

Mr. Suter's Visit to Manchester

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This terminated the proceedings.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by an ordinary Monthly Meeting to deal with the usual routine matters. One of the interesting points raised was the question of establishing closer contact among the lady members, and Mrs. G. Jenne and Miss J. Bossard undertook to study this matter and to report at a later stage.

Mr. A. Renou, Hon. Secretary to the Council for the Study of Swiss Problems, gave a general review of the progress of the Council's activities to date, and he complimented the S.M.S. on the great support given to this venture from the very outset, particularly in their sphere of activity.

As a fitting conclusion, the President and Mrs. Boos invited the assembly to have tea with them, which gesture was very much appreciated by all present.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Saturday, March 11th, when it is hoped to arrange for a most interesting lecture on matters of great national importance to Switzerland. Full details will be announced in due course.

WB.

MR. SUTER'S VISIT TO MANCHESTER.

The Swiss Club and the Swiss Relief Society for Manchester held their Annual General Meeting on Saturday, the 12 inst., at the Midland Hotel, when Mr. E. Kuebler entered upon his 10th year as President of the Club. He conducted the proceedings in his masterly way. He knows what he wants and has a way of getting it. The routine items on the Agenda were liquidated in the twinkling of an eye. Although the Club's activities during the past year have entailed expenditure in excess of current income, the Meeting graciously agreed to pass the sponge over the resulting deficit and accepted both the General and the Financial Reports with unanimity. The Committee heaved a sigh of relief and turned the face to the future, accepting re-election "en bloc." It is comfortable to enjoy such a measure of confidence from the members, but is it really good for the Club to leave the same set of old hands to carry on year after year? One would like to make room for eager new collaborators and would welcome a brisker interest in the affairs of the community than is denoted by mere contentedness; for, our Club's function is not limited to its own membership, it being the centre of a whole Swiss Community scattered over several Northern Counties. And it is just in these times when we feel so far from home that we have the greater need to keep together and to impart to our gatherings as nearly as possible the reality of a "home-coming."

The re-elected old crew, inspired by this responsibility, will do its best and it received considerable encouragement from the Meeting's ready acquiescence to raise the rates of subscription in a manner which will permit the maintenance, perhaps even an acceleration, of our activities. Even now, full membership costs only 20/- a year and country-members pay half of that. We can't run far on this, but perhaps the year will make history in another way, as the general discussion revealed a readiness to give the Swiss ladies of the community the opportunity, if they will take it, for organised co-operation. The ways and means remain to be explored and debated. In the past the Club looked on it as a privilege and pleasure to treat the fair sex with manly chivalry on suitable occasions. This noble tradition shall in no way suffer by our joining in the march of time towards their and our own full emancipation and equality of rights. We shall beware of the snares and pitfalls, but taking step by step, the venture holds the promise of stimulating and enriching our communal life.

The Relief Society transacted its annual business immediately the Club had done its work, Mr. J. A. Steiner taking the Presidential chair. The few calls which have been made upon its succour have enabled the funds of the Society to swell a little in the past few years, amounting now to the handsome sum of £2074.4.1, and its investments are as safe as can be said of the best these days. Thanks to the vigilance of Messrs. Steiner and Bébié who share the burden of collecting the subscriptions, the income was well maintained. The President appealed for unflinching support as none can know that harder times may not be coming to make greater demands on the Society's help, especially in view of the higher cost of living. — Mr. E. A. Pernet, Acting Consul was elected a Consulting Member of the Committee in place of his predecessor Mr. Hirs, and Mr. F. Meyer accepted his election as a

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Trustee in succession to Mr. H. Corrodi to whom the Society is indebted for having served it as a Trustee over a period of 15 years.

By this time there had started an influx of guests who arrived for the Gathering of the Colony at Afternoon Tea, at which we had the honour and the great pleasure of welcoming as principle guest a friend of long standing who has shown us great kindness and rendered valuable service: Mr. A. F. Suter, President of the N.S.H. London Group and member of the N.S.H. Central Council. Though he had only been able to join in the meeting of the Club towards the end of the proceedings, he was in time to offer useful advice on the Ladies' question.

Adjourned to the Lancaster Room, where the tables were tastefully set for tea, each decorated with a vase of daffodils, every appetite was enticed by the varied dainties whose excellence and abundance were due to the personal interest Mr. Cottet takes in us. His genial presence drew out all the devotion of a staff with whose every member he seems to be on a footing of friendly comradeship. The tea was greatly enjoyed and there was time for a gossip between old acquaintances and for making new friendships, before the President rose to introduce our Chief guest. Soon Mr. Suter held the audience spellbound. The only way to do justice to his address is by reproducing it in full for the benefit of all the S.O.'s readers:

"May I tell you first of all how delighted I am to be with you at this meeting after an absence of some years, and how much I value the privilege of being asked by your President to address you. At my last meeting here we still had Dr. Schedler with us, that eminent President of yours and whose death we all deplore so deeply.

