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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

(London Group.)

Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the above Society was held on Saturday, January 10th, 1948, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

The Meeting on the invitation circular was announced to start at 2.30 p.m., but as punctuality seems not to be one of the strong points in the Swiss Colony, half an hour lapsed before Dr. H. W. Egli, who was in the Chair, declared the Meeting as opened.

There were about 80 members and guests present, and it is a pity that the attendance was not larger, it would have been a well-deserved compliment to the Council if more of the members could have made it convenient to be present.

The President, extending a welcome to the invited guests, amongst whom was Dr. A. Escher, Chargé d'Affaires, mentioned that the agenda contained various important items to be discussed and exhorted the would be speakers to be brief and to the point.

The minutes of the last annual meeting were read out by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. Tall, and accepted.

The Council's Annual Report having been sent previously to all the members, was declared as read and was unanimously accepted. (The report is published in another part of this issue.)

The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. R. Weist, went through the various items in the Balance Sheet, which showed a satisfactory state of affairs. The accounts, were, after a short discussion and some recommendations passed with compliments to the Treasurer for his painstaking work. The auditors declared that they had inspected the books and had found them correct.

It was resolved that no change as to the amount of the annual subscription should be made, which thus remains at 10/- p.a. The Auditors, Messrs. Weber and Roethlisberger, were re-elected for another term of office.

The item "Revision of Rules" caused a lengthy discussion, and after some alteration and additions in the proposed text had been advocated and accepted by the Council were passed with a large majority.

The President then announced that the year of office of the Council having come to an end, he would now vacate his Chair, and invited Mr. A. F. Suter, a former President of the Society, to act as President *pro tem* during the elections of a new Council.

The latter expressed, on behalf of the members, the

thanks to the retiring President and his colleagues for the year's work. He passed in review the many important events which had taken place during the last twelve months proving that the Society had displayed a lively and successful activity, and that the Council fully deserved the gratitude of the members for the services they had rendered.

Mr. Suter, amidst applause, acquainted the Meeting with the news that a holiday camp for young Swiss girls would be inaugurated during the summer months somewhere in the Surrey Hills.

The President *pro tem* then read out the names of the Members who were willing to act on the New Council for the ensuing year, and the ballot was proceeded with.

Whilst the voting slips were counted by the tellers, the President, in order to save time, asked the outgoing President to deal with the intended activity of the Society during the next few months.

Dr. H. W. Egli informed the gathering that it was intended to continue with the Monthly Meetings on the same basis as hitherto, namely by inviting distinguished and qualified lecturers to address the members on questions of interest to the Swiss community. Educational courses both for grown ups and children would be introduced. The question of holidays for Swiss children in our country would again be studied.

In referring to the creation of a Swiss Centre, Dr. Egli said that investigations have been made and would be relentlessly pursued in the future.

He also informed the company that a Swiss Youth Club had been brought into being with the support of the Swiss Legation, who had generously, for the time being placed suitable accommodation at 28, Duke Street, W.1 at their disposal.

Dr. Egli expressed the hope that the new Library would be completed in the near future, and a guide for the new Swiss arrivals to this country, published.

He mentioned, that a Conference of representatives of all Swiss Societies in Great Britain would be arranged early in the spring to discuss the Agenda for the next "Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger" which will take place later on at Interlaken.

Dr. Egli, in concluding, made a strong appeal to the members to give support to the Colony's official paper the "Swiss Observer" and to the "Echo" the organ published by the N.S.H. in Switzerland.

Meanwhile the counting of the ballot papers was completed and Mr. Suter informed the Meeting that the following Members had been elected to serve on the new Council:

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Dr. Egli in resuming the Chair, thanked Mr. Suter for having conducted the Meeting during the elections, and the Members for having entrusted the affairs of the Society to him and his colleagues. He proposed, on behalf of the Council that the Swiss Minister, Dr. Paul Ruegger, should be elected as Honorary President of the London Group, Mr. A. F. Suter, as Honorary Vice-President, and Mr. C. Campart as an Honorary Member.

These proposals were duly seconded and the above mentioned were unanimously and with acclamation elected.

Dr. A. Escher, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, expressed his pleasure at the renewed activity of the London Group, and paid a special compliment to Dr. Egli and his colleagues on the Council for their successful efforts in their various spheres of activity, saying that one may look into the future work of the Society with optimism.

He referred to the various anniversaries which will take place in our country shortly, such as the 100th Jubilee of the 1848 constitution, the 150th anniversary of the canton of Vaud, etc., and said that the Nouvelle Société Helvétique would be the proper channel to bring these anniversaries to the knowledge of the Colony.

The business part having thus been exhausted, the President declared the Annual General Meeting as closed.

A very excellent tea was served after which Miss Unden played two valses from Chopin in her usual accomplished manner.

Mlle Béguelon, a charming young actress from Switzerland read, most beautifully, some lines from the works of our famous writer C. F. Ramuz.

Mr. H. Marfurt recited the poem "Die jodelnde Schildwache" and gave readings from works of Federer, Spitteler and a Swiss-Italian writer.

Mr. C. Campart shortly thanked the members of the N.S.H. for having conferred on him honorary membership, and thus an agreeable and fruitful afternoon came to an end shortly before 6 o'clock.

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique has of late played a conspicuous part in the history of the Colony by infusing new blood and a new spirit into their delibera-

tions, and should be copied by some of the Societies who have not yet been able to shake off their war time handicaps. We wish them the best of luck in their commendable activities during 1948.

ST.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

(London Group.)

Council's Annual Report for 1947.

