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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

OLD FOLKS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AT THE FOYER SUISSE.

By a remarkable coincidence, I was within three days the guest, of both the youngest, and the oldest members of the Swiss Colony.

On Friday, the 16th of December, I felt frightfully old amongst the students of the Swiss Mercantile College, — there I was surrounded by youth, by an unbounding spirit of optimism; God's wide world lay before them, the future belonged to them: life with its bitter experiences had not yet succeeded in putting a damper on their youthful aspirations, many, if not all, looked at the world through rose coloured glasses. — Three days later, I attended the most enjoyable luncheon given to the "Old Folks" of the Colony, by the House Committee of the *Foyer Suisse* at 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C. Here was a gathering of some 52 venerable Ladies and Gentlemen, most of them at the eventide of their worldly pilgrimage. They have all experienced life in its fullness and gladness, as well as in its harshness and disappointments. Many of those who sat around those artistically decorated tables could relate tales of bitter experience, of incessant hard and untrifling work, of hardship, but also of success and happiness: some have made careers, some have climbed to the top of the ladder, some have not reached those exalted heights, but have rested half way, but all of them, I am sure, have struggled to overcome the many adversities of which life is so full, and to all of them I hope a kind providence will sweeten their remaining days amongst us.

Never in my life have I felt so *young* as on last Monday, to begin with, I must admit, I felt rather out of the picture, I had an idea that I was trespassing, and when my table neighbour, an old lady of 82 asked me, with a searching look, how old I was, I promptly put on 10 years, (for which I may be forgiven) a thing which I have never done before, but it was no good, she told me quite frankly that I have no right to be there, it took me some time to quieten her down, and to explain to her, that I was only there in the capacity of a reporter, to which she replied that she has no time for Newspaper men, as they never tell the truth.

This was not a very hopeful beginning but I am glad to say that we got on quite nicely afterwards: to prove that she bore me no grudge, the old lady generously offered me her portion of the luncheon, owing to the fact, that she had already previously dined.

The Luncheon started shortly before 2 o'clock and about fifty-two people sat down to a really delicious meal. Mr. Meyer has excelled himself; not only was the food most exquisite, but also the service too was very efficient, and the staff of the Foyer Swiss can claim a big share in the success of this event, they were politeness and efficiency itself.

The Hall was very nicely decorated, a picture depicting a range of snow covered mountains, reminded everyone of the "Old Country" and I feel sure that this unpretending painting has brought back, to many present, glorious times of happy days spent in that land, which although far away, is ever present in their memories.

Shortly before the coffee was served, M. Bertschinger, the chief organiser of this happy gathering, welcomed the company, amongst them the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who honoured this luncheon party for the 3rd time since its innovation. He informed the participants, that about 120 invitations were sent out to various of our compatriots, all of whom were over 60 years of age. He read out some of the replies which had reached him, showing, that many of the invited ones were, mostly on account of indisposition, prevented from attending.

Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, expressed his pleasure, to be once again amongst the venerable members of the Colony. "I am glad to see," he said, "so many familiar faces present, and I sincerely hope that we shall meet again next year." The Minister then informed the gathering that the silver medal presented by the House Committee to the oldest member, would go to Mlle. Gilbertine Weber from Geneva, who would shortly attain her 90th anniversary. (The medal depicts on one side an eagle perched on a rock, and bears the following biblical quotation: "They shall mount up on wings like eagles" and on the other side the name and birthday of the recipient).

M Dupraz, President of the Fonds de Secours, who was amongst the guests brought the greetings of his Society expressing his appreciation at having been invited to this memorable gathering.

Pastor C. Th. Hahn regaled the company with some Swiss songs on the piano, and lo and behold some of the old ladies heartily joined in the singing.

Mr. G. Hafner, too, extended a warm welcome to all the visitors and as usual managed by his sincerity, to touch everyone's innermost feelings, he urged that more value should be put on spiritual things, which after all are the only things worth having. These words inspired by a deep religious conviction did not fail to leave their mark on the listeners.

The company then adjourned to the drawing room, where old friendships were renewed, and on leaving, many expressed the wish to be present again at the next Luncheon party a year hence.

In concluding my report, I wish to heartily congratulate the House Committee of the Foyer Suisse for their great kindness in arranging this party; by their undertaking, they have proved in a most commendable manner, that our old compatriots are not forgotten, and I feel sure that in their memory this day will live for a long time.

ST.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, December 14th. The Meeting was preceded by a supper and an old feature was thus re-established after a long spell and proved a success in every respect. The President, Mr. W. Lehmann, opened the proceedings soon after 8 p.m. when some 35 members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed and the admissions and resignations on hand were duly accepted. The President then apprised the meeting that the Council at its last meeting had voted a sum of Frs. 500.— as a donation of the London Section towards the Christmas Collection launched by the Central Authorities in Zurich for unemployed members of the S.K.V.

A credit had also been voted by the Council towards a new library. It is the intention of the General Purposes Committee to create a library of professional reference books rather than fiction. The latter are available at very moderate charges at any local library, whereas professional books are not always at hand and no doubt will render valuable services in intricate cases.

Mr. Henchoz reverted to proposals which he had submitted to a previous meeting with a view to making the meetings more attractive. The chairman reiterated that these suggestions had the careful attention of the G. P. Committee.

