

Swiss Spotlight

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PERSONAL.

The "Swiss Observer" is glad to welcome a new member of the London Colony in the person of Mr. Max Homberger, Doctor of Laws of the University of Zurich, who has joined the staff of the London office of the Swiss Bank Corporation as an additional Manager. Mr. Homberger has behind him a record of distinguished advancement in the service of the Corporation. He became a Sub-Manager at the Zurich office in 1948 and was, at the beginning of 1950, transferred to the General Manager's section of the Bank in Basle. We trust that Mr. Homberger's appointment to London may prove another valuable step in his advancement, and that he will find, like so many of his predecessors, that London has many attractions to offer to those who make it their home.

* * *

We extend heartiest congratulations to Mr. E. M. Hamilton (alias von Arx) of 7, The Willows, Chorlton Ville, Manchester, on his forthcoming 80th birthday (May 22nd).

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 29th May 1959. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: G. N. Ross, Mrs. M. Cassel, A. W. Sommer, Mrs. A. Rietmann, Mrs. R. R. Callingham, Swiss Club Balloch, W. A. de Vigier, C. A. Aeschmann, Mrs. M. Werder, R. A. Strahl, A. Kunzler, Swiss Club Dunfermline, H. Markwalder (Tanga).

SWISS SPOTLIGHT.

By PIERRE BÉGUIN.

An attempt is being made in the canton of Vaud to achieve unity once more between the Protestants and to effect a fusion of the two Reformed Churches, which separated more than a century ago.

For a long time past there have been two main Protestant Churches in the French-speaking cantons: a National Church — which is closely linked with the State and is the expression of an official religion — and a so-called Free Church, born, more than a century ago, of the desire to be absolutely independent of all political power. The scission was so real and so profound that there were not only two churches in each canton, but also two Faculties of Theology.

The question of the union of the Church with the State, or that of their separation, was not, however, the sole element which differentiated these two churches. A distinction also existed between them from the theological or dogmatic point of view. Thus, the Free Church demanded from all its members an act of adherence, a profession of faith and the express acknowledgment of a certain number of dogmas. The National Church, on the contrary, is a multitudinous Church, i.e., a Church which considers as being its members all those Protestants who are not openly separated from it.

Nevertheless, this division into two adjoining Protestant Churches is now in a fair way to disappearing. A fusion of the two Churches was realised in the canton of Neuchâtel more than twenty-five years ago. In Geneva, the Free Church gave up maintaining a Faculty of Theology of its own thirty-five years ago. In the canton of Vaud, the two Churches have been striving for several years to achieve a fusion. Recently

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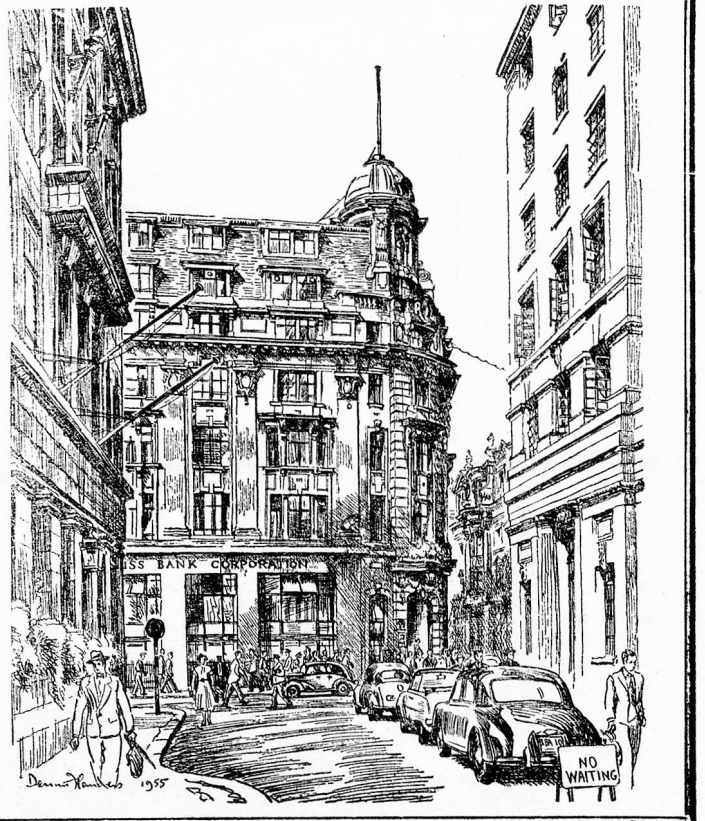
In LONDON the City Office is situated at 99, Gresham Street, E.C.2. and there is a WEST END BRANCH, specially equipped for the convenience of visitors, at 11c, Regent Street, S.W.1, close to Piccadilly Circus.

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their two Synods, holding their sessions separately but simultaneously, decided to pursue their efforts with a view to their reunion, and they made the final decisions regarding the procedures which are to render this possible.

As a matter of fact, certain of the former obstacles no longer exist. Even where a State religion is still to be found — or, at any rate, a close union between the Church and the State — the public powers allow an increasingly large liberty to the ecclesiastical authorities. They contribute towards the upkeep of the official Church, but they do not manage it, so that the reasons which, during the middle of the last century, had brought about the setting up of the so-called Free Churches, have now gradually disappeared.

