

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

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1943)

Heft: 1017

Rubrik: Nouvelle société helvétique

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The heroes of the 13th century as Tell, Stauffacher, Melchtal were seated at the upper end of the table, the 14th century heroes came next and so on down the table to the 19th century. This novel table arrangement proved in all respects a most excellent idea; it served for instance as a sort of refresher course in Swiss history and for days afterwards various history and other reference books could be seen displayed in the homes of the Swiss here.

After dinner we all proceeded to a place about a hundred yards distant where a huge bonfire was already burning, the exploding bamboo canes giving the effect of fireworks.

Whilst the fire illuminated the whole scene, one of those present read out the "Bundesbrief," others recited patriotic poems; in between these recitations favourite Swiss hymns were sung, with the daughter of the Consul accompanying on the harmonium.

Whilst the fire was dying out we all returned to Consul Tanner's house where an excellent "bowle" awaited us. Further recitations and presentations, some of the humorous sort, were given.

Consul Tanner, who is at the same time G.M. of the Amboni Estates sisal concern, also gave a short address in which he especially drew attention to the late Consul Johann Franz, who had died at Lugano end of June last. He pointed out that it was Consul Franz, who, after he had come out to East Africa as pioneer towards the end of last century, first brought success and influence to Swiss capital out here and who was the real founder of the Swiss colony in East Africa by engaging many young Swiss for the various enterprises in which he had a controlling or financial interest.

During the last war, when Tanganyika changed hands, the then already existing Swiss Colony collapsed entirely, to rise however again, more vigorous, after the war — for which we have to be grateful, for in the first place to Consul Tanner, who during 38 years of closest collaboration with Consul Franz and by his indefatigable activity, not only as official representative of Switzerland but also as individual, gave assistance to many of our compatriots. At present there are approximately 500 Swiss registered in this Consular district, which comprises Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Nyasaland and the Seychelles Islands. Owing to the additional work thrown on the Consulate by the safeguarding of foreign interests, the consular staff had to be increased recently.

After the official part of the evening followed the social side: there was dancing, singing, reminiscences and the usual "leg-pulling." As in previous years two collections were made: one for the British Red Cross, realised Shillings 16,000, which is another proof that the Swiss in British East Africa are not too badly off — and a second collection for the benefit of necessitous Swiss returning to Switzerland from abroad, which yielded the nice sum of Shillings 5,000. A raffle and a "parcel fishing" game brought in more than Shs. 1,000; the prizes for the raffle had been donated by the Swiss living in Tanga and on the nearby estates.

It was not till it started to grow light, that the guests left the Consul's house, grateful to have been able to spend such a nice evening amongst compatriots, and also grateful for having so far escaped the horrors of war in this hospitable country.

G. E. BUCHER.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE.

Film Show at Conway Hall.

The Film Show given on Saturday, September 11th, at Conway Hall, under the auspices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, deserved a better attendance, and all those who, for one reason or other, missed the performance of the principal film, entitled "The Flag of Mercy," deprived themselves of an interesting afternoon.

Some of my friends called this sound film good "propaganda" for the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva. I do not like the word "propaganda" in this connection, let us call it, what it really is, namely a documentary film, depicting the working of this great institution of mercy, founded by our countryman Henri Dunant.

The humanitarian work of this great body is too well known, to enumerate here the countless benefits which mankind has derived both in peace and war time.

All those, and I hope they are not numerous, who are still ignorant of the purpose of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, will get all information they want from this interesting film, which, alas is too short; a number of features are hardly touched upon or are left out. If the sound recording could be made clearer the performance would undoubtedly gain by it.

The film took us through the numerous offices at the Headquarters at the Musée Rath in Geneva, Registration, Prisoner of war enquiries, Exchange Department, Parcels Delivery Office, etc., etc. Hundreds of busy hands, were typing, packing parcels, drawing and filing, and to all appearances everything was working like clock-work. Young boys and girls, elderly Gentlemen and matronly Ladies work hand in hand at the same benches like busy bees.

The greater part of the work is done by volunteers, thousands of them, and the Swiss Government pays 78% of the total costs amounting to several million Swiss francs per year, the remainder is split up amongst various foreign countries. Switzerland is thus making a valuable contribution towards this great humanitarian undertaking.

A grim story is portrayed by the arrival of a Red Cross train, some of the faces of those who are taken on stretchers from the carriages, vividly brought back to the audience the ghastliness of a war with all its sufferings.

Another shot, shows Delegates of the International Red Cross Committee visiting hospitals and interviewing patients. Unfortunately lack of space does not allow me to deal more fully with this most interesting film, which I understand will be shown to a number of English audiences in this country.

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique is to be congratulated on having procured this film from the Secretariat in Berne, and thus bringing the splendid work of the International Red Cross Committee to the knowledge of a wider circle.

Two further Swiss films were also shown, and much enjoyed. Mr. Fer, who acted as operator deserves hearty thanks for his always ready collaboration.

ST.