

City Swiss Club

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at home. And Prof. Inebnit has never merely considered the Swiss Colony as a sounding board for his ideas! On the contrary, he is one of the most devoted contributors to the organised life of the Swiss of Yorkshire and nobody over there denies that without his tireless efforts, the Yorkshire Swiss Club and Swiss activities in the North would probably not survive for long. The furthering of the life of the Colony is indeed a major interest of his life of retirement.

In the course of our conversation, Prof. Inebnit said to me that life had a meaning only if there remained something of value to strive for. This became especially true in old age. Taking part in the fight of all men of good will in search of a better world by using the means afforded to him in the time and the place in which he was called to live, this is Prof. Inebnit's living embodiment of that confession. If only there were more men of Prof. Inebnit's calibre militating for the same cause and exercising their influence in the right places, then we could look forward to a cloudless future! We wish him many more long and fruitful years and remain with the certainty that his action has, and will help to build the foundations of a better world.

(PMB)

THE CITY SWISS CLUB SUMMER DINNER AND DANCE

Great Fosters, the vast Surrey manor in which the City Swiss Club holds its annual Summer Dance, would make an ideal setting for a romantic film—or even a horror film. But Frankenstein and the ghosts had been chased away by the oncoming members of the City Swiss Club on that Friday night. The evening air was tender, the light was mellow, and we enjoyed a prolonged gathering in the garden before dinner. These garden reunions are the traditional charm of the Summer Dinner and Dance.

We moved for dinner in the vast manorial hall in which we were to enjoy our evening. Massive cast iron chandeliers were looming from its ancient beams. The hundred or so guests glided to their tables, all set to enjoy a fairly unsophisticated menu, plenty of gay conversation and all the

other prandial pleasures. The prawns which we had to overcome as an entrée were huge and scaly. They required the patience and skill of everybody. The meal ended with a creamy, multi-layered gateau that left very few cavities inside.

The Summer Dinner is not followed by any speech. Neither are the guests interrupted by the mandatory toast to the Queen and "La Suisse" and, oh marvel, they may proceed with their obnoxious smoking habits without having to wait for permission! The tables are long and rectangular. This geometry and the absence of excess seats condemns each guest to remain at the table assigned to him or her. It is therefore harder to communicate with one's friends scattered across the ballroom and could be disastrous in the event where one had landed at a boring table!

The music was arch conservative. A bar pianist, who had been smacking his gorgeous chords during the meal, was assisted by three companions at dance-time. They played soft, rill music. No beat, no twang and no jumping. No exertion on the dance floor either, just intimate middle-age and middle-class prancing. Oh yes, there were two cha-cha-chas.

At one o'clock, the Dance was still going strong and plenty of laughter rising from the tables.

(PMB)

THE REVISION OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION DEBATED AT THE NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

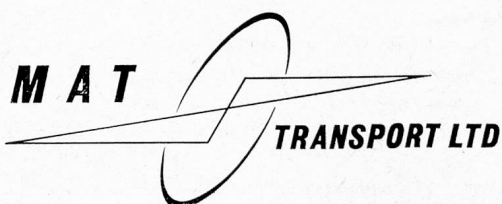
The last reunion of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique to take place before the summer holidays, originally scheduled for the 18th June but postponed for a week because of the elections, was devoted to the study of a questionnaire pertaining to the revision of the Constitution and specially drafted for us Swiss Abroad by the Secretariat that so devotedly looks after us in Berne. Mrs. Marianne Meier and Dr. Peter Hollenweger, from the Embassy, had painstakingly prepared the meeting but Dr. Hollenweger was unfortunately called on business to Berne at the last minute and it was for Mrs. Meier to handle the debate alone. She per-

formed this task remarkably well, introducing the subject by outlining the history of our Federal Constitution, the document on which rest the rules of our national life, and then moderating the discussion on each of the individual items raised in the questionnaire.

This Constitution, drafted in 1874 and constantly enlarged throughout the years, may eventually be totally revised. There have been a number of initiatives and efforts by various quarters (including the Nouvelle Société Helvétique) in the past, but they have been thwarted by a Swiss people and a Swiss parliament quite satisfied with the Constitution as it was. A national councillor and a councillor of state proposed together in 1965 to settle the matter by asking for the opinion of each individual canton, party and university. The Federal Council appointed a committee presided by Dr. F. T. Wahlen, former Federal Councillor, which drafted a questionnaire for the attention of the aforesaid cantons, parties and universities. The churches and economic groupements were eventually also asked to fill the questionnaire, although their positions were not to have any official value. For the Swiss Abroad, it was not possible to send the "Wahlen questionnaire" because it raised questions on which no one living outside Switzerland could be expected to have a definite opinion. The Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad therefore drafted a simplified questionnaire containing questions in which the 300,000 denizens of Fifth Switzerland could be concerned. This questionnaire was described in detail in these columns by MM in the last but one issue.

There is no escaping it, the "revision of the constitution" is an arid subject and rather academic too. In spite of this and the small attendance at the meeting (about 30 people turned up) we managed to have a prolonged and lively discussion on nearly all the points in the questionnaire. Each question had to be ticked by a "yes", "no" and "no opinion" answer and the meeting was useful to those who had patriotically decided to fill and send the questionnaire to Berne. It helped them not only to make up their minds, but gave them the opportunity to see the problems more in perspective by listening

M A T



"Arnold House", 36-41 Holywell Lane,
LONDON, E.C.2.

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