waiting again.

Maertel Moor

ADOLPHE STEINMANN

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Mr. Adolphe Steinmann, Rennweg 97, 4000 Basel. He died on 14th March after a long and grave illness, at the age of 78.

Adolphe Steinmann hailed from the Canton of Solothurn and came to this country in 1923. He was with the Swiss Bank Corporation where he rose to a high and responsible position.

He took an active interest in the affairs of the Swiss community in London and was a member of several societies, above all the Swiss Mercantile Society whose efficient President he was from September, 1933 to February, 1939. The Society made him an Honorary Member for his valuable services.

He married Miss Susi Mueller from his own home town in his mid-fifties and the happy couple had one daughter. It is to Mrs. Steinmann and Beatrice to whom our deep sympathy goes. All those who had the privilege of knowing Adolphe will remember his distinction and kindness and will be proud to have been amongst his friends.

M.M.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

We have just heard that Mr. Hugo Vonwiller, of 21 The Warren, Chartridge, Chesham, Bucks, was 80 on 20th March.

Mr. E. Zwicky will be 77 on 24th April and Mr. J. B. Brutsch, of Courtfield, 17 Melvin Shaw, Leatherhead, Surrey, will celebrate his 85th birthday on 23rd. Mr. G. Keller (Kuesnacht) will be 69 on the same day. On 26th April, Mr. F.

Delaloye will be 87, and Mr. A. C. Boller, of "Tadorne", Derrière le Canard", 1162 Saint-Prex/VD, will have his 75th birthday on 8th May. Mrs. A. Sommer will celebrate her birthday on 15th May.

Mr. W. Schedler, of 58 Meadway, NW11, will be 70 on 24th May, and Consul F. Burgunder (Baghdad) will have his birthday on 29th May. The 30th May is the birthday of Dr. A. Weitnauer, Swiss Ambassador in London, and Mr. A. Zullig will be 67 on the same day.

The following wedding anniversaries will take place: on 23rd April, Mr. and Mrs. G. Bouverat will have been married 55 years, and on 2nd May, Mr. and Mrs. F. Burri 28 years. Mr. and Mrs. W. Flory will have their 38th wedding anniversary on 16th May, and Mr. and Mrs. O. Grob their 44th on 18th of the month. The same day, Mr. and Mrs. R. Senn will have been married for 28 years.

Best wishes and many happy returns to all these and any other readers who will be celebrating birthdays and anniversaries shortly.

DELEGATES OF SWISS COMMUNITIES ABROAD MEET IN BERNE

The Commission of the Swiss Abroad met in Berne on Saturday, 9th March. On the two previous days, meetings had been held of the Council of the Solidarity Fund for the Swiss Abroad and of the special Commission on Information.

The Council of the Solidarity Fund was chaired for the first time by the new President, Dr. G. Schelling. The main item on the agenda was the draft of the

new constitution. As it had been found that the idea of solidarity did not carry the appeal the Fund's founders had hoped for, it was deemed necessary to restructure the Fund and stress the element of saving. After long and careful deliberation, the draft constitution was accepted. It will now be submitted to the Annual General Meeting in August and come into force not later than 1st January next. More information regarding the new structure will be given in the next special issue of the *Swiss Observer*.

The **Commission on Information** met under the chairmanship of Dr. Louis Guisan, President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. A progress report was given in the *Review*, the carrier of news and information sent to Swiss citizens abroad four times a year (*Swiss Observer*: special issues). The Federal Political Department and the Secretariat of the

Swiss Abroad reported satisfactory results in all French- and German-speaking countries and a first successful year in Great Britain. The English text is being used in North America and Canada, and plans were presented as to extending the service to other English-speaking countries.

The *Echo*, periodical for the Swiss abroad, has been losing some subscribers due to the *Review*, and a special publicity drive has not brought the hoped-for success. Nevertheless, the Commission decided to go on with the present campaign and to try to increase revenue from advertising.

The tape service "Helvetic Forum" run by the Swiss Shortwave Service, was reported on, and it was hoped that more Swiss societies would take advantage of this excellent means of information.

The Commission of the Swiss

Abroad was once again privileged to meet at the "Federal Palace" for its spring meeting. Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan was in the chair and he welcomed the fifty-odd members from countries as far apart as South America and Scandinavia, Thailand and Canada. Great Britain was represented by Dr. H. R. Bolliger (North) and Mrs. Mariann Meier (South).

