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SWISS AT WORK IN THE THIRD WORLD

That was the name of a film shown at a meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique at the Swiss Embassy on Thursday, 20th October. The event was a special one in conjunction with the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK, and its purpose was to hear a report on the 55th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad in Lausanne. The President of the Federation, Mr. B. Simon, The Rev. Father Paul Bossard (Deputy Delegate to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad), one of the participants in Lausanne, Mrs. Lisa Hall, and Mrs. Mariann Meier, Delegate to the Commission and President of the London Group of the NSH, shared in the general reporting. Since Mrs. Meier had attended a number of important meetings, it was she who told of the business dealt with in the "Little Parliament" (Commission of the Swiss Abroad), in the meetings of the Solidarity Fund (Council and AGM), and in the two information meetings. (*There will be a report on the Assembly sent from Berne in the next issue of the Swiss Observer.*)

Mrs. Meier also gave a description of the social events and in particular of the Plenary Session and the general theme of the Congress: "The Contribution by Swiss Abroad to Technical Development Aid".

The theme was treated extremely well. Great care had been taken to

illustrate just how varied the contribution of the Swiss abroad was, very often quite unknown to the individuals themselves. When the President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Dr. Louis Guisan, opened the Plenary Session, he said that we Swiss were almost predestined to succeed abroad, due to excellent schooling and vocational training, our tenacity, our inherent talent for teaching, our sense of community, our need for personal freedom. Obviously, he said, there were many who did not fit into this all-embracing ideal, and there were some who overdid things, so that they were accused of exploiting their environment in their country of residence. The ideal Swiss abroad was still somewhere in the middle, not too good for human consumption and always aware that he had a responsibility to his country of origin by making the best impression as a Swiss citizen.

The report on the Plenary Session not only included details of the round-table discussion (more of this in the next issue), but also of the talks by the President of the Foundation for the History of the Swiss Abroad, Mr. Jean-René Bory, and by Ambassador Heimo, Delegate for Technical Co-operation. He gave the official point of view, spoke of the difficulties and gave some figures. With 1.5% of the annual budget spent on Development Aid,

Switzerland comes fourth from the bottom up on the list of 17 industrialised countries, just after Finland, Italy and Austria. Not exactly splendid. That is why the contribution made by individual Swiss in their countries of residence is of such great value and importance.

The film "Swiss at Work in the Third World" which was shown to the NSH meeting in London was the full version. In Lausanne, only one part of it had been shown. It is an excellent testimony of the arduous work carried out by devoted teams and individuals sent out by the federal authorities. It showed agricultural schemes, the fight against land erosion in Africa, South America and Asia, the clearing of virgin forests and the most suitable new tree planting, introduction of Swiss cattle, cheese-making, simplification of labour methods, and alphabetisation (a most interesting aspect of the work, the part of the film shown in Lausanne).

MM.

P.S. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, it should be added that the delegates' reports included the problem of citizenship of children born to Swiss mothers married to foreigners abroad. This was not only dealt with in a special meeting at which various and opposite points of view were expressed,

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but also formed part of a detailed discussion in the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. The whole matter is being studied by a special commission under Mr. Ugo Guidi, Swiss lawyer from Milan and a member of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, with National Councillor (Mrs.) L. Spreng from Fribourg, herself mother of daughters married to foreigners, Mr. O. Schuerch, head of the Police Section of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, and Mr. L. Paillard, Deputy-Director of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, as members. It will take a very long time to come to a conclusion, for it is a constitutional matter and many points have to be considered, a possible flood of dual national, international law, military service etc. For the time being, the whole problem is taken care of by this group of very competent personalities, and any progress made will be duly publicised.

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Birthday congratulations

The following readers are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries shortly: Mr. F. Burri will be 65 on 2nd December, and Mrs. Claire Renz has her birthday on the 3rd of the month. Mr. H. Suter will celebrate his 89th birthday on 12th and Mr. M. G. Ehrlsam his 81st birthday on 14th December. Mrs. L. Reutlinger (Basle) will have her birthday on 21st December. Mr. E. C. Schmid will be 83 on the last day of the month,

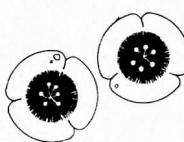
which is also the birthday of Mrs. E. Crack.

And there is one "round" birthday on Boxing Day, when Mr. C. A. Fuchs, of 14 Denehurst Gardens, Hendon NW4, will be 85.

Congratulations and best wishes to all these friends and any others of whose birthdays and anniversaries in December we are not aware.

Forthcoming

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER



events

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Saturday, 10th December 1977: Children's Christmas Party. Ciba Geigy (U.K.) Ltd., Heald Green.
 Thursday, 26th January 1978: Raclette Party. Cottons Hotel, near Knutsford.
 Thursday, 2nd March 1978: Annual General Meeting. Ciba Geigy (U.K.) Ltd., Heald Green.

Friday, 2nd December, 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. Schweizerbund (Swiss Club) Christmas Dinner at The Edgwarebury Hotel, near Barnet Lane, Elstree, Herts.

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