

The annual general meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1939)**

Heft 905

PDF erstellt am: **04.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-690422>

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.



A. NUSSBAUMER

President

Swiss Benevolent
Society.

(Fonds de Secours).

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society (Fonds de Secours pour les Suisses pauvres) took place on Wednesday, March 8th at the Glendower Hotel, Glendower Place, South Kensington.

Owing to a previous engagement, the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, was unable to be present during the Meeting, but later on presided over the dinner which followed.

Mr. A. Nussbaumer, President of the Society, took the chair during the deliberations.

As on former occasions the meeting was conducted with great efficiency, which was all the more appreciated as the agenda was a heavy one.

The Secretary, Mr. Theo Ritter, read out the minutes of the last meeting which were accepted.

Mr. A. Nussbaumer, President of the Society, then gave his Presidential address.

He said:

It gives me great pleasure to be here to-night to address you as President of the Swiss Benevolent Society and I should like to welcome the representatives of the various Swiss Societies whose co-operation is so essential to the success of our Society, and with these I would also like to associate Mr. Stauffer of the "Swiss Observer."

It is a source of great satisfaction to me that at the end of a first year of office I can report healthy progress in the affairs of our Society, and record that we close the year in quite good shape.

I remember intimating when I took over the Presidency that while I did so with great pleasure and with a full appreciation of the honour you bestowed on me by calling me to this office I had to admit one misgiving, namely that I should hardly be able to be as regular an attendant at the weekly meetings as I should like. I hope you do not really cherish the well-worn belief that a bank manager strolls in at 10.30, performs some mysterious Managerial Duty (spelt with Capitals) and rolls home or to the golf course at 3.30, thus earning the title of a busy City man. Such an existence might be desirable; I cannot say myself, never having experienced it. The fact is your City bank manager leads a very full existence and has to fit things in as best he may. Nevertheless I have kept in very close touch with developments and the Society has been often in my thoughts.

Another thing sticks in my mind too. I drew a picture of myself as an arch-ogre, almost a bird of prey, certainly an octopus with many tentacles outstretched searching out the life-blood of the Swiss Colony and its friends — in other words, an enthusiastic collector of funds for the Society. Curious to know what that great man said about Benevolence, I looked up the word in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, — the famous book which so picturesquely describes a Stock Jobber as "a low wretch who makes a living out of dealing in stocks and shares" — and I find that at one time in English history Benevolence was a kind of tax. As long ago as the reign of Richard the Third, however, it was found unsatisfactory and abolished and since then, I am glad to say, things have been conducted on a voluntary basis — giving for the love of the cause. Benevolence, moreover, implies a friendly understanding between those who put their hands in their pockets and those who so willingly devote their time to the service of their less fortunate fellows. Nothing that I can say is good enough to describe and commend the wonderful work put in by this band of devoted helpers. I refer to our Honorary Vice-President, Mr. Dupraz, to Mr. Gamper and to our Secretary, Mr. Ritter, and to those many others who so faithfully carry out the somewhat prosaic duties which cannot be avoided if the work of the Society is to be carried to success. It is very heartening to know that this excellent tradition of real and active

benevolence still persists and to be able to claim at the end of a year that the results have to some extent at least justified any effort that was made so that, in spite of a year upon which none of us can look back with feelings of satisfaction, the accounts which the Treasurer will shortly submit make a favourable showing. This is the more satisfactory when we look back and realise what a disturbed and worrying year it was, with political clouds perpetually on the horizon and markets depressed to the utmost. Notwithstanding all this, the accounts now show that after the necessary allocations have been made to depreciation there is an increase of £200 in our total assets.

It is, however, still more satisfactory to be able to record that we have been able to extend the benefits we distribute to our pensioners. There is, as you all appreciate, a tendency for the cost of living to go up and you know well that the allowance which the Society is able to make to its pensioners is such as will in fact only cover the bare necessities. The increase in benefits to our pensioners which we have felt compelled to provide will involve additional annual expenditure to the amount of about £200 and we shall therefore have to strive to increase our revenue and consolidate it at a higher level. We have, therefore, cause to be thankful for every increase in revenue which may help us to provide a little more generously for these deserving people. At the beginning of the year we had 83 pensioners on our books. I have to record with regret the death of six of these old people during the year, while twelve new members have been admitted to our number, making a total of 89 at the end of the year.

