

1
Mrs. Polk
January 17, 1920.

My dear Mr. Polk,

As the last act of my administration, may I take the liberty of submitting the following matter for your kind consideration.

Item 11 on the coupon of the Immigration Service of the U.S. Department of Labor, which each person entering or leaving the United States is required to fill in, calls for the race of the person in question. The instructions on the back of this coupon enumerate 26 different races, without mentioning a Swiss race. This omission is, I understand, based on the assumption that, Switzerland being composed of three races, German, French, and Italian, a Swiss citizen should register under one of the three categories, according to the language spoken by him. I, together with a great many of my compatriots, have always felt very keenly that this classification is not warranted and consider it unpleasant to be required to register under one of these three categories.

The Swiss cannot accurately be classified under any of the headings given. It is true that we speak three different languages but it is equally true that the languages do not

Honorable Frank L. Polk,
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run at all along racial lines. As a Swiss of that part of Switzerland where a German dialect is spoken, I may say that there is a strong feeling against the tendency to be classified as belonging to the German race. We have been separated from Germany for over 600 years and during this time have developed quite different racial features.

The list of races on the above mentioned coupon specifies, amongst others, a Dutch race. Is Holland not exactly in the same position as Switzerland ?

If a discrimination regarding the racial descent of the Swiss is desired, may I not be permitted to suggest that the denominations generally used in Switzerland be adopted. Would it not be possible to establish two Swiss races : The Alemannic Swiss and the Latin Swiss, and, in case of a further division, of the latter, separate it into French and Italian Swiss ? Such a division seems, however, hardly desirable.

I should appreciate it very much indeed if you would kindly bring this matter to the attention of the Labor Department with a view to having the list of races adjusted accordingly. I cannot tell you how much the Alemannic Swiss would appreciate such an adjustment which would relieve them of the necessity of registering under a racial category to which they do not belong.

I am, my dear Mr. Polk,

Very sincerely yours,

Minister of Switzerland.