

Home affairs

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Mr. & Mrs. G. Julmi-Schaefer of Basle, Mrs. S. Hubler-Roesselet, of Wingreis, nr. Twann. [A.T.S.]

The following have celebrated their iron wedding anniversary (65): Mr. & Mrs. A. Hafner-Hafner of Dinhard (Winterthur), Mr. & Mrs. J. Tschudi-Luipold of Schwanden (Ct. Glarus), Mr. & Mrs. J. Scheppeler-Studer of Braunwald. [A.T.S.]

HOME AFFAIRS.

by MAX NEF.

According to official statistics, 155 Swiss from abroad, returned to their homeland, last year. More than half of them came from the East Zone in Germany, whilst other groups came from Rumania and Poland. Last Autumn, the Rumanian Government authorised seventy Swiss citizens to leave the country, of which number, however only a portion returned to Switzerland. In the Soviet Union, also, there would appear to be signs that a somewhat more generous practice, in this respect, is being established, so that it may be anticipated that further Swiss citizens, who have been striving for years to obtain permission to leave that country, may be coming back, here, shortly.

In regard to the question as to what help is given to these returned wanderers by the Confederation, the Statement of Accounts of the Central Office for Questions Relating to Swiss Citizens from Abroad, provides the following information. Between three and a half and five and a half million francs are available each year for Relief Activities, being appropriated for this purpose by the Federal Chambers, within the framework of the Ordinary Budget of the Confederation.

The task of finding employment for these people is not so easy in regard to the older generations, in spite of the prevailing economic boom. Approximately 1,600 persons have to be kept permanently, at the expense of the State, partly for reasons of health and partly because of their age, as quite one-third of them are already over seventy-five years of age.

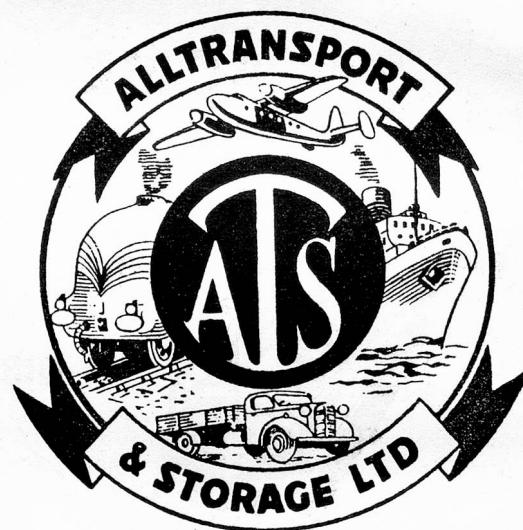
In such cases where the returned emigrants are willing and able because of their qualifications and capacities, to undertake some *independent* activity, this is made possible for them through the granting of loans. In this way, during the last ten years, about ten million francs have been paid out by the Confederation, either in the shape of direct loans or as security. Approximately one-third of such loans have been paid back, after their object had been achieved. Rather more than one-tenth has had to be written off as a dead loss.

In addition to those Swiss who have returned to their own country from abroad, there are also distressed Swiss citizens residing abroad, who have to be helped. Here, in each case it is necessary to ascertain — and this is no easy matter — whether the distressful situation has really been caused by the war or the post-bellum conditions, in the meaning of the legal Ordinance. Almost exactly half of the circa 1,700 cases requiring relief measures, which belong to this category, relate to Swiss citizens who live in the West German Federal Republic; another important group resides in France, or in the East Zone of Ger-

many. Here also permanent relief is required in respect of one-third of the people, which consists of elderly persons who are over seventy-five.

Individual financial aid is supplemented by collective relief, most of which consists in deliveries in kind. Although this particular kind of aid, could be cut down somewhat latterly, there still exists a penury of all manner of goods, in a great many countries. Thus, Swiss citizens established in Poland, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia received aid from the home-country in the form of occasional consignments of goods, sent to them last year.

Finally, mention should also be made, in this connection, of the aid brought to the Swiss children abroad. In 1955, no fewer than four hundred children belonging to our fellow-countrymen abroad were able to spend their holidays in Switzerland. Furthermore, the Swiss abroad are given the opportunity to have their children educated, during a certain time, in the Schools and educational establishments here, in Switzerland, in order to obtain some technical training. In this way, these young people are made acquainted with the Swiss way of living and thinking, and their ties with their home-country are strengthened; this is of considerable importance for the renewal and rejuvenation of the Swiss colonies abroad which, in general, have grown somewhat too old. Private organisations also help a great deal in the carrying out of these relief activities, the Confederation repaying them a certain part of their financial outlay.



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