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LA NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

DINNER ON 29th SEPTEMBER, 1922.

(Communicated.)

For some time back there had been apprehension as to whether a sufficient number of members would be ready to attend a dinner which was to be held, combining it with business concerning the activity of the N.S.H. Pessimistic and optimistic conjectures were repeated over and over again, but finally the large hall at Pagani's, which had been booked for the occasion, was hardly big enough to hold the 170 members and friends who had come together to have a talk and to listen to speeches, songs and instrumental music. The character of the gathering was, moreover, enhanced by the presence of two illustrious guests, Dr. James Vallotton, Swiss delegate to the International Rhine Commission, and Mr. Emil Koch, the president of the "Semaine Suisse," also a creation of the N.S.H. in Switzerland. Mr. J. Baer, the president, gave a brief survey of the manifold activities which the Group had pursued since February, and then sketched in an impressive manner the programme of lectures for 1922-23, which is as follows:—

October 27th.—Lecture by Dr. Paul Lang on the "Revival of the German-Swiss Dialect Poetry," including recitations of German-Swiss poems and to be given in Swiss-German.

November 24th.—Lecture by Mr. Jean Goy: "En Passant, une revue de la Situation en Suisse au point de vue national."

December 15th.—Lecture by Dr. Wegelin, who is a specialist in finance, in English on "Swiss Finance Reforms," which will give a survey of the finance of the Swiss Confederation as before and during the war and will expound the different proposals for putting our financial system on a sound basis again as suggested and put into practice by the Federal Council, also taking into account different reform schemes recommended by party programmes.

January.—If possible, a lecture by Professor Eugène Borel of Geneva University (President of the Mixed Arbitral Tribunal) on "The Position of Switzerland in International Law"; or a lecture by the Rev. Meyer, of Liverpool, on a subject of German-Swiss literature.

February.—General Assembly.

March.—A lecture by the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme on "Le Major Davel" (bi-centenary), to be given in French.

April.—A lecture, with lantern slides on the "Swiss National Park" by Professor Dr. Friedrich Zschokke, Professor at Basle University and Honorary Member of the Swiss Alpine Club, and who is going to lecture as the first Swiss exchange professor at Cambridge University from January till April, 1923. The lecture to be given in English, French or German. To be given previously under the auspices of the British Alpine Club, if it can be arranged.

May.—If no other arrangement can be made, a lecture by Dr. Paul Lang in English on a political or literary subject.

This Mr. Baer supplemented by giving an outline of the propaganda work to be done by the Secretariat during the forthcoming winter:—

1. To send out to 5,000 addresses in the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the United States (including our members) a bibliography containing 250 exact titles of books on Swiss matters written in English and which have appeared since 1880. This compilation, the result of four peoples' work during more than a month's time, gives the whole of the literature at present available in English on our country, its institutions, history and great men. It includes a chapter containing all the English translations from the works of Swiss writers which have appeared since the above-mentioned date. The work, which is the first of its kind and should prove very useful to hundreds of English and American writers, journalists, etc., as well as to all Swiss scholars interested in Anglo-Swiss relations, is now ready for print.

2. To get into personal touch with all the eminent London Publishers and to induce them to translate works of modern Swiss fiction (especially Spitteler). This campaign to be undertaken in connection with the sending out of the Helvetic Bibliography, mentioned under 1.

3. To prepare an Exhibition of Swiss Master Paintings which the Art Commission hopes to be able to arrange in the

course of 1923, and for which the help of the Federal Councillor concerned has been promised. The necessary notes are now being collected for writing a series of articles on the history of the artistic relations between England and Switzerland in the course of the centuries. The preparation of English public opinion for the first Swiss Art Exhibition ever held in this country, on such an extensive scale, will constitute an elaborate form of campaign by the Secretariat with the help of the art critics of our Press Committee.

4. To edit regularly on behalf of "The Swiss Observer" a special "literary page," containing first-rate contributions in all our national languages, written by Swiss writers on Swiss subjects (Fiction, History, Literature, Art, Folklore, Education, Miscellaneous). An offer on these lines is under the consideration of the publishers of "The Swiss Observer." It is the result of a long cherished desire of the Secretary to let our members of the Swiss Colony generally have more fully than is possible by lectures—and above all more agreeably—the benefit of his extensive reading on Swiss matters and of his literary and journalistic experience.

5. To continue regularly the reporting on the activity of the London Swiss to the "Anglo-Swiss Review," the "Echo Suisse," the Bulletin of the N.S.H. and various Swiss papers. It is contemplated to interest our Press Committee more extensively in this kind of journalistic work.

6. To transmit, as in the past, suitable short articles to the English Press when the death of a Swiss of international fame is reported or when festivals, centenaries, etc., of great importance occur.

7. To send out the books of our Library, as well as the cuttings of our new Subject File, containing thousands of cuttings on every aspect of Swiss life, to any Englishman eager to use them for work or information on Switzerland. The offer to be made simultaneously with the sending out of the Helvetic Bibliography. This will bring the Secretariat into close touch with a number of English friends of Switzerland: writers, professors, journalists, clergymen, lecturers and alpinists.

8. To arrange for suitable lectures on Swiss topics, to be given by the Secretary to English Clubs, Associations, and Students' Unions. The offer to be made simultaneously with the sending out of the Helvetic Bibliography.

9. If it is desired, to arrange occasionally informal gatherings of the younger members of the Group in order to give them an opportunity of meeting each other and acquaint themselves personally with the work of the Secretariat and thus become educated in the spirit of the N.S.H.

Mr. Baer wound up his most interesting exposé by bringing home to the members present that all these good things could only be done provided they made an earnest effort to assist the Council and Committee morally and financially.

It was then heartily agreed that a telegram should be sent to Professor Bohnenblust, the Central President, to be read out at the General Assembly of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique which took place the following day at Schinznach, and by which the members present agreed to overcome the difficulties of the present financial emergency, and expressed their confidence in the future of their Group.

The same note was struck by the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme in an eloquent appeal to the members by which he put into proper relief the rôle of the N.S.H. and the value of its activities.

Then came lighter moments. Madame Gysin sang some delightful songs, and Mr. Roos made us almost imagine that we were standing at the top of Rigi or Pilatus when he started jodelling, while Messrs. Chappuis, Pressia, Becker, Suter and Arber gave us, either as soloists or in quartettes, proof of their high art. Mr. E. Hartmann also favoured us by his delightful singing on more than one occasion.

Both of the guests addressed the audience, Mr. Koch explaining to them what the work of the "Semaine Suisse" had been and how it came that the N.S.H. in Switzerland created this movement which had done so much to strengthen the consciousness of our national identity, and Mr. James Vallotton saying some very kind words in eloquent French about the London Group of the N.S.H. and the London Colony as a whole. He made clear to the members how much the work done here was appreciated in the Home Country and how they had always been praised for doing it in such an admirable way.

There were then sung some Swiss songs in which the audience joined, and it was well after half-past eleven when the last man slipped out of Pagani's, certainly satisfied with the food and drink, which had been excellent, and very probably also satisfied with the artistic pleasures he had enjoyed, and quite decided to do his very best to help the N.S.H. of this town to carry on its work.

P. L.