The Home for Aged Swiss continues to be one of the Society's important interests and it is particularly in connection with this that I should like to express our very sincere regret that Mr. and Mrs. Conrad have found it necessary to resign from those duties with which they have so long been identified. No praise could be too high for the untiring and unselfish service which they have put in, their regular attendance at the Home and the way in which they have devoted time and energy to the work of the Society. I should also like to take this opportunity of expressing our thanks to Mrs. Saager and Miss Müller for their invaluable help in the work of the Home. Thanks to the unremitting labours of all the members of the Home Committee and to the efficient management of Mrs. Jenne — whom we used to know so well as Miss Simmen — and to whom I must take this opportunity of officially conveying the Society's most cordial congratulations, the Home has been self-supporting. It has been full to capacity throughout the year. In replacement of Mrs. Jenne, we have been able to secure the services of Miss Wurlet, whom I am very glad to see here to-night and to whom I should like to extend a hearty welcome.

Many thanks also are due to our Honorary President, Mr. Paravicini, for the untiring help he has given to the Society as an invaluable intermediary with the Federal and Cantonal authorities, who are, as you know, large contributors to the funds owing to the help they give in special cases.

Unfortunately we are not in a position — like some of our sister societies in the Swiss Colony — to offer our supporters the attraction of cocktails, a nine-course (or was it eight-course?) dinner and a dance (it makes one's mouth water to study the columns of the Swiss Observer at times) — we claim your money and your time on much more austere lines. All the more then can I congratulate all those members who are taking an active part in the management of the Society on the very happy spirit which has always prevailed. And so, before we proceed to the further business of the evening, I thank you all.

This very clear *exposé* of the Chairman was acknowledged with applause by all present.

M. M. Rothlisberger, Hon. Treasurer, then went through the accounts item by item; as these will be made later on available to the friends and supporters of the Society, we need not go into details at this juncture, and it will be sufficient to say, that in spite of a somehow reduced income during the financial year, the accounts show a satisfactory result, due principally to reductions in the expenditure, which totalled £4,285 8s. 2d.

The accounts, which were so ably presented and explained by Mr. Rothlisberger, were passed unanimously by the meeting, after thanks having been expressed by the Chairman.

The report of the Finance Commission was read out by Mr. F. M. Gamper and the Auditor's report by the Chairman, both were accepted.

The Secretary of the Society, Mr. Theo Ritter mentioned a number of incidents with which he had to deal, some of which involved Court procedures.

M. F. M. Gamper, a member of the Committee of the Swiss Home (Home for aged people), reported about the position of this institution, he mentioned that although the cost of upkeep had considerably risen, owing partly to a rise in the cost of living, and partly to a full complement of pensioners (14) during the whole year, the income has managed to keep pace with the expenditure, and that the accounts show even a small surplus.

It was mentioned that the Committee has decided to realise the wish expressed, to increase the weekly allowance given to the pensioners, and same has now been raised from 11/- to 12/- per week.

In accepting this additional liability the Committee feels confident that all contributors and friends will again, this year, give the Society their full support.

Mr. Gamper associated himself with the President, in expressing his deep regret at the resignation of Mr. Conrad, President of the Swiss Home Committee and Mrs. Conrad of the Ladies Committee, who have both rendered the Home invaluable services since its inception.

A tribute for excellent services rendered was also paid to Sister Scheuermeier, who had so ably assisted the matron, and to Dr. Rast and Mrs. Saager, and, of course, to Mrs. Jenne.

Mr. Gamper finished his report by saying:

"Our *Old People* have again been the object of many kindnesses on the part of members of the Colony:

The Swiss Jodelers of the Coliseum show, "St. Moritz," gave them an evening of homely Jodels and songs.

They received invitations to the film shows of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

Tickets were given to them for the Swiss Orchestra concert.

The Committee of the Swiss Mercantile Society obtained tickets for the use of the amenities of the gardens of Fitzroy Square, etc., etc.

And last, but not least, they had another outing to Whipsnade in cars supplied free and the cost being defrayed by generous members of the Swiss Colony. Mr. Schorno provided a wonderful luncheon and treated all the participants to an excellent tea on the occasion.

Many gifts in kind were also received during the year and particularly at Christmas, and we feel it a pleasant duty to thank all those most heartily who have in one way or another contributed to bring some joy and additional comfort into the lives of our *Old Folk*.

On the whole I think we can fairly claim that we are earnestly trying to fulfil the purpose of the Home in the spirit of our beloved late President, Mr. Dimier, in providing a haven of peace and rest for some of our compatriots to whom the evening of life has not been very kind."

The resignation of the President and the Committee were then put before the Assembly, and with acclamation, Mr. A. Nussbaumer was unanimously confirmed in his office for another year.

The decision of Mr. Nussbaumer to again allow his candidature to be put forward, in spite of his otherwise heavy engagements, was greatly appreciated.

