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## THE S.K.V. DELEGATES AT BASLE.

This year's meeting, on May 5th-6th, will long remain in the memories of the participants as the end of another chapter in the history of the S.K.V.

Central-President Karl Strickler, with his imposing figure of height and breadth, had guided the Association's destiny for the past 18 years with a verve in strict keeping with his towering presence. The President's is an honorary office, with unlimited opportunities for hard work and, how could it be otherwise, for being the occasional butt for democracy's privilege: Grousing. He has now decided to retire, and who can begrudge him the spending of his leisure in the bosom of his family? It was a happy thought on the part of the members, and a fitting tribute to great merit, to elect Karl Strickler as Honorary President. Long may he enjoy the honour!

But there was more to come. Another pillar of the Society, no less than our friend the Secretary-General, National Councillor Philip Schmid-Ruedin, asked to be relieved from his duties. He had already served beyond the age-limit in his office, a job in which 24 hours per day and seven days per week is all too little time to satisfy the manifold demands made upon the holder. Space does not permit to enumerate all his tasks. In fact, the activities of Philip Schmid-Ruedin since his appointment to a position in the Central Secretariat on February 4th, 1918, could only be put into proper perspective by writing the full history of the S.K.V. for those years. A herculean task awaited him; but he proved equal to it.

In due course he was promoted to Secretary-General, an office he has held for 26 years, and we can only marvel that his health has stood the strain of his efforts. His was the courageous and persistent intervention in the National Council that ultimately brought the A.H.V. into being. And he it was who, troubled by the harsh fate of the "over 40" unemployed, obtained the means for the funding of a special fund to help those unfortunates to find a fresh livelihood. We in London have good reason to be grateful for his understanding and practical help in matters affecting our College. Wherever a difficulty arose, Schmid-Ruedin's services were given generously and with a keen insight into needs and fancies.

His contacts with employers inevitably were numerous and not always only pleasant ones. One's memory reverts to an address he gave to our members here some years before the last war, when a much respected leader of Swiss industry in this country said afterwards, "I came specially to hear this Schmid; he is not the 'Hetzer' I thought". And that after an intervention by the S.K.V. at the man's Swiss office on behalf of an employee. Again, one of Switzerland's industrial giants, in the forefront of the employers' association, hearing of our friend's retirement, sent him a letter expressing appreciation of Schmid-Ruedin's courtesy during trying negotiations, coupled with the wish for a happy rest. To many of us the letters S.K.V. were synonymous with "Schmid Kommt Vorbei", rather than Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein, whenever we were troubled. No doubt some hated him, while we loved him, and that is why we share his gratification at the acknowledgement his work has received from those, whom he had at times to fight in our interest. The

thanks of our Society were given to him by election as Central-President, an announcement greeted with thunderous applause. And what a wise move! Thus our new Central-President will not only ensure continuity of our aims, but will also remain in close contact with his successor, Arnold Meier-Ragg.

The new Secretary-General, well-known to us here, takes over with the united good wishes of all members. It is not easy to follow an outstanding personality; however, he has already proved himself a painstaking and capable official during the many years he has served the Society, and he will be given every support.

An event of particular pleasure to the London delegation was the conferring of the Honorary Membership of the S.K.V. on our meritorious friend and President, Walter Meier. He was visibly moved, and so was "Mariann" who at that moment might have been able to write, but speak she could not!

Delegates meetings always re-unite old friends, and we were delighted to see our one-time stalwarts A. Steinmann and Max Schneider. And on the veterans' list of honour for 50 years' uninterrupted membership figures the name of our member E. Hardmeier, for many years to the fore in our Education Committee and now living at Ipswich. How we would have welcomed his presence.

With unfeigned pleasure we greeted the meeting with "our patron" at the B.I.G.A., Mr. Arnold Schwander. His cheery smile on his young looking face, crowned with waving silvery hair, is always a tonic.

Is it conceit to infer that an Association which, like the S.K.V. and with justifiable aspirations, obtains the friendship, the devotion, and the services, of men from all walks of life and from all the corners of Switzerland, must indeed be a body which above all is governed by overriding loyalty to people and country?

A.C.S.

## WIEVIELE AUSLANDSCHWEIZER GIBT ES ?

Unter "Auslandsschweizer" sind diejenigen Schweizerbürger zu verstehen, die wirklich im Ausland leben und dort ansässig sind. Einer Erhebung der BIGA in Bern zufolge sind in 50 Ländern verteilt, rund 205,000 Auslandsschweizer zu zählen, das sind etwas über 4 Prozent der Gesamtbevölkerung. Natürlicherweise sind die meisten Auslandsschweizer in den Nachbarstaaten, also Frankreich, Deutschland, Italien und Oesterreich zu Hause, nämlich rund 90,000 oder fast die Hälfte des ganzen Kontingents, wobei Frankreich noch an erster Stelle steht, mit 56,000 Auslandsschweizern.

Grossbritannien hat 8,225 und die USA 9,679 aufzuweisen. Die Wanderungsbewegung scheint gegenüber 1951 nicht sehr gross gewesen zu sein. Einzig Grossbritannien und Kanada weisen "Verschiebungen" auf und zwar interessanterweise Grossbritannien eine Abnahme um 1317 Personen, dafür aber Kanada eine Zunahme um 1272 Einheiten.

Wir müssen uns bei diesen Angaben vor Augen halten, dass der übliche Nimbus der "grossen Zahl" nicht in Frage kommt, sondern es ist der Wert des Einzelnen, der ausschlaggebend ist und unserem Bestand an Schweizern im Ausland mit Recht soviel Bedeutung zukommen lässt.