The first major items on the agenda were the Organisation's annual report and the accounts. Both reflected the great amount of work which is being done on behalf of the Swiss living away from their homeland.

With regard to the voting rights for Swiss abroad, there was no further news as consultations were still pending. It was reported that the regulations governing military exemption tax had been eased even further for Swiss abroad, and that in

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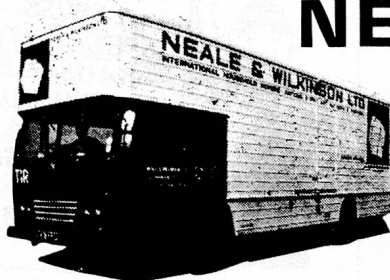


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spite of some objection by the Military Department and some Cantons, the period during which a Swiss has to reside abroad before the tax is dropped, has been reduced from eight to three years, dating back to 1st January, 1974.

Thanks to a further chance for Swiss abroad being able to join the voluntary Old-Age Insurance and no doubt to widespread information in the *Review*, 13,000 new members had joined by the end of 1973, which represents an increase of 50%. There are now 39,000 members. Further improvements in benefits, etc. were still being studied by a special commission.

It was also reported that although thanks to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, the Swiss in Italy had been consulted regarding a new double taxation agreement between the two countries, results were not very satisfactory. But at least the principle of consultation had been achieved, small consolation to compatriots in Italy!

An extremely interesting report was given regarding the Swiss in Eastern Europe and Russia. Their numbers are extremely small, i.e. 48 in USSR, 79 in Poland, 49 in Czechoslovakia, 55 in Hungary, 37 in Rumania, 15 in Bulgaria, 115 in Yugoslavia and none in Albania. The only community of any size is in East Germany where 1,473 Swiss are registered. In the total of 1,850 all diplomats, students, journalists and Swissair staff are included. It was agreed that the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad could not establish any contacts, but Embassies and Consulates should make it known that the Organisation is there in case of need. Incidentally, the leader of

the Youth Service reported that quite a number of young Swiss from Eastern Germany attended the Youth Camps every year, and that they were amongst the most grateful participants.

The next Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will take place in Neuchâtel from 23rd to 25th August.

M.M.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

CITY SWISS CLUB: Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 23rd April, 6.30 for 7 p.m. at the Dorchester. The date of this function was stated incorrectly as March in the last issue. Please note correct date.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY: Dinner on Thursday, 25th April, 7.30 for 8 p.m., at the Portman Hotel (ballroom Entrance: George St.). Sir Joh Wolfenden, former Director for the British Museum, will speak on "British's Image of Switzerland - Dream or Reality".

SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB): Friday, 26th April, Presscala Club, 72 Fleet Street, London EC4. Annual General Meeting, 6.00 p.m. Dinner 7.30 p.m.

SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY: Wednesday, 24th April, Social Evening, Swiss Films and Refreshments.

SWISS CLUB LIVERPOOL: Friday, 3rd May. Card Evening at Hotel Dresden, New Chester Rd, Bromborough.

SWISS CLUB EDINBURGH: Friday, 26th April, 7.30 p.m. Skittle Match between Edinburgh and Dunfermline at Sheep's Heid Inn, Duddington.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE, Thursday, 2nd May 7 p.m. Swiss Embassy, Open Meeting - Talk in English by Dr. Brigitte Geiser, Berne on "THE SWISS ALPHORN - NOT ONLY AN ATTRACTION FOR TOURISTS, BUT AN ANCIENT MUSICAL INSTRUMENT" - illustrated by slides and recordings.

Friday, 17th May - Annual General Meeting of Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK.

Sunday, 26th May - ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON - 79 Endell Street, WC2 - 10.30 a.m. Annual General Meeting - 11.15 a.m. Divine Service, The Rev. M. Pradervand. This will be followed by a meal. (Please notify one of the Ministers).

Sunday, 16th June - GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON - Family Outing to Ashburnham Place with a Service of Thanksgiving at the Chapel.

22nd to 25th August - ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD - Neuchâtel.

Saturday, 2nd November - SWISS CHURCHES BAZAAR.



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