

News of the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

Should our special Article 45bis be accepted as it stands at present, or do we want any changes in it? *"The Confederation is empowered to promote the relationship amongst the Swiss Abroad themselves and between them and the home country and to assist institutions which pursue such aims."*

"The Confederation may legislate concerning the execution of their rights and duties, taking into account the special circumstances of the Swiss Abroad. This applies in particular to political rights, liability for military service and social assistance. The Cantons are to be consulted preliminarily."

The last question asks us if we consider a total revision really necessary, or if we should be satisfied with further partial revisions.

The questionnaire is available at the Manchester Swiss Club or the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, also at the Secretariat in Switzerland, 26 Alpenstrasse, 3000 Berne. Would interested compatriots please return their answers to one of the two delegates on the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, Dr. H. R. Bolliger (Fern Cottage, Mereside Road, Mere, Cheshire) for the Midlands and the North, and Mrs. Mariann Meier (53 Priory Road, London N.W.6.) for the South. *Please not later than 20th June.* The questionnaires will be returned to Berne in the end, but it will help the two delegates to make their report if they can evaluate the answers.

Once the working group under Mr. Wahlen comes to the conclusion that a total revision is necessary, the Federal Council will appoint a much larger commission to work out a draft. The Government would then put this to Parliament, and finally, the electorate will have to vote on it.

Considerable time will elapse before then. An optimistic view is that a new Constitution might come into force by the end of May 1974—exactly 100 years after the present one. We shall see.

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SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

(For Information, Advice or Help)

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THE SWISS OF YORKSHIRE

THEIR GENERAL MEETING, A DINNER SOCIAL AND SOME HISTORICAL REMINISCENCES

This year's General Meeting took place on Tuesday, 7th April, 1970, in our Headquarters at the British Council House, 1 St. Marks Avenue, Leeds, in the presence of a fair number of members and friends. Our President, Professor J. Ph. Inebnit was in the chair.

Our Club was able to look back on an active and interesting year, adding to their usual activities, an enjoyable dinner-social and a visit to Liverpool (mentioned in an earlier issue of the "Swiss Observer"). One of the highlights was our yearly Landsgemeinde, this time made even more interesting by the welcome presence of our Ambassador from London, and Madam Keller, and a large gathering of prominent and leading compatriots, who the day before had attended the General Meeting in Manchester of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom.

The town of Hebden Bridge takes an ever increasing active part in our proceedings and the newly formed Hebden Bridge-Swiss Association organises a yearly Swiss Week and lends a helping hand in our combined function in Hardcastle Crags. Although Hebden Bridge is entirely an industrial town, their main industries being textile and clothing, revolving to a great degree around both the woollens of Yorkshire and cottons of Lancashire, it does enjoy the advantage of unspoiled and very beautiful scenery on all sides. Furthermore, it is conveniently placed at almost equal distances from the centre of Manchester and centres of Leeds/Bradford, easily reached by train or road. Our monthly meetings were all well attended and made more interesting by slide-shows and talks, some of a very high standard.

Accounts submitted showed favourable results, reserves having considerably increased and we hope that we may be able to maintain this favourable trend.

Then came the election of the Committee, Professor J. Ph. Inebnit offered to withdraw but he was persuaded to accept this office for another year, and thus assure us of the continuity of a long year's established club practice and policy.

The New Committee Elected consists of:

President—Professor J. Ph. Inebnit
Vice President—Mr. Ermanno Berner
Honorary Treasurer—Mr. Kaegi
Honorary Secretary—Mrs. Edith Lerch

and Mrs. Ruth Leathly
Committee Member—Mrs. Laura
Berner.

The following members were elected to the Hebden Bridge-Swiss Association

Mr. T. Amman
Mr. E. Berner
Mrs. L. Berner

Special thanks were expressed to Mr. Richard Mueller for so generously providing for our circulars. The execution of this work being in the able hands of his Secretary, Mrs. Mary Briggs.

It is the cherished wish of our President to keep such meetings as informal and friendly as possible, and we are proud of his long, fruitful and dedicated service to the cause of the Yorkshire Swiss, and being almost on the threshold of his 80 years we wish him many more happy and active years. A great moral responsibility lies on all of us, being the heirs of 105 years of Swiss history in this County.

It all started in 1865 when a small, enterprising and patriotic group broke away from the cosmopolitan German "Schiller-Verein", to found their own "Schweizer-Verein", to be known as the Société Suisse de Bradford. Their first President was a Mr. Charles Federer from St. Gallen. It must have been a young, warmhearted, and perhaps at times, unruly "Gesellschaft", liquors standing high in their budget. Once a special General Meeting was convened to deal with a "tapage nocturn", or as it was stated: "... par suite de quelques visites nocturnes se prolongeant même jusqu'au temps du cris du coq ..." and necessitating the additional rule of: "... que le local de la Société Suisse doit être évacué toujours à minuit au plus tard ..."

At that time Switzerland was far away, bad communications, no wireless, no television, and they did not hesitate to spend quite substantial sums on newspapers and periodicals from home and well over £10.0.0 yearly (quite a sum at that time) was laid out for such publications as the "Bund" the "Journal de Genève", the "Postheiri", the "Neue Zuercher Zeitung", the "Zuercher Freiheitszeitung", etc., etc.

In 1869 they contributed, with the help of the town of Bradford, a sum of £140.0.0 towards the "Swiss Inundation Fund"—at that time a great achievement.

Tragedy befell the Club, when in 1872 their President was made to resign for some kind of indiscretion or "faux-pas" in the approach to the "Conseil Fédéral" in matters of revision of the Constitution. The Club did not survive for long after this sad affair because a couple of years later it ceased to exist. Very fittingly the following words were entered in the final statement of their gilt-edged Minute Book: "Hic finis gloria mundi".