Mr. Krucker reminded the members of the forthcoming Fancy Dress Ball to be held at the Midland Grand Hotel on January 7th. This, apart from the Annual Banquet to be held on February 4th, will be the only social function of the season and every effort will be made to ensure it a complete success. The tickets will be 7/6 instead of 8/6 as formerly whilst the same amenities will be offered. Please, therefore, do not miss to book January 7th for the S.M.S.

Mr. E. Hardmeier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the work of his department which is making steady progress.

The climax of the evening was a lecture delivered by Mr. Hardmeier on "A Journey through Switzerland," illustrated by lantern slides. The lecturer related reminiscences of his holiday tours through some of our homeland's most beautiful scenery. The slides which were kindly lent by the office of the Swiss Federal Railways, did not fail to rouse many pleasant memories and no doubt awakened a quiet longing in many a heart for those sunny days with peaceful rest spent in some remote part of our dear country. Lectures of this nature go a long way in fostering patriotism and love for one's homeland, specially in these days of commercial depression when it is not within everyone's means to spend the holidays at home.

The lecturer received a hearty and well deserved ovation.

For the next Monthly Meeting on January 18th, we have been able to arrange for a lecture on "Life in Russia to-day," by J. Locke. The lecturer, whose rhetoric qualities are eminent, will give his own impressions of the country of which we hear so much and yet know so little.

W.B.

DER SCHWEIZERFRANKEN.

(Dem Vierteljahres Bericht der A.G. Leu in Zurich entnommen.)

Zu den im Golde verankerten stabilen Währungen zählt nach wie vor auch der Schweizerfranken. Sein intervalutarischer Kurs bewegte sich auch den Goldwährungen gegenüber während des grösseren Teils des Jahres über pari. Nicht bei jedermann hat diese Goldwährungspolitik der Schweiz Genugtuung ausgelöst. Im Inland selber haben sich da und dort Stimmen erhoben, die sich für eine Loslösung des Frankens vom Golde einsetzen. Sie kamen bald aus dem Lager jener Goldwährungsgegner aus Grundsatz, die, oft weniger von nüchterner Logik überzeugt als durch gleissende Schlagworte geblendet, das Heil des Schwundgeldes verkünden und, angesichts der Währungsvorgänge im Ausland, auch in der Schweiz ihre Stunde gekommen glauben. Zu ihnen gesellen sich jene engherzigen Egoisten, welche die Deflation mit der Inflation bekämpfen wollen und lieber eine zerrüttete Währung in Kauf nehmen, als dass sie der Anpassung der Preis- und Lohnverhältnisse der Schweiz an das Ausland auch nur das bescheidenste Opfer zu bringen bereit wären. Ihre Stimmen, die in der öffentlichen Meinung der Schweiz keine Resonanz besitzen, fanden um so lauten Widerhall im Ausland bei allen, denen die durchaus gesunden Währungsverhältnisse der Schweiz aus irgendeinem Grunde ein Aergernis sind. Sie haben ihre wohlberedelten, ungünstigen schriftlichen und mündlichen Aussagen im Herbst zeitweise geradezu zu einem Sturmangriff auf den guten Ruf des Schweizerfrankens verdichtet, der jedoch erfolglos geblieben ist. Zwar vermochten im November die wirtschaftlichen und politischen Schwierigkeiten des Platzes Genf, zusammen mit den verschärften Massnahmen des französischen Fiskus gegen die Steuerflucht, zu einer gewissen Kapitalrückwanderung zu führen, die sich jedoch in sehr mässigem Umfange bewegt und an die Notenbank nur bescheidene Anforderungen gestellt hat.

Allen Angriffen und Lockungen aus dem In- und Ausland haben die verantwortlichen Instanzen stets dasselbe unzweideutige Nein entgegeng gehalten. Zuletzt ist noch vor wenigen Wochen dieser Wille zum Durchhalten der Goldwährung in der Budgetbotschaft des Bundesrates für 1933 in den folgenden Worten zum Ausdruck gekommen:

Es ist unser Stolz und unsere Kraft, eine gesunde Währung zu besitzen, die sich während der hinter uns liegenden, oft stürmischen Zeit sowohl im Inland als auch im Ausland des grössten Vertrauens erfreute. Unser Geld wird sich auch weiterhin auf eine vorsichtige Verwaltung und kluge Anleihepolitik stützen.

1933.

PROSIT NEUJAHR!

Nebel, o Graus,
Karaffe heraus!
Die Lebensgeister sinken
Der Traube Blut,
Bringt neue Glut,
Lasst trinken uns, ja, trinken!
Das erste Glas,
Wem bring ich das?
Dem teuern Heimatlande,
Dran binden mich
Herzinniglich
Die stärksten Liebesbände.
Das zweite Glas,
Wem bring ich das?
Ich bringe es entgegen
Den Schweizern all
Auf dem Erdenball,
Die Schweizer Sinn stets pflegen.
Das dritte Glas,
Wem bring ich das?
Helvetia's Heereswesen,
Das ihr zum Schutz,
Dem Feind zum Trutz
Von Alters her gewesen.
Das vierte Glas,
Wem bring ich das?
Num, wohl dem neuen Jahre.
Dass mit dem Kram,
Der die Welt legt lahm,
Es schonungslos abfahre.
Das fünfte Glas,
Wem bring ich das?
Dem S.O. ungezwungen,
Dass er bald ganz
Erscheint im Glanz
Der Schweizer Landesungen!
Mutz.

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