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Swiss Welfare Office seeks firm financial commitment

IN spite of the decreasing number of Swiss girls coming to England as au pairs, the Welfare Office is increasingly busy with 105 girls making use of the small hostel at Conway Street.

In February last year the office arranged yet another visit to agencies in Switzerland. In a two weeks marathon more than 20 agencies were visited and the exchange of information, views and ideas can only be of benefit.

Some of the agencies are thoroughly conversant and up to date with the au pair scene in England, unfortunately there are others who still harbour many out of date ideas and misconceptions.

It is an important part of the Swiss Welfare Office work to bring them up to date. Surprisingly, some of the agencies have never even sent representatives to England, which is after all the background of their work.

The Schweiz. Evangelischer Kirchenbund in Berne reprinted the leaflet "Au Pair in England" and translated it into French, which should enable it to reach as many young girls as possible.

In the last year the advisory group for au pairs has organised two International Au Pair Days in London, giving some thousand girls the chance to meet other au pairs and, more importantly, to learn of the many organisations concerned with their welfare, including their own national organisations.

In December, the European Parliament passed a resolution approving the adoption of the report on au pairs, presented by the Committee for Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport which was largely due to the dedicated and persistent work of the group's chairman Dom Placid M. Meylink O.S.B.

This is an important step forward in the long campaign to achieve a European au pair agreement.

In spite of financial support from the Swiss Federal Authorities, City Swiss Club, the Swiss Benevolent Society and the various other contributors, the office had to draw heavily (£1,310.80) from its assets, income remaining practically un-

changed from previous years.

It was necessary to provide more financial assistance to individuals than ever and in one case, to finance a funeral for a young girl.

All this demands the immediate availability of funds for emergencies.

To enable the Swiss Welfare Office to carry out this important and necessary work successfully requires not only time, patience and understanding, but also the firm financial commitment of its supporters.

Airport's future in balance

TALKS aimed at keeping Belpmoos airport, near Berne, operational are to be held soon.

The future of the airport is in question following rejection by voters in Canton Berne of improvement plans, including the lengthening of the runway.

The voters also turned down proposals to amend existing legislation, thereby refusing a legal basis for the canton to help cover the airport's operating losses.

British airline Dan-Air has been operating a regular service between London Gatwick and Berne-Belpmoos for 12 years.

Passengers carried by Dan-Air on its scheduled service between London Gatwick and Berne rose 67 per cent as a result of the introduction last May of the 88-seater BAe 146 machine. In 574 flights, Dan-Air transported 28,858 passengers.

Swiss regional airline Crossair operated 1,691 scheduled flights - a rise of 87 per cent - between Lugano, Berne and Paris, carrying

9,537 passengers, a rise of 62 per cent.

★ ★ ★

CROSSAIR, the Swiss regional and commuter airline, recorded a big increase in activity last year.

It carried 212,160 passengers, an increase of more than 43 per cent over the previous year's figure.

Flights totalled 22,473, a rise of 32.7 per cent, and seat occupancy was 56.6 per cent, up from 54 per cent.

★ ★ ★

PASSENGER traffic at Zurich-Kloten, Switzerland's biggest air-

port, increased last year after 12 months of stagnation.

The total of 8,661,582 was an increase of 3.5 per cent over 1982.

Scheduled traffic was up by 3.2 per cent and charter by 5.5 per cent.

★ ★ ★

DAN-AIR is to introduce a daily scheduled service between Zurich and Manchester on May 14.

It will supplement Dan-Air's existing daily UK-Swiss service between Zurich, Berne and London Gatwick.

Fares will start at £150 for an advanced purchase return.

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