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A very busy year for Welfare Office

IN its annual report the Swiss Welfare Office says that 1980 was a record year for the number of young people helped.

Reports the president, Mrs G. Schwab: "That so many young people turned to our office for advice and assistance is obviously the result of efforts made in previous years to make this facility better known. We are very fortunate to have Mrs Lyster as our social worker who with all her skills approaches her work with a high professional standard and in a very human-orientated way.

"We were lucky to find Mrs Priska Studer, a very capable replacement to stand in for Mrs Lyster during vacations. She joined the organisation in spring 1980 and she replaces Mrs Lyster on a regular basis."

The committee thanked Mrs Lyster and Mrs Studer, as well as Mrs Sharp, the social worker of the Swiss Benevolent Society,

Rev. Steiner, Fr. Bossard and the Gemeindegelferin, Consul-General Charles Glauser, and the staff of the Swiss Embassy.

Mrs Rast retired as president last year and is now vice-president. Mrs Schwab was elected president in her place. She was thanked for all her work and for making herself available to smooth the transition and for future advice.

Mrs B. Caillat, wife of the Swiss Ambassador, has accepted the position of honorary president. During the year Mrs R.E. Cottet resigned from the committee, of which she has been a member since 1966. Mrs M. Kaeufeler, a member since 1968, resigned as secretary but agreed to continue serving on the committee. Mrs Feitknecht resigned as treasurer.

Three new members have joined the committee. Mrs Marti became secretary and Mrs Deutsche treasurer. Another new member is Mrs Goodwin, and Mrs Kaluza has rejoined the committee after two years abroad.

During 1980 the Swiss Welfare Office printed a new 'Bus Card', advertising the help and assistance which it can give to those in need. Another innovation was that the president and the social worker visited 16 au pair agencies in Switzerland during a 10 day trip through German and French speaking parts of Switzerland. Each agency was fully briefed on the office's activities.

Said Mrs Schwab: "While some agencies were well informed about the Welfare

Office, some surprisingly were not aware of its existence at all. We believe that this tour, which was very strenuous indeed, helped to establish a good working contact with these agencies.

"Many did not know of the closure of the Swiss Hostel for Girls and we in turn discovered some of the problems these agencies are experiencing. Overall it was felt that this goodwill trip was very worthwhile and helpful for all involved."

Of the 327 new cases dealt with during the year 43 were young men, 272 were German-speaking and 32 French-speaking.

Concluded Mrs Schwab: "With the help, inspiration and encouragement of the friends of the Swiss Welfare Office here and in Switzerland and of the authorities, we are looking forward to continuing our task of giving help and advice to our young Swiss in this country in the coming year."

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NSH aim is sense of unity

THE Nouvelle Société Helvétique is one Swiss club that doesn't have to worry about dwindling membership. The AGM was told that 36 new members had joined during the last year, and 75 members and friends attended the dinner that followed the meeting.

The president, Mrs Mariann Meier, welcomed Ambassador and Madame C. Caillat. She said that the ambassador was honorary president of the NSH and "landlord" of the embassy's lecture hall, and the fact that the NSH has the support and goodwill of the embassy staff greatly facilitates matters and was much appreciated.

Mrs Meier also welcomed guests from the embassy, representatives of a number of other Swiss societies and of the Swiss churches.

The NSH celebrates its 65th birthday this year, but the historic links go back as far as 1761 when the Société Helvétique was founded in Switzerland.

In 1914, when the rift between the alemannic Swiss and the Romands reached danger point, 250 Swiss of various languages and denominations founded the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. The aims of the new society were the return to federal self-examination, fostering the Swiss



national heritage and to overcome materialism - principles which are still valid today.

The Swiss weekly "Le Jura Libre" stated recently that the NSH in Switzerland rendered great services by trying to unite different ethnic groups within the Confederation by endeavouring to create a sense of unity in the communities separated by culture and customs. The NSH never debates what separates the different linguistic groups but of what unites them.

Ambassador Caillat thanked Mrs Meier for her untiring efforts for the NSH. He recalled she had been president of the society for 13 years. He described the NSH as a vital meeting place for the Swiss in Great Britain.

The following council members were re-elected: Mr P.M. Béguin, Mr V. Berti, Mr Th. Biland, Miss A. Bonzon, Mr J. Broggin, Mr Ch. Glauser, Mr J.J. Indermühle, Mr H. Kunz, Mrs M.

Lyster, Mrs M. Meier, Miss M. Oswald, Mrs A.R. Sharp, Mr B. Simon, Mr R. Simon. New members are: Mrs L. Hall, Mrs C. Rhoda and Mr J.P. Hofer.

Honorary members are: Dr. H.W. Egli (vice-president), Mr W. Renz, Mr J.W. Bonjour and Mr P. Jacomelli.

The society lost two members through death last year, Mr M.A.

Swiss Centre Restaurants, now nearing the completion of their £1,500,000 refurbishment programme, held an Open House recently when guests were greeted by a surprise visitor from Switzerland - a giant walking talking St Bernard called Grindelwaldi.

Visitors, who were taken round the redesigned kitchens and the new-look Chesa and Locanda restaurants, included Minister Karl Fritschli of the Swiss Embassy, and Mr Carlo de Mercurio and Mr Hans Fässler, chairman and vice-chairman of Swiss Fair Ltd.

Rothlisberger and Mr H.E. von Gunten. In place of the late Mr Rothlisberger Mr D. Bonnet and Mr Oggier will take over as auditors.

The subscription was increased from £2 to £3, still good value considering the many varied activities the NSH offers throughout the year.

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Solothurn Assembly

THE next Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will take place in the old "ambassadors' town" of Solothurn from August 21 to 23. All Swiss living abroad are welcome.

They do not necessarily have to belong to Swiss societies.

It is a family gathering as well as a get-together of Swiss men and women who wish to compare notes and discuss problems.

This year there will be no

dinner and dance on Saturday evening, but an excursion on Sunday to a very charming place where a folkloristic programme will fill the afternoon. This is particularly suitable for families, and it is hoped that many Swiss resident in Britain will find it possible to add the Solothurn Assembly on to their holidays in Switzerland.

Details can be obtained from: Secretariat for Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Switzerland.