When taking over the stewardship of the London Group the newly elected Council undertook an ambitious program of important work, not only in order to revive the Group but to make it again the natural forum of the Colony and link with the homeland. Not all tasks have been undertaken, but a good many and always with encouraging results. Thanks to the willing co-operation of the *Swiss Observer* in publishing extensive accounts of our meetings and other activities, in the course of the year we may content ourselves in this report with giving merely a summary of them.

1. *The Council* was constituted as follows:—
President: Dr. H. W. Egli, Hon. Secretary: A. Tall, Hon. Treasurer: A. J. Stahelin, Assistant-Secretary: Dr. Ernest Spühler, other members: Messrs. Aubaret, Ferraris, Ferrari, Kilchenmann, Lindt, Kullmann, Wasmer, Renou, Weilenmann and Weist. Dr. Kullmann has not been able to take up his position in the Council owing to almost permanent absence abroad; Mr. Weilenmann resigned immediately after the election for purely personal reasons; Mr. Stahelin had to resign owing to his departure to Switzerland and was replaced by Mr. R. Weist as Asst.-Treasurer; Dr. Spühler was taken from us by his tragically premature demise. The Council held 14 meetings at which Mr. Suter, the former President and Mr. Campart were regularly attending, thus showing an interest and a spirit of co-operation most warmly appreciated by the Council.

2. No less than 13 *Open Meetings* were held in the course of the year with most gratifying attendances from 50 up to 108. They were devoted to the following:

1. Free discussion on "How to maintain and strengthen allegiance to Switzerland amongst the Swiss abroad."
2. Discussion on the "Desirability of Establishing a Swiss Centre in London."
3. Talk on "Swiss Political Life" by Mr. P. Dürren-

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- matt, Editor of "Basler Nachrichten" and on "Switzerland in the after-war period" by Dr. E. von Schenck, Editor of "Schweizer Annalen."
4. Discussion on "How to maintain allegiance to Switzerland among our children."
 5. Discussion on the "Problem of Dual-Nationality," introduced by M. Aubaret.
 6. Talk on the "German Problem" by Dr. Hans Zbinden, Bernese author.
 7. Talk on "Switzerland's Past and Future" by Dr. Arnold Jaggi, historian.
 8. Discussion on the "Journée des suisses à l'étranger".
 9. Report on above by Dr. Egli, discussion.
 10. Talk on "Switzerland and the Marshall Plan" by M. de Graffenried.
 11. Discussion on "Old Age Insurance for the Swiss Abroad" introduced by M. Clottu.
 12. Talk on "English Residents in Switzerland of the past" by Prof. de Beer.

At various of these meetings Mr. Tall also showed Swiss films of great beauty and interest. A fine Swiss Army-Film was shown to the Colony on April 15th and 17th.

3. Our intention to organise special scientific and educational lectures to be given by qualified specialists is maturing only slowly as it is not easy to find suitable lecturers. Early in December Dr. Lindt gave an introductory talk for a course of three lectures on "Switzerland's history, constitution and culture" to be held in the early part of the new Year. Dr. Lindt, as Chairman of a special educational sub-committee, has also secured the special lecturers from Switzerland

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(mentioned above under 3, 6 and 7), for which the warmest thanks are due to him.

4. An outing for children of the Colony was organised by Mr. Weist. It was invited to tea by Mr. Dubs on his farm near Missenden. For this act of generosity as well as the free use he is allowing us of the hall at his "Vienna Café" for our meetings we wish to thank him and Mme Dubs most cordially.

5. Dr. Egli and Mr. Renou were delegated by consent of all societies of our Colony to the "Journée des suisses à l'étranger" at Berne, supported by Mr. Suter and Mr. Huber, Consul at Manchester. Mr. Suter had the honour of speaking on behalf of all the Swiss abroad at the memorial ceremony at Murten. Our views and suggestions, based on former discussion in our Colony, met with much interest and attention in the press.

6. As a result of the previous Open Discussion on a "Swiss Centre" the Council invited Mr. Renou to form an autonomous committee at his own discretion to pursue the question and establishment of such a Centre. It has met several times and is preparing for action as opportunity occurs, finance constituting the most difficult aspect of the problem.

7. M. Aubaret and Mr. Spargnapani have worked hard in sorting out and completing the N.S.H.-Library, enriched by the generosity of Mr. Wüthrich's heirs with many books from his collection. The Library now counts over 1,000 volumes and it is hoped to make it available soon to members and friends.

8. The Council assisted the Anglo-French Art Centre last summer on the occasion of the performances of the Swiss cabaret-artists "Edith et Giles" by suitable propaganda and an opening reception.

9. Experimentally a first Social Evening was held towards the end of the year with dancing and songs with guitarre.

10. The Council has taken the initiative to the publication of a "Guide to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain" as a welcome to new arrivals and reference book to all members of the Colony. Proposals have been published in the Swiss Observer and sent out to all fellow-societies. It is hoped to bring the booklet out early in the new year, with a foreword from the Minister.

11. Closer contacts with the provincial colonies in this country have been initiated by correspondence and a visit of Mr. Renou to Manchester.

Our special thanks are due, apart from those already mentioned, to our Minister for his active interest in our progress; to the Editor and publisher of the *Swiss Observer* for their ever ready co-operation; to the presidents and other members of our fellow societies for their sympathy and frequent participation at our meetings, and to the Secrétariat des Suisses à l'étranger for their encouragement and unflinching help.

On behalf of the Council,
Dr. H. W. EGLI,
President.

TO OUR READERS.

The Editor wishes to thank his many readers for their kind messages of appreciation which he has received at the close of the old year.

These tokens of esteem and interest are an encouragement to him to carry on and improve the Colony's paper.