The various elections for the Committee then took place, and the following Ladies and Gentlemen were either confirmed in their office or newly appointed:

Vice-Presidents: Messrs. A. C. Baume, O. Gambazzi and F. M. Gamper.

Stewards: Messrs R. de Cintra and A. Rueff.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. M. Rothlisberger.

Assist. Hon. Treasurer: Mr. E. S. Favre.

Assist. Hon. Secretary: Mr. P. Hilfiker.

Finance Committee: Messrs. A. Nussbaumer, F. M. Gamper and M. Rothlisberger.

Committee of Home for Aged Swiss: Mr. H. Senn, Chairman (new), Mr. F. M. Gamper, Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. B. Sigrist, Hon. Treasurer (new), Miss G. Müller, Hon. Secretary, Members: Mesdames Gamper, Saager and Sigrist, (New) Messrs. Berti, Dupraz, Nussbaumer, Dr. Rast, Ritter and Schmid.

Auditors: Messrs. E. A. Pernet and M. Weber.

Commission for drawing up the Annual report: Messrs. Nussbaumer, Rothlisberger, Ritter and Oertli.

It was proposed and accepted to elect two new pensioners, and it is interesting to know that the number of pensioners amounts now to 92,

which I understand is a record figure, whilst nearly 700 people received financial assistance during the year.

This concluded the Agenda, and Mr. Dupraz thanked the President for having so ably conducted the Meeting.

I think it is an excellent idea that all those, who throughout the year give their services freely and willingly to work for the benefit of our less fortunate compatriots, should foregather and have a little dinner together.

This "little" dinner was, let me tell you, excellent, and the host was Mr. Alfred Schmid, this is enough said, and I can spare myself the trouble to go into any details.

Monsieur Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, was in excellent form, and his witty address once more proved what an excellent after dinner speaker he is, some serious addresses were given, one by Mr. A. F. Suter, President of the N.S.H., who paid a great tribute to the unselfish work of the members of the Committee and another by Pastor Bommeli, who spoke straight from his heart words which touched everybody very deeply.

A number of jokes were cracked, some of which were real chestnuts, but nevertheless enjoyed.

This second part of the evening was equally successful as the first one. One had the feeling that this was a very jolly family gathering, where everybody went out of their way to make all and sundry happy, a fine spirit and a creditable one.

In concluding this report, I sincerely wish the Swiss Benevolent Society every success during the present financial year, hoping that they will get the support from the Colony which they so richly deserve.

ST.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

En raison des circonstances, le City Swiss Club a jugé préférable, au double point de vue de l'utilité générale et du délassement individuel, de restreindre mais non pas d'abandonner tout à fait son programme habituel de saison. C'est donc dans cet esprit qu'a été organisée la seule soirée dansante offerte à ses membres et à leurs amis cet hiver, à part — bien entendu — le Banquet Annuel, qui remplit en quelque sorte le rôle de manifestation officielle annuelle de la colonie et qui a eu lieu comme d'habitude au mois de novembre.

La soirée dansante, tenue samedi dernier au May Fair Hotel, a réuni cent-trente participants et a eu le même succès spontané et réjouissant de celles de 1937 et 1938.

Comme toujours, le May Fair avait fait les choses à la perfection; le "Garden Suite," abondamment décrit à cette place autrefois, demeure à jamais le lieu le plus sympathique que nous ayons eu jusqu'ici pour ce genre de réunions. Des fleurs et encore des fleurs, partout; sur chaque table, de magnifiques tulipes très artistiquement arrangées ajoutent à l'harmonie des couleurs. Le menu, encore que simple, est de très bon goût. Autour des tables, à quatre, à six, à huit, même dix, c'est la gaieté, qui tout à l'heure va remplir le parquet de danse. Et que dire de six de l'ensemble Colombo, si effectif aussi bien dans le divertissement musical durant le dîner que dans ses généreux fox-trots, ses valse lentes ou viennoises, ses tangos, ses Lambeth walks, ses Chestnut Trees, etc? Deux "Paul Jones" l'un au début de la soirée, l'autre vers le fin, on un succès immédiat et prolongé.

Est-il surprenant, dès lors, que chacun se demandé quand aura lieu la prochaine soirée, ou ceux qui savaient que ce ne serait pas avant 1940, de poser la question quand même comme pour dire: est-ce vraiment, montrant par là et combien dans quelle sphère idéale, bien éloigné des soucis, ces moments délicieux les avaient transportés? Espérons que cette douce illusion n'ait été détruite brusquement par le froid de minuit, mais ait duré en rêve au travers d'un repos bienfaisant, pour devenir cet agréable souvenir qui fait que chacune de ces soirées dansantes du City Swiss Club commence où la précédente a fini.