Your arrangement of combining the annual general meeting with a social function appears to me a very wise one in these days of black-out and paucity of transport; it brings the colony together for a longer period of enjoyment and makes the business part of the meeting more agreeable. The need for closer contact and companionship is now so urgent that we dare not neglect it. We of the N.S.H. in London have done the same thing for some years past, holding our annual general meeting at the Dorchester Hotel between a good lunch and a cosy musical tea; it works very well and has strengthened our group considerably.

I have noticed that, as we grow older, contact with the world in general appears to us much less important than contact with our own countrymen and, as second youth progresses, we are also drawn more and more to the spot where we were born, in the hope that we may see it once more with the same eyes and in the same colours. In that respect, we are told by the naturalists, we are like the African elephants, who will make every possible effort to reach that spot before death approaches. I can offer you no explanation for this similarity.

I congratulate you upon the flourishing condition of your Club as well as the wisdom and the energy of your officers; this is apparent enough in your Annual Report. We Swiss in London, with our large number of clubs and members are in an equally fortunate position on the whole. There have been casualties in lives and there must be an inevitable shrinkage of wealth in our colonies, but — I think — we have also relearned the lessons of war:— closer cohesion, greater interdependence, fuller charity.

I am privileged to convey to you the greetings and patriotic compassion of the London colony at large, but in particular of those societies of which I am a member and the representative to-day: — the London Group of the N.S.H., the City Swiss Club, the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Mercantile Society. These greetings include our heartfelt wishes that your Club may flourish long and happily, that your trial, like ours, may now soon be ended and that we all should emerge from the misery of war into a better world as better citizens and finer human beings.

Let us compare with our own position the tragic fate of our colonies on the Continent and in the Far East. The Report of the activities of the S.S.E. for 1943 which has just reached me through the Legation in London give some poignant examples. Milano, that former flourishing colony of some 3,000 souls, has lost the Casa Svizzera, a wonderful building, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and the Swiss School through bombing. In Genoa the Circolo Svizzera is also destroyed; the colonies in Torino, Napoli, Palermo and Catania have been heavily hit and dispersed.

In Germany, as we might expect, things are still worse:— Köln, Mannheim, Leipzig, Berlin and Hamburg have brought deep misfortune to our compatriots and 23 of them have lost their lives. In so many cases absolutely everything has been lost, goods and chattels, the home, the business, the full result of long years of hard work and stern saving. So many of them cannot now hope to start again in the future. In Greece and the Middle East generally there is stark famine, with no possibility of bringing up the children on a sufficiency of nourishing foods, no matter how wealthy the parents. Those splendid colonies of the Far East, in Singapore, in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Cochin China and China proper, of whose magnificent hospitality I retain such fine memories since 1928, where are they now? Extinct, or only extinguished temporarily? We shall not know for a long time yet. No colony has escaped damage, perhaps irreparable damage, even in countries so far untouched by actual invasion; as an example I would mention the heavy taxes on the fortunes of Foreigners imposed by Turkey and which threaten the ruin of many a countryman.

In face of all this misery and this sense of utter hopelessness, it is a great comfort to hear from the S.S.E. that our Authorities at home, as well as the S.S.E. and other public spirited bodies are doing everything possible to hasten and increase the assistance which must be sent to our compatriots. You may well imagine how gratefully this help, both physical and moral, is received by the tens of thousands of sufferers, in France alone something like 50,000. To-day they can only look to their homeland for relief and necessities, for comfort and guidance; and they have reason to thank God that Switzerland has remained free, benevolent and charitable Switzerland, as ever. Their need for contact with the land of their birth is now insistent and irrepressible.

The S.S.E. is responding with all the power and means at their disposal to save the spirit of these colonies. In Germany alone the demand for the bulletin d'informations has grown from 500 to 7,000. Incidentally, that canker-spot on the movement of the Swiss Abroad, the Nazi Schweizerbund, is finished, shrunk to a miserable remnant of its former self, its propaganda ridiculed. The members have had their

eyes opened to the truth that you cannot serve two masters.

Contrast with this fate our own position in Great Britain! Have we not reason to go down on our knees morning and night and thank God for two great gifts: — For our comparative immunity from the horrors of war in this great-hearted country, and for the preservation of our own homeland, physically so small and spiritually so great? Does it not now come home to us all what this inestimable boon of our traditional neutrality means? Are we not now — more than ever — reaping what our forefathers have sown and planted and tended so lovingly in our little country? We have reason to be grateful for our nationality!

