

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1972)

Heft: 1643

Rubrik: News form the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION TO SWISS PEOPLE LIVING ABROAD, FOR 1st AUGUST, 1972

Dear Compatriots,

It is my great pleasure to convey to you the best wishes and greetings of the Federal Council on this, our National Day.

This year, the annual meeting of the Swiss Abroad is taking place for the 50th time, and for this reason the commission of the New Helvetic Society has endeavoured to give the gathering a particularly festive air. It is also certainly not by chance that Berne has been chosen as the meeting place. I hope that many Swiss citizens, men and women living abroad, will be able to take part in the congress, which will be accompanied by numerous cultural, musical, folkloristic, military, and sporting events. The subject of the discussions which will be held at the meeting is "The political rights and obligations of the Swiss abroad"; and the opinions of the people attending the congress will be of great value to the Federal Government.

As the Federal Government pointed out in its second report to parliament on policy guide lines for the 1971 to 1975 legislative period, the Swiss people face several very important decisions at the ballot box. It would be going into too much detail to list them all here. But I should like to pick out a few which could also be of importance for you. This year, in fact, the Swiss people will be called upon to vote on a popular initiative for increased arms' controls and a ban on arms exports. There will also be a ballot on a new constitutional basis to provide for the aged. Moreover, the Swiss people will have to express themselves, towards the end of this year, on an agreement to regulate our

relations with the European Economic Community; and at a later date, the question of Switzerland's entry into the United Nations Organisation is to be put before the electorate.

As you can see, participation demands a great deal of political awareness, knowledge and effort from our men and women. The importance of informing the Swiss abroad, who might also be able to exercise these political rights in the not too distant future, is therefore not to be underestimated. In consequence, Federal Authorities, in collaboration with the Commission for Swiss Abroad, have adopted new methods of information. More than half of all the Swiss abroad today are reached by a newly conceived, periodic information sheet which tells them of the most important happenings at home and in the Swiss communities abroad. The Confederation is sparing neither time nor effort—nor expense—to keep in regular contact with Swiss in foreign lands and to maintain their interest in their home country. In addition, the Swiss Shortwave Service, which broadcasts daily to the whole world about events in Switzerland, has also produced a new and more comprehensive means of information. In co-operation with the Secretariat for Swiss Abroad, free tape copies are being made available, each month, to Swiss associations and official representatives abroad of "Round Table Discussions", specially produced for this audience, and dealing with Switzerland's current problems. In this manner, it is also hoped to strengthen further the links between Swiss citizens abroad and their home land.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your families health and happiness for the future, and I thank you for the loyalty you continue to show to our country.

Nello Celio

President of the Confederation

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of this Society took place on Friday, 26th May, 1972 at their headquarters in Swiss House, Fitzroy Square, W.1. Due no doubt to the fact that this was the beginning of the traditional Spring Bank Holiday weekend the attendance proved to be rather disappointing. Nevertheless, the Society's President, Mr. W. Burren, extended a hearty welcome to all present and brought greetings and apologies for unavoidable absence from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Grunberg, and the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. M. Rothlisberger. Mr. Burren then proceeded to read his report on the activities of the Society during the past year, which in fact covered 15 months to the end of March 1972. He particularly referred to the two Annual Dinners at the Dorchester Hotel which took place during this period both of which had been a great success both socially and financially.

In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Burren presented the accounts which showed a satisfactory surplus. He pointed out, however, that comparison with previous years was difficult because the Society benefitted from two raffles at the annual dinners as well as an extra auction. It was gratifying to note that due to a substantial increase in the sale of stamps through the Exchange club packets the resulting commission also showed a welcome increase over previous years and Mr. Burren took the opportunity of thanking Mrs. Paschoud for the great amount of work she has done during the period under review. Both the President's report and the accounts were duly adopted.

There followed the usual election of President and Committee and Mr. O. Grob kindly offered to act as Chairman pro tem. He first expressed his and the members' thanks to the out-

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