

At random news

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how the Swiss abroad could or should be consulted for negotiating international treaties on matters such as double taxation, immigration and importation.

If some of these suggestions provoke contradictory views, this will be interesting and useful to our Delegates for their guidance when representing our Colony in the Commission and at the annual Conference of the Swiss Abroad. The important thing is to get enough expressions of Opinion in to represent a fairly accurate cross-section of views. They should be sent to the President of our Federation of Swiss Societies, Dr. H. W. Egli, 17 Corringham Road, London N.W.11, by 20th June. The initiative of the Swiss Club Manchester in eliciting such expressions of views is most praiseworthy, though it is hoped that our compatriots will not hesitate to communicate any ideas of their own they may have on the subject quite apart from the questionnaire.

One suggestion not mentioned in the Questionnaire but may be deserving attention is a demand for the establishment of special sickness insurance facilities for the elderly Swiss abroad when retiring to the home country. Another matter missing in the Manchester questionnaire is our deep concern for the poor image of our country abroad requiring a vastly increased effort of cultural propaganda for Switzerland in the best sense of the word, of which the still hoped for establishment of a worthy "FORUM of SWITZERLAND" in the Swiss Centre in London should only be regarded as the nucleus of a continuing effort radiating throughout the British Isles. Let us all help in this great work of making the "FIFTH SWITZERLAND" a living reality — first by the pooling of ideas as to what should be done and secondly by supporting whatever actions and projects may emerge from this exchange of views culminating in the forthcoming *Auslandsschweizertagung* at Lugano at the end of August.

Dr. H. W. EGLI.

AT RANDOM NEWS

It is now known that **Stalin's daughter** spent some time with the wife of the Fribourg industrialist Claude Blancpain, Madame Bertrand d'Astier de la Vigerie, (whose death is announced on another page) at her house at Ninan near Fribourg. First, she was at Beatenberg, and then she retired to the home of the Canisius Sisters at Burgbühl/St. Antoni (in the Sarine district). For a while, she also stayed at a Convent in Fribourg. Twice she was in Berne, always well taken care of by two Swiss security men. After her departure for U.S.A. on 21st April, she thanked the Swiss authorities and all concerned in making her stay one of relaxation and peaceful collection.

The investigations into the fatal flying accident at Sion on 26th August 1966, when "**Glacier Pilot**" **Hermann Geiger** lost his life, have been concluded. The blame has to be put on the dead pilot himself who ignored the right of way to which the other plane was entitled. Geiger's great courage and daring and unselfish nature were coupled with a certain rashness which led to his tragic death.

The collection in aid of the **flood victims in Florence**, started by the Swiss Red Cross in November, has so far resulted in 5½ million Swiss francs. The first phase in the aid campaign was for immediate help, the second will be for rehabilitation, such as prefabricated houses, furniture, linen, etc.

Forestry students at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich spent their spring holidays in Florence, helping in afforestation work in the Apennines.

The **population of Skopje** in Yugoslavia thanked organisations and individuals in Switzerland for their extensive help after the earthquake in 1963.

Three years after the **air catastrophe at Duerrenaes**, in which practically the whole adult population of the little village of Humlikon was killed, life at the village goes on. The farms are being worked and kept going until the respective children can take over. The fund which was collected and reached 2¼ m. francs is slightly lower now, but money is used wisely according to a 20-year plan set up by the curatorium in charge of it.

The organisation in aid of poor **mountain farming communities** is 25 years old. Nearly 400,000 francs was spent on help in 1966, and a new appeal for *Patenschaften*, a kind of godparent scheme, has been launched.

Some 8,000 young boys and girls helped in the **Voluntary Agricultural Service**, among them 18 were Germans, 4 English, 4 Dutch, 3 French, 2 Italian, 2 American and an Austrian. Most helpers went to individual farms, but there were four camps too. Whole school classes went, and some firms gave their young employees an additional holiday for the purpose.

A social service called "**Aktion 7**" was founded in Zurich in 1964. Its aim is to afford young boys and girls a chance to help. In 1966, 1,021 girls and 549 boys offered themselves to work in hospitals, as home helps, in catastrophes, etc. This spring, for instance, old people in Basle, Zurich and Schaffhausen had their double windows removed, cleaned and stored ready to be put in again in winter.

Old **telephone directories** are collected by the "Radio for the Old and Invalid" group every year. Out of the money received, radio sets are purchased for the blind, etc. In 1966 alone, 870,000 kg. of telephone books were collected.

The **First of August Collection** 1966 resulted in 3.8 m. francs, 800,000 more than in the previous year. 932,000 badges were sold and over 34m. stamps. The money benefited needy mothers.

In 1961, the **Exhibition for Hygiene and Sport** (HYSPA) took place in Berne. It has just been announced that the deficit was 4.9 m. francs. The town of Berne carried nearly half, the Canton about a third and the Confederation about a sixth.

[A.T.S.]

HOLIDAY CAMP FOR YOUNG SWISS ABROAD

The Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad again organises a hiking camp. It will take place from 23rd July to 12th August. Girls and boys from 16 to 24 years are invited to apply. In small groups, the young people will leave the base camp for walks in the Canton of Ticino and spend a few days of rest on the Lake of Lugano or the Lago Maggiore. Cost: Fr.150.—.

Application forms may be obtained from and should be returned by 15th June to:

Jugenddienst des A.S.S.,
Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne.