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LA NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE. GROUPE LONDONNIEN.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The eighth Annual General Meeting of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique was held this year in the Foyer Suisse, 15, Upper Bedford Place, on Friday, February 29th. There were present about forty members and friends, all of whom expressed their regret at the illness of the President, Mr. J. Baer, which prevented him from taking the Chair. This duty was, however, very ably performed by Mr. A. F. Suter.

Before proceeding to the business of the evening, Mr. Suter asked the meeting to stand for a few seconds in memory of Mr. Georges Dimier.

After the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting had been read by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. Campart, Mr. A. F. Suter read the President's Annual Report, which showed very clearly that, in spite of reduced membership and financial difficulties, the work of the Secretariat still continues as actively as ever, especially with regard to the propaganda for Swiss Art and Literature. As a result of Dr. Lang's endeavours in this direction, it is hoped that an important English publisher may bring out a translation of one of Ramuz's books, and that another publisher will shortly give the English public a monograph on the Swiss painter, Hodler. The report concluded with a deep expression of regret owing to the termination of Dr. Lang's collaboration with the Group. No one could have worked with more enthusiasm and untiring energy than he, and the Group had greatly benefited by his literary skill as well as by many happy initiatives which have brought the Swiss and British public more closely together.

Mr. Suter, the able and energetic Treasurer of the Group, then gave a clear and satisfactory account of the financial situation. There had been a full year's run of the 10s. subscription, and the figures for this year seemed to show that there was no doubt but that the increase had been a wise one. Another alteration also appeared to be all to the good, and that was that the old system of guarantees had come to an end and the Group now practically entirely depended upon the support of its members. In previous years the proportion of members' donations to guaranteed donations was as low as 1 to 4, and now the proportion was 5 to 6.

The Auditors' report was then heard, and a vote of thanks, both to them and Mr. Suter, was heartily responded to by the meeting.

During the election of the new Council, Mr. Schupbach was appointed chairman.

Dr. Lang, Secretary, and the outgoing Committee were accorded a hearty vote of thanks by the meeting for the great work they had carried on throughout the year.

Mr. Weber and Mr. F. Zimmermann were again elected Auditors, and the following members were elected as Councillors for 1924:—L. Audemars, M. Bachofer, J. Baer, E. Bloch, P. F. Boehringer, C. Campart, J. R. Goetz, Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme, C. Kiefer, A. Schmid, A. J. Strahlé, A. F. Suter, J. Weber, Theo. Weber.

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT.

1. Owing to the strict application of our statutes in so far as we struck off those members who definitely refused to pay their subscriptions, our members have decreased from 480 at the beginning of 1923 to 354 in January, 1924. If we cannot any longer boast of a numerous membership, we have, on the other hand, the very welcome feeling that we can absolutely rely on those who remain with us.

2. The Committee met eleven times.

3. The Council met ten times.

4. Library, books for sale, papers and reviews: (a) The library has increased by 45 books and now numbers 837 volumes. Most of the books which have come in this year are gifts. Its use has been as follows: fifty-six books have been lent to thirty-one different people. As regards the number of books lent out, a little decrease is to be noted, but, on the other hand, the number of borrowers has increased by 50 per cent. Fourteen reviews were lent to four different people. It is satisfactory to record that quite a number of borrowers were English people whose attention was drawn to our library by the Helvetic Bibliography. A revised catalogue of the library is in preparation and will be ready in the spring. (b) We have still about 250 books and pamphlets for sale. The prices have been greatly reduced. Price-lists are still at the disposal of book-lovers. (c) Papers and Reviews: We receive regularly about thirty Swiss, American-Swiss, American and English reviews and papers. We only paid, however, for ten of these publications, the remainder being sent us gratuitously. In this connection thanks have to be rendered to:—Mr. J. Baer, Miss E. K. Barnum, Mr. F. Beyli, Central Committee of Zofingue, Courrier Suisse de Rio de la Plata, Mr. J. Emmenegger, Exportateur Suisse, Highwayman Publishing Co., Information Office Lugano, Dr. Paul Lang, Mr. H. Martin, Office Suisse du Tourisme, Orell Füssli, Polyglot Printing Co., Pro Juventute, Rheinquellen, "Der Schweizer" (Organ of the North American Schweizerbund), Secrétariat des Suisses à l'étranger, La Société Suisse d'utilité publique, "The Swiss

Observer," Suchard's, Union Helvetia, University of London and Swiss Universities, Vorort de l'Union Suisse de Commerce et l'Industrie, Mr. P. Walser, Different Groups of the N.S.H.