However, this tendency towards a restoration of unity possesses still deeper causes. Without dwelling on the recent initiative of the new Pope, the true significance of which it is still impossible to gauge, it is important to note the immense effort that is being made by the Protestant Churches, throughout the world, to get closer together and to unite. The Oecumenical Movement — the headquarters of which are in Switzerland — has no other meaning. An aspiration towards getting closer together most certainly exists at present among Christians. This phenomenon can be explained by the general evolution of the world. The divisions to be found among Christians assume a derisory character when one realises how the whole of Christianity is threatened by the political régimes which, although they sometimes tolerate religion, more often than not despise and combat it.

In this regard, the following fact is not without interest. In Switzerland, the traditional divisions between the Protestants have still got a meaning and a justification in the eyes of those of the faithful who are more than forty or fifty years of age. They are not, however, understood by the younger generation, to whom they appear to be something quite out-of-date, and even rather scandalous. Thus, it would seem as if it is the young people who are the artisans of the unity to which we now tend.

The above reference to the Protestants of the French-speaking regions of Switzerland might very well apply, one day, to the whole of Christianity. In any case, a fair prospect in this direction is now opening before us.

The movements towards unity in the Protestant Churches, such as is being witnessed at present in French-speaking Switzerland, possesses an importance which is all the more significant, in that it forms part of a more general movement which is becoming apparent in the whole of the Christian world.

SWISSAIR APPOINTMENTS.

Mr. Ian McPhail has been appointed Swissair's Manager for Scotland from 1st May 1959. He is replacing Mr. P. Kessler, who is returning to Swissair's Head Office in Zurich as Assistant to Mr. F. Kretz, the General Sales Manager there. Before joining Swissair in 1952 as Mr. Kessler's assistant, Mr. McPhail worked for four years in the Continental Department of Thomas Cook & Sons. Mr. McPhail, who is in his thirties, is married with one child.

Swissair have also appointed Mr. E. Tanner, previously with the company in Zurich, to be their Station Supervisor at Manchester Airport. He is replacing Mr. B. F. Grivel, who is returning to Zurich.

DIE STRASSENVERKEHRSunFAELLE IN DER SCHWEIZ IM JAHRE 1958.

In einer soeben erschienenen Mitteilung über die Verkehrsunfälle im Jahre 1958 erinnert das Eidgenössische Statistische Amt daran, dass auf Grund des Bundesratsbeschlusses vom 23. Dezember 1955 die sogenannten Bagatellunfälle mit blossem Sachschaden bis zu 200 Franken in der Statistik nicht berücksichtigt werden und dass sich die Angaben über die tödlich verunglückten Strassenbenützer nicht nur auf die an der Unfallstelle gestorbenen, sondern auch auf die nachträglich den Verletzungen erlegenen Personen beziehen.

Die ganze Schweiz betrachtet, hat sich das Unfallgeschehen auf der Strasse im vergangenen Jahre weniger ungünstig entwickelt als angesichts der erneuten Vergrösserung des Motorfahrzeugparkes und des nochmals dichter gewordenen Verkehrs zu befürchten war. Im vierten Quartal musste allerdings gegenüber dem entsprechenden Zeitabschnitt des Vorjahres eine starke Zunahme der Unfälle, insbesondere der Unfälle mit Todesopfern registriert werden; in den ersten neun Monaten stieg jedoch die Gesamtzahl der Unfälle nur geringfügig an, und die Zahl der tödlichen Unfälle ging sogar merklich zurück. Die unablässigen Bemühungen um die Hebung der Verkehrssicherheit sind also nicht vergeblich gewesen. Gemessen am Motorfahrzeugbestand hat die Unfallhäufigkeit weiter abgenommen.

	Auf 10 000 in Verkehr stehende Motorfahrzeuge entfielen		
	Unfälle	Verletzte	Tote
1950	992	711	30
1956	660	463	17
1957	607	440	17
1958	587	412	16

Der relative Rückgang käme noch deutlicher zum Ausdruck, wenn die Unfallziffern mit den Verkehrsleistungen in Beziehung gesetzt werden könnten, die vermutlich stärker angewachsen sind als der Motorfahrzeugbestand, weil sich die Einreisen ausländischer Automobilisten nochmals kräftig erhöhten, nicht zuletzt dank der Abschaffung der Grenzpapiere. Diese eher zuversichtliche Eindruck soll indessen nicht vergessen lassen, dass im vergangenen Jahre wiederum Tausende von Personen und Familien durch Strassenverkehrsunfälle in schwere körperliche, seelische und oft auch materielle Not gerieten.

Insgesamt ereigneten sich vom Januar bis Dezember 1958 auf dem schweizerischen Strassennetz 42 564 (im Vorjahr 40 563) Unfälle, bei denen 29 908 (29 432) Personen verletzt und 1136 (1162) Personen — 795 Männer, 195 Frauen und 146 Kinder — getötet wurden. Verglichen mit 1957 ist die Zahl der Unfälle um rund 2000 oder 5 Prozent und jene der Verletzten um 476 oder 1,6 Prozent gestiegen, die Zahl der Todesopfer dagegen um 26 gesunken. Damit kam die seit 10 Jahren beobachtete Aufwärtsbewegung der tödlichen Unfälle zum hoffentlich endgültigen Stillstand.

Die Automobilisten hatten 37 Tote weniger zu beklagen als im Vorjahr. Während damals 135 Lenker und 157 Mitfahrer ihr Leben einbüssten, waren es im