

No more childrens' parties!

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FEDERAL COUNCILLOR VISITS LONDON

The Swiss Minister of Justice and Police, Federal Councillor Dr. Kurt Furgler, paid an official visit to London (13th/14th October) as guest of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn-Jones. The Swiss delegation included Prof. J. Voyame, Director of the Justice Division, and Prof. H. Hausheer, Vice-Director of the Justice Division of the Federal Department of Justice and Police. It was the first time in the history of Anglo-Swiss relationship that a Swiss Minister of Justice visited the British Government officially, although relations between the two countries, also in the field of law and justice, have always been most satisfactory.

At a press conference at the Swiss Embassy, at which mainly London correspondents of Swiss papers took part, Federal Councillor Furgler reported in fluent English on the talks with the Lord Chancellor, the Attorney General and the Secretary for Home Affairs. Present were, too, the Swiss Ambassador and Monsieur P. Ramseyer, Press Attaché.

The purpose of the visit, Dr. Furgler explained, was to strengthen friendly ties and to further mutual understanding by personal contact. The first trade agreement between GB and Switzerland had been signed in 1856, and several agreements in other fields had been made since.

With regard to legal questions, Switzerland is of opinion that these, like problems of the family, human rights, etc, could be better taken care of in the Council of Europe where 18 nations were represented, rather than in the EEC which had above all to solve economic and political questions. The two Governments are agreed that representatives in the European Council should insist on more realistic programmes.

One of the most important subjects discussed was that of fighting terrorism. Until the Stockholm incident, this item had not appeared on any agenda of ministerial meetings. But since then, Ministers of Justice had met, and much had already been done, vertically and horizontally. In the former, police and other security organs had been strengthened, and in the latter, at international level, contacts had been strengthened between governments and such organisations as Interpol. No country in Europe would give asylum to terrorists, although it was regrettable that this could not yet be said about all countries in the world.

As every country has different legislation, it would be difficult to get international, even intereuropean laws on terrorism and similar crimes like industrial espionage, political crimes (this

would need definition first) accepted by all countries. The talks with the Lord Chancellor and other Ministers had shown that Great Britain, too, is of opinion that existing national laws should rather be adapted. The most important aspect were that existing contacts be better developed, so that in any emergency close agreement already existed, rather than the system of "sauve qui peut" which had been used hitherto.

And here not only close touch at highest levels was meant, but also between ordinary individual legal experts. Such relations exist, but are not made use of nearly widely enough. Ambassador Weitnauer regretted that there were no young Swiss lawyers in London, whereas a tidy number of law students and lawyers from other European countries came here to get to know an old democracy and its law and juridical system. The great and real sympathy which Great Britain has for Switzerland should be used in order to strengthen existing ties. Relations in the economic field, he said, were very close, but more practical steps should be taken in the field of study, culture etc.

Ambassador Weitnauer concluded the press conference with a statement that Federal Councillor Furgler's visit could be called a great success. It had been an information and goodwill tour, and the federal Minister of Justice had understood extremely well how to get Switzerland's message across.

On the eve of the talks, the Swiss Ambassador gave a dinner for the guests from Switzerland at the Embassy. Several prominent personalities (of both sexes) in the Swiss community in London were present, amongst them the President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K., Mr. Bernard Simon, and The most Rev. Archbishop Bruno Bernard Heim, a Bernese, Apostolic Delegate to the Church of England.

MM

No more childrens' parties!

It has been decided to put an end to an event which has been taking place for a very long time at the beginning of each new year: the Swiss Children's Christmas Party.

The main reason for this unhappy decision is that, with growing costs and slackening support, the event was producing a greater loss every year. Last January's Party at the Queen Mary Hall in the YMCA Headquarters had cost \$264.10 while income, mainly from the Swiss societies and the Embassy, had totalled \$144.50. The substantial loss thus sustained was the fifth in succession. It was quite plain that within a year or so the Children's Party would have exhausted its balance in hand.

Mr. Maurice Rothlisberger, who had organised the event for fifteen years, furthermore wished to resign from the very demanding duties involved and there was no candidate willing to succeed him. It is only appropriate to underline here the selfless efforts undertaken all these years by Mr. Rothlisberger in connection with the Children's party. We should like to thank him on behalf of the countless children that have laughed gleefully at the magicians, enjoyed the presents from the hands of Santa Claus and tucked into the goodies offered for tea at each one of these events.

The physiognomy of the Children's party had changed somewhat during the past few years because many of the children that participated were only half Swiss. Indeed, some potential donors questioned whether their generosity was justified when they realised that very few of the children had Swiss names. Most, in fact had eastern names, being the children of former au pair girls and Commonwealth immigrants. The termination of a cheerful event like this is just another reminder that the situation of the Swiss Colony is changing fast.

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