5. As we gave full details of our activity up till October in the Intermediate Report, which was read at our autumn dinner, only the following events, which have taken place since, require to be recorded:—Nov. 13th: Dinner at Paganini's and reading of the Intermediate Report. The Swiss Minister in the Chair. Nov. 26th: Swiss Chamber Music Concert. Compositions by Andreea, Frey, Huber, Lang and Schoeck. Soloists: Mrs. Woodhouse, Mrs. Clifford Austin and Mr. Chamberlain. Dec. 14th: Dr. Paul Lang, Lecture: "Die schweizerischen Tellspele." Jan. 18th: Causerie, Dr. A. Kraft: "La quatrième Suisse d'aujourd'hui et de demain." Feb. 15th: Dr. C. W. Saleeby, Lecture: "Sunlight and Health"—in conjunction with S.M.S. When surveying the events of the year, we find that we have had two concerts, one lantern lecture, six other lectures (three in French, two in German and one in English) and two dinners. Guests from Switzerland gave three lectures, an English guest one, one was given by our devoted Councillor, the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme, and the Secretary gave two. Nobody will say that this programme lacked variety.

6. Lectures other than to the Group: The Secretary gave lectures at University College and to other different English and Swiss audiences. Our members, the Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme, Mr. C. Kiefer, the late Mr. G. Dimier and Mr. A. Renou, also spoke to different audiences about Switzerland.

7. Our relations with other Groups, Societies and Institutions: (a) Groups: We are in constant touch with the S.S.E. and a number of Groups abroad. We are sorry to report that in the past year the two last remaining Groups in the Midlands, Manchester and Bradford, have dissolved, chiefly owing to the departure of a great many of their members. The movement as a whole, however, is continuously spreading. There are now 115 recognised Groups. The Parliamentary Group for Swiss Abroad numbers to-day over fifty members, belonging both to the Council of States and the National Council. Mons. Dollfus of this Group recently asked that the Confederation should give material assistance to the S.S.E., and the National Council thereupon unanimously voted a subvention. (b) Swiss Legation and Swiss Societies in London: Our relations with the Swiss Legation are of the very best. We had great pleasure in welcoming the Minister to our last dinner at Paganini's. The Secretary, as hitherto, has closely collaborated with the staff of the Legation. Equally good are our relations with the other Swiss Societies in London. We were very glad to have for the first time the delegates of the different societies as our guests at our last dinner. The Council has at different times voiced the opinion of the Swiss in London by means of Resolutions. We passed a Resolution on the Military Tax Bill, one on the Matriculation Tax question, and one on the Opium Convention. (c) Other Institutions: The Secretariat has been also in the past year in touch with a number of societies and institutions whose aims coincide in part with our own. We tried to rouse interest in the International Committee of the Red Cross Society. Our endeavours to provide suitable information for Swiss students and other young Swiss coming to London have been continued. The delegates of the Swiss Students' Union to the International Students' Congress were received at our Secretariat. Especially intensive was our collaboration with the League of Nations Union.

8. Committees: The following committees were in existence this year: (a) the Art Committee; (b) the Budget Committee; (c) Entertainment Committee; (d) Entr'aide Committee; (e) Finance Committee; (f) Press Committee; (g) Propaganda Committee. Furthermore, we appointed delegates to the Swiss Club House and to the Swiss Sports Committee. The Art Committee dissolved in January, as its aim to arrange a first-class Art Exhibition in London is not realisable, owing to lack of support in Switzerland. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking our Swiss Minister, who throughout the many years the Committee has existed has presided over it with the utmost zeal and courtesy. The Entertainment Committee had to arrange two dinners, and the Propaganda Committee was useful in connection with the Charity Concert which we organised in October with the assistance of three other societies. The Entertainment and Propaganda Committees have now been amalgamated into one, and so have the Finance and Budget Committees. The Secretary was in individual contact with the members of the Press Committee, which as a body had no opportunity to meet. The Entr'aide Committee edited a very useful guide for young Swiss new in London, which contains all necessary information and of which copies are still at the disposal of whoever is interested.

9. Staff of the Secretariat: The Secretariat consisted this year of a half-time Acting Secretary, Dr. Lang, and a full-time Assistant Secretary, Miss Crawford.

10. Propaganda Work: The Helvetic Bibliography, which was sent to 3,000 addresses, was the chief propaganda publication we distributed. We added other documents occasionally to our monthly invitations.

11. Correspondence and Visitors: Callers have been of an irregular character, as in former years. Some of them stayed rather too long, considering that the Secretary had to cope in three days with the work for which he had had a full week in the previous year.

12. Lectures printed: "The Swiss Observer" kindly obliged the Secretary by arranging for a separate print of his lectures on "Contemporary French and Italian Literature" and on the "Tellspele."

13. Journalistic Activity of the Secretary: He wrote to different Swiss papers about England and the London Swiss Colony. He also had several opportunities of correcting erroneous statements on Swiss matters which appeared in the English press. We may mention here the "shirt-sleeve" story the "Domestic Bill" rectifications. Two special articles on Swiss Music were written in connection with the Swiss Chamber Music Concert.

14. Propaganda Activity for Swiss Art and Literature: The Secretary made a number of endeavours in order to make Swiss Art, and especially Hodler's Art, better known in this country. The monumental work on Hodler, published by Rascher, was shown to a number of important connoisseurs. The Secretary was fortunate enough to interest an English publisher so much in Hodler's work that he is now contemplating a monograph on it which will be the first of its kind in England. Throughout the year energetic efforts were made to induce English publishers to translate books by contemporary Swiss writers. Innumerable letters were exchanged with a number of British publishers, and works by de Reynold, Falke, Ramuz and Spitteler were submitted to and read by various of them. So far no translation has been definitely decided upon, but the efforts are, nevertheless, not lost, for various influential people in the publishing world have very much revised their opinion of Swiss literature.

15. Secretariat: You will remember that, when reading our Intermediate Report in November last year, we warned you that, unless our financial position considerably improved, we would have to part with Dr. Lang's invaluable services. We had all hoped that we could have offered him again full-time occupation at full pay, but our means will not permit this, and in accordance with our mutual agreement Dr. Lang is leaving us to-night. It is, I know, with the deepest regret that you will hear of the termination of our devoted Secretary's collaboration with the Group. No one could have worked with more enthusiasm and untiring energy, and the Group has greatly benefited by his literary skill, as well as by many happy initiatives, which have brought the Swiss and British public more closely together. In the name of the London Group of the N.S.H. I herewith convey to Dr. Lang the expression of our deepest gratitude for all he has done and for the spirit in which it has been done. I also wish him success and happiness in his future career. Dr. Lang's departure is a great loss to the Group. It will mean more responsibility, more work on the part of your executive Committee, more concentration, hence the abandonment of all ideas of expansion in any direction, until matters generally improve again. Our faith, however, in the Ideal of the N.S.H. is such that even with these restricted means we feel we shall be able to accomplish much useful work and keep the fire alight until better times return, which will permit again of extended activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as on previous occasions, I call most earnestly upon your support, which has never failed in the past, and I look with confidence into the future of the Group.

EXTRACT FROM DR. LANG'S FAREWELL SPEECH.

... If I have been able to do anything for the London Group and to exercise a certain influence in this colony and among our members, it is in the first place thanks to the untiring support and sympathy of a gentleman who is not here to-night, but who is in the minds of us all. I had an opportunity of seeing him this evening, and I was again struck by his magnanimous spirit and the uplifting quality of his influence on whomsoever he comes into contact. If ever a man had the interest of his country at heart in the truest sense of the word, it is he. He is not only a man to be respected, but he can stand as a type of the N.S.H. or indeed of any patriotic society all over the world. But it was not only Mr. Baer who extended me help and sympathy, there were all the members of the Committee, as well as the members of the Council. There were also many members of our Group, who were not on our Committee or Council, but who helped to make my task easy. I cannot say all members, because many of them were only members on paper. But, as you have heard, most of these have now left us for one reason or another. We used to boast of the number of our members, but now we can boast of the feeling of security we have in their good faith, a thing we could not do of all of them two years ago. But we now know that those members we have left believe in us, and, as a matter of fact, we have quite a considerable number more of loyal supporters than we at one time

hoped to have. I may mention that there was a day when 250 was considered a possible figure, but we have 350 members left to-day. We can reasonably hope, too, that these 350 will remain with us—not only this year, but next year and perhaps for an indefinite number of years.

Our movement is no longer what it used to be. It has changed its character. The movement, as it developed during the war, had a fighting character—if not an attacking one, at least a defensive one. Its activity has become quieter now, but just because of that it requires more energy, more push, more conviction. It is very easy to join a movement when everybody does it. It is extremely easy to say, I support that also, when everybody else is doing the same. But it is not so easy when people become absorbed in the more material considerations of life. Material things are necessary, but we must not *only* think of them. There are others. The vital thing is for a man to know where he stands, to know his place in the world, to understand the feeling of international solidarity and brotherhood, the feeling of being spiritually linked up with other nations, but particularly with his own nation. The nation to which one belongs and the traditions of that nation are very important and not to be despised. If a man thinks he can overcome these things, he makes a great mistake, for he cannot. Going abroad amongst different conditions of life from those in which he has been brought up, he is apt to lose all moral stability if he cuts himself adrift from his own traditions. For the average man it is necessary to live in contact with the nation in which he was brought up, it is something essential for him. The average man will never be able to identify himself completely with the ways of thinking of another nation, and that is why he should keep his patriotism high. This is a word which has been much abused, yet I venture to say that the majority, the overwhelming majority, of the members of our Society have proved that they mean to stand by the opinions they have uttered in after-dinner speeches. But there is more required, and that is that the members of our Group should make up their minds to support it, materially as well as morally. We have in our statutes as aims and objects not only the development of the national spirit, but also the development of mutual understanding and sympathy between Britain and Switzerland. Now this sort of work, I believe, is not included in the statutes of any other Swiss Society. And it is an aim, too, which cannot be achieved by a single individual, but only by an organisation, an organisation such as we have founded in our Secretariat. If our efforts are to be co-ordinated, it is necessary for the Secretariat to be continued. I am glad, however, to say there is every prospect of this. Whether it will go on as it is to-day, or whether it will do so in another way can be discussed in the near future, if only the will to maintain such an institution persists. I know, for instance, that the Danes, who have a colony ranking considerably after the Swiss one, have their own newspaper, and they also support financially a University Bureau which helps to facilitate the pursuits of Danish students and organisers, on a very broad basis, Danish lectures, etc. This is the kind of work which I have been trying to do in a very limited way. Now, if the Danes can do this, Switzerland—in my opinion a more interesting country than Denmark, for Denmark is mainly agricultural, and Switzerland has seven universities, whilst Denmark has only two—Switzerland, I say, can also do it. More than that, it owes it to itself to maintain our Secretariat, which is not quite a University Bureau, but a little bit of one, not quite a Literary Bureau, but a little bit of one, and not quite an Information Bureau, but also a little bit of that too. An institution such as this is one to be proud of and should not be allowed to go under because a certain economic crisis is sweeping over the country. I hope the feeling of citizenship in this Colony will remain as loyal as it has done during the years 1916 to 1924, that the members of the London Group will stand behind their President and their Council as steadfastly and patriotically as hitherto, and then I can say good-bye to you now, knowing that the future of our movement and your Group is assured.

Union Chrétienne de jeunes Gens de langue française.

(Communiqué.)

L'activité déployée par cette Société est connue dans la Colonie suisse; aussi est-ce avec plaisir que le Comité de l'Union Chrétienne invite tout le public suisse à assister Lundi, 24 crt., à 8 h. à sa 40ème Soirée Annuelle, qui aura lieu au King George's Hall, Y.M.C.A. Building, sous la Présidence de S.E. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Ministre de Suisse. Le rapport annuel sera présenté et un programme choisi, avec les concours de M. le Prof. Rod. Gaillard, baryton, et d'autres artistes, laisse espérer une Soirée fort intéressante. Entrée gratuite.

KIRCHLICHES.

Die vor einigen Wochen im S.O. erwähnte Petition ist inzwischen, von 403 Schweizern unterzeichnet, an das Consistoire der Schweizerkirche eingesandt worden. S.

ROUND AND ABOUT.

The time is drawing near when the moving spirits in most of our societies and clubs will be getting busy to secure "fresh blood" for the respective committees. These far too frequent changes are a deplorable feature of our club life, but are unavoidable, as, with more essential personal interests, few of us can remain committed for long to an unlimited expenditure of time and energy. One of the first to put their house in order was the Swiss Sports Committee, and no better man could have been found to follow in the footsteps of the late Mr. Dimier than Mr. Chas. Barbezat, who was associated with our departed friend in connection with so many other institutions. The Nouvelle Société Helvétique was fortunate in finding the old committee willing to accept re-election; in the place of the Secretary, who has left for Italy for study, a successor has been found in the person of Dr. A. Kraft, who has played an important and prominent part in the work of the central society in Switzerland. The City Swiss Club will have to find a new leader within the next fortnight, and I believe there is an agreeable surprise in store for us. As regards the Swiss Mercantile Society, it is whispered that Mr. G. E. DeBrunner thinks of resigning, both on account of business reasons and the strain on his health; one of the vice-presidents, the popular Mr. O. Jaeggi, seemed to have been the "wanted" man, but in spite of one or two attractions, which to others would have been irresistible, he deserted the London Colony.