X.

70ème FÊTE SUISSE. 15 juin 1939.

Under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. F. Suter the Committee of the Fête Suisse held its first meeting of the year on Monday, 13th March. Amongst the members sitting round the table was Monsieur le Pasteur M. Pradervand who acts as Hon. Secretary to the Committee, thus following in the footsteps of the late Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de-Visme.

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. C. Chapuis, read his report giving facts and figures showing that on the financial side the organisation is moving in the right direction as well, leaving no doubts whatsoever regarding the success of the Fête Suisse held last year at Central Hall, Westminster.

It will be of interest to the Swiss Colony to know the date of this year's Fête having been fixed for June 15th, that the preparations have already been taken in hand by the Committee which was re-elected unanimously. Further, that in view of last year's record number of 1,500 people attending the function the Committee have booked additional accommodation on the balcony of the Hall. Without giving away any secrets it can also be stated that our Swiss talents resident in London are expected to perform, in addition to the artists from Home whose support the Committee is securing through the good offices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

The Swiss Flag will be flying on June 15th!
ms.

A. HALLER †.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. A. Haller, which occurred on March the 10th, at the age of 73.

Mr. Haller was born in June, 1866, and was very well known by all the Swiss Colony in England. As Secretary of the Union Helvetia, he served both faithfully and well from 1909 until 1926, when he retired on pension paid him by the Society.

He was buried in one of the Society's graves at Hendon Park Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, and the funeral was attended by many members and old friends.

TO OUR READERS.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer would be greatly obliged if readers would supply him with addresses of likely subscribers, so that specimen copies could be posted to them.

If such addresses supplied should be already included on our mailing list, no extra copies would be sent.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Thursday, March 23rd, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y. M. C. A. — Lecture by Pastor Bommeli, on "Die Versuchung" (Math. 4. 1-11) at "Westgate House," 28-29, Bedford Place, W.C.1.

Sunday, March 26th, at 8.15 — The Catholic Club, St. Peters Hall, Westminster Cathedral — Film show — on "Switzerland," commentary by Mr. A. Tall of the Swiss Federal Railways, under the auspices of the Rev. A. Lafranchi.

Wednesday, March 29th, at 8.15 p.m. Concert given by Swiss Orchestra and Swiss Accordion Club, Jodels by Frau Aus-der-Au, specially engaged from Switzerland, at Queen Mary Hall, Great Russell Street, W.C.1 (One minute Tottenham Court Road Tube Station)

Thursday, March 30th, at 7 p.m. — Swiss Y. M. C. A. — Lecture by Mr. E. Rapp, on "Sons of God," at "Westgate House," 28-29, Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C.1. "All Young Swiss invited."

Thursday, March 30th, at 8 p.m. — International Ice Hockey Match, England v. Switzerland — at Wembley Sports Arena. (See special announcement).

Saturday, April 1st — Swiss Club Birmingham — Swiss Rally and Annual Dinner and Ball — at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham. (Reception 6.15 p.m., Dinner 6.45 p.m.)

Tuesday, April 18th — City Swiss Club — Annual General Meeting (preceded by dinner at 7 p.m. sharp) at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Thursday, June 15th — "70ème Fête Suisse," at Central Hall, Westminster.

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Dimanche 19 mars 1939 :

11h. Culte M. M. Pradervand.
11h. Ecole du dimanche.
6h.30 Culte M. M. Pradervand.

BAPTEME.

Le 12 mars, Jessica-May SAGON, fille de Percy Wilfred et de Florence-May née Seaward.

SERVICES FUNEBRES.

Le 11 mars, Jules-Auguste Gerber, de Schangnau (Berne), né le 5 août 1883, décédé le 7 mars 1939. — Le 15 mars, Antoine Haller, de Bartsweil (Zurich), né le 4 juin 1866, décédé le 10 mars 1939.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office, St. Paul's and Aldersgate Street Tube Stations (Central London and Metropolitan).

Sonntag, den 19. März :

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli
7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.
11 Uhr Sonntagschule 186 Aldersgate.

Mittwoch Nachmittags: Schwyzerschänzli von 2.30 an, 15, Bedford Way (Zwangslose Zusammenkunft der jungen Schweizerinnen im Foyer Suisse, wozu alle Schweizerinnen freundlich eingeladen sind).

Anfragen wegen Religions — bezw. Konfirmanden Unterricht sind erbeten an Herrn Pfarrer E. Bommeli. Sprechstunden: Jeden Dienstag von 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche, Jeden Mittwoch von 5-6 Uhr im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

Printed and Published by THE FREDERICK PRINTING CO., LTD., at 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.