All this means that there are tremendous obligations placed upon our shoulders. They are of a dual nature — not in conflict, but complementary one to the other: — our duties to Switzerland and our duties to Great Britain. I might almost compress them into one sentence: — To Switzerland our hearts, to Great Britain our sons. This is our fate to-day; we must accept it and fulfil our duty. This does not take away our allegiance to the land of our fathers, nor lessen our admiration and love for the land of our adoption. On the contrary, it combines and strengthens the two into one wider living purpose. It will make our lives fuller and ultimately it will be our spiritual contribution to the brave new world to come which will be built up, not by narrow national seclusion, but by real world-citizenship.

After the war we shall still have to carry on. Those of us who come towards the end of our life's work will be glad to retire to our homeland, if our sons return from the war and take up the work where we left it. The younger members will continue their work, perhaps will have to start anew. That will be the time to assist each other with word and deed, the time to show our confidence and trust in each other, in short, to work together and in harmony. In this way our colonies will never die, but will remain the trusted outposts of Switzerland's economic and spiritual well-being; in this way shall we all prove worthy of our patrimony."

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Suter gave information about the efforts which are made to repatriate distressed compatriots from the stricken countries of Europe and Asia and brought to our notice the fund which he has started to create with the object of sending relief through the *Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger* to the numerous Swiss Colonies who have suffered grievous losses and whose very existence is in jeopardy as a result of the devastations of the war. On the other hand we heard with a mixture of delight and envy of the literary and dramatic venture undertaken by our compatriots in Scotland who are prepared to propagate the art of our native bards among the Swiss Colonies in the British Isles. Will they include Manchester in the projected "grand tour?" They will receive a hearty welcome.

By coming among us, Mr. Suter has not only given us the great pleasure of enjoying his youthful personality and enthusiasm, he has also reaffirmed the solidarity of the Swiss Colonies throughout the land which could be brought into greater evidence by a more frequent interchange of visits. That he also got some pleasure from his week-end in the North may be gathered from his promise to come again and to bring or send us other interesting visitors.

R.....R.

LIVERPOOL NEWS.

In the peaceful days prior to 1914, when trade could flourish, the Cotton and Grain Exchanges of Liverpool became of world wide importance. For the Swiss Textile Industry the Liverpool Cotton Exchange was of great importance and there was a constant stream of young men coming here to gain experience. Most of these, although they came of decent homes, had to earn their keep and accepted positions in commercial houses, some for 2-3 years, some to stay. I do not remember a single case of dismissal on account of incompetence amongst these clerks, in fact most, either in Switzerland or here, obtained eventually leading positions. No system of statistics will disclose the gain all round in pounds, shillings and pence, but it must have been considerable on both sides. However, this happy position was destroyed by the 1914/18 war. Those men who stayed were still an asset while they lived, but it is a dwindling band. In the Cotton trade we have lost Hermann Baer, Emil Mueller and now Charles Hartmann the veteran, known to several generations for his active interest in the Swiss Club. We have also lost lately Gabriel Widmer at the great age of 85, who was a pioneer in the North of England in the trade for Swiss watches. We cannot see any accession of new blood unless the pendulum swings back to more enlightened arrangements between nations. Perhaps the cotton and other firms will be allowed, in view of the necessity of developing the export trade, to choose their clerks even from Switzerland.

We have all been pleased to hear that Maryse Faivre, the daughter of the Chancellor of the Consulate, has at the early age of 15 passed her Examination for the School Leaving Certificate (Cambridge University) with 5 credits and 2 passes. As this carries the right of entry into the University without the im-matriculation examination she has her foot on the ladder for a University career. Well done, Maryse and good wishes for the future.

E.M.

UNIONE TICINESE.

Annual General Meeting held on the 13th February, 1944, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

The meeting was opened by the President, Mr. C. Ferrari, with a few well chosen words, followed by the observation of a minute's silence in memory of two lately deceased members.

The auditors then presented their report and recommended that the accounts for 1943 should be approved, and the motion was passed unanimously.

The Secretary, Mr. P. DeMaria, followed with a lucid exposition of the Society's activities for 1943.

The new Committee for the year 1944 was elected and is composed as follows:— President: C. Ferrari; Vice-President: O. Gambazzi; Secretary: P. DeMaria; Vice-Secretary: V. Berti; Treasurer: C. Berti; Collector: E. Lucca; and three additional members: Mr. V. Ratti, Mr. C. Cima and Mr. P. Morosi.

The Society regrets to announce the death of another old member Faustino Morosi, native of Dangio, Val. Blenio, Canton Ticino, and offers its sincere condolences to the family.