Now and again our clubs and societies are approached by some enterprising Swiss firms with a request for a list of members and their addresses. For obvious reasons this invitation is being given the cold shoulder in a polite way, but one obliging society has evidently overcome the difficulty. Together with the annual report the members have received a circular soliciting orders for champagne. It is to be hoped that this example will not be copied generally, as such a practice is most unfair to competing firms in this country, who pay taxes, advertising expenses and other incidentals, and probably support these very societies by donations or otherwise.

A well-meaning member of the colony has thrown out the suggestion that a bust should be ordered to perpetuate the memory of Mr. Georges Dimier, and is now disgusted that the societies who have considered this proposal do not see eye to eye with him. I cannot go into all the *pros* and *cons*, but two reasons may be cited here: one is that this token is not looked upon favourably by Mr. Dimier's family, and the other that Mr. Dimier himself, as judged by his most intimate friends, was averse to such commemorations. The fact is that during his lifetime a few compatriots had a similar desire and sounded him on the matter, when they found that he held most decided views which left no doubt in their minds. However, the spirit of the proposal is not lost, for at the last meeting of the Swiss Sports Committee it was unanimously decided to take the initiative in launching a general appeal for a "Fond Dimier"; the Swiss Benevolent Society has been asked to suggest the most acceptable form.

A correspondent writes that at certain Swiss dinners, reported in our columns, the toast to "La Patrie" did not follow the one to "The King," which he hoped was an editorial omission. I am not the offender in this instance, but shall pass his complaint on to the proper quarters.

The many friends of Mr. A. Isler, the late steward of the Swiss Club "Schweizerbund," will wish him every success in his new appointment as manager of the Richmond Hotel, Cambridge Park, Guernsey, where he hopes to welcome many of his old acquaintances during the summer holidays.

The Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club.

The report for 1923 of the above Association, just published, states that 59 new members have joined in the year under review, the total being now 496—the highest in the history of this useful club. Membership is limited to alpinists residing in this country who are already members of one of the sections of the Swiss Alpine Club. Apart from social functions, of which the annual dinner, held on November 28th last, is reported verbatim, the Association has interested itself in a number of Swiss appeals, such as the construction of a hut in memory of the late Dr. J. Coaz, the Gex-Collet fund for the benefit of the dependents of the well-known guide, who fell early in 1923, etc. In this way the Association has in its short existence raised over £1,500, and we need hardly add that these subscription lists are topped by our departed friend, Mr. Georges C. Dimier. The income of the Association, derived from members' subscriptions (£162 12s.) and a donation of the Geneva section (£20) is devoted towards furthering the work and aims of the Swiss Alpine Club and towards promoting amongst British members that sociability "which is so conspicuous a feature of the Swiss sections."

The report contains useful hints on how to join the Swiss Alpine Club and on the many advantages enjoyed by its members.

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CONNECTED EVERYWHERE ABROAD.

Mr. Henry Durler, of Whitehill, Luton, and the senior partner of Messrs. Henry Durler & Son, Ltd. Luton, died suddenly from syncope on March 15th; the funeral took place last Wednesday at the Parish Church in Luton.

The late Mr. Durler was a most successful business man and a highly respected member of the Swiss Colony, the annual gatherings of which he used to attend regularly in previous years. We hope to publish a few personal notes in our next issue.

EGLISE SUISSE, 79, Endell St., W.C.2.

Dimanche, 23 Mars, 11h.—Mr. Jacot.

6.30.—Pfr. H. Urner.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Monday, March 24, at 8 p.m.—UNION CHRETIENNE de jeunes gens de langue française: Soirée Annuelle, présidée par Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Ministre de Suisse, at King George's Hall, Tottenham Court Rd., W.C.1.

Wednesday, March 26th, at 8 p.m.—CONCERT by Rod. Gaillard's pupils, assisted by Swiss Choral Society, at Morley Hall, 26, George Street, Hanover Square, W.1. (Postponed from March 11th.)

Friday, March 28, at 8 p.m.—NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE: Lecture by Dr. A. Kraft on "L'émigration des industries Suisses" at 28, Red Lion Square, W.C.

Friday, April 4th, at 8.30 p.m.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Lecture on "Lafadio Hearn" by J. Tinkler, Esq.

Saturday, April 5th, at 7 p.m.—SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY: Annual Banquet and Ball at the Midland Hotel.

Every Saturday, 3 to 5 p.m.—SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION: Miniature Rifle Shooting Practice at Regent Street Polytechnic, W.1.

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