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SWISS SOCIAL CENTRE. An Appeal.

The Swiss Colony in London has been offered an opportunity to establish a modest Swiss Centre for purely social purposes in a very central position at a reasonable price. The premises in question are those of the Union Helvetia in Gerrard Place, W.1. The offer was made over a year ago to a number of Swiss societies. It has never been acted upon seriously by any society to the extent of a proper investigation of the possibilities of the place.

Convinced that the existence of a suitable social centre would be of great benefit to the Colony and to the cultivation of Anglo-Swiss relations, the President of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, London Group, obtained a renewal of the offer last June with a time limit till the end of this month (September) and certain details as to mortgage, etc., agreed to. He thought it best to submit the offer to one particular society most likely to be interested, but received a negative decision towards the middle of September. Dr. Egli then brought the question up at the second Presidents' Meeting on September 20th suggesting that it would be a pity to let the opportunity slip by without at least having investigated it properly. The presidents were, of course, not in a position to do more than express their personal views on the proposition, preponderantly inclining to scepticism as to the feasibility of the scheme. They were asked by Dr. Egli, however, to weigh the matter further in their minds and possibly discuss it with friends and members of their societies.

It seems clear, however, that only by the intervention of some determined compatriots of substance, capable of a quick decision could still save the opportunity. For this reason the essential facts are published here by the unfailing courtesy of the *Swiss Observer* in the hope that sufficient indications of active interest and support may be forthcoming to justify a request being made to Union Helvetia for a few weeks extension of the option. Such indications should be addressed either to the president of your own society or to Dr. H. W. Egli, Chairman of the Presidents Council (provisional name), 3, Chesterford Gardens, N.W.3.

The essential details of the proposal are as follows:

The Union Helvetia has offered to sell the 50 years' leasehold of their premises at 1, Gerrard Place, to the Swiss Colony. Ground rent £285 p.a. Privileged price asked is £15,000, on condition that Union Helvetia may maintain small office rent-free. The unencumbered market-value is said to be considerably higher. To facilitate finance in early stages Union Helvetia is prepared to leave up to £9,000 on mortgage at 3%.

The freehold is available as well around £10,000-£11,000. This money could be easily raised on first mortgage.

War-Damage so far agreed to as Governmental liability, comprise complete overhaul of main house, for which building licence already obtained; could be carried out within a few months. Rebuilding of two large halls at back and some rooms above is clear war-damage liability of Government. But agreement to this and licence would have to be obtained. For say £3,000 the whole premises could be suitably adapted to needs of Colony, while rebuilding and redecoration are in pro-

cess. For fitments and furniture the aid of well-wishers, certain official funds, and possibly official quarters in Switzerland might be invoked, on the ground that the centre would greatly benefit the young who have arrived in London since the end of the war.

Capital requirements: Say

£10,000 for freehold, borrowed entirely first mortgage	
£15,000 for leasehold, borrowed on second mortgage	£9,000
by share issue	£6,000
£3,000 on adapting premises, share issue	£3,000
£3,000 fittings, furnishings, possibly gift from Switzerland or borrowed	£3,000
£4,000 safety margin, reserve, share issue	£4,000

£35,000 grand total (£25,000 without freehold).

Accommodation: Basement, kitchen, cellars, mens' toilet; *ground floor:* reception hall used as restaurant (pending rebuilding of halls), small bar, office, cloak room; *1st floor:* large front, two back rooms, cloak-room, ladies' lavatory; *2nd floor:* large front, 3 back rooms, lav.; *3rd floor:* 3 small front, 2 back rooms, bath room, lav.; *4th floor:* service flat, 3 rooms, bath.

Two Halls, about 30 x 90 feet, on top of each other, lower suitable for Kegelbahn, billiards, gymnasium, etc., possibly also brasserie; upper hall, ground floor, with stage, movable chairs for shows, films, used as banqueting hall, holding up to 250 comfortably if stage is kept small; on top a tennis court or light play rooms, etc., might be added.

It is suggested that various societies rent rooms for exclusive permanent use and engage banqueting hall, theatre, etc., when needed.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

60th Anniversary

followed by a

Thé Dansant

will be held on

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6th, 1948

at 12.45 for 1.15 — 6 o'clock

at the

DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.1.

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur HENRY DE TORRENTÉ, will be the guest of honour and a delegation from the S.K.V. including the Central President, Mr. K. STRICKLER, and the General Secretary, National Councillor PH. SCHMID-RUEDIN, will attend.

Tickets at 21/- (including gratuities) from the Secretary, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.