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SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

The Swiss Minister was in the Chair at the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society at 31, Conway Street, W.1, on Monday, 11th April, at 6.30 p.m. Mr. Dupraz, Hon. Vice-President, opened the proceedings by announcing that the Minister had kindly accepted the Honorary Presidency of the Society. He also informed the meeting that the President, Col. A. Bon, was still in Switzerland on sick-leave and that the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. M. Rothlisberger was suffering from laryngitis.

The Minister then addressed the meeting in French. He thanked the President and his small Committee who meet every Monday evening for their hard and unselfish work. He said that it was a sign of the vitality of the S.B.S. that the larger part of their funds was given by the members of the Colony themselves. It was possible, of course, that the Society would be confronted with new tasks but he had no doubts that the S.B.S. would rise to the occasion.

After the minutes had been read the Hon. Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Bonnet, presented the accounts which showed a satisfactory state of affairs as the deficit in the Ordinary Fund was only £57. Expenses had been constantly on the increase, some £957 more were spent in 1948 than in the previous year, pensions alone having gone up by £130. On the other hand the sum of £2,903 was also a record figure for subscriptions and donations, and it was hoped that the many friends and supporters of the Society would continue their generous help as the cost of living was still rising.

The usual letter from the auditors was read and the accounts were passed unanimously.

In his report the Secretary drew attention to the A.H.V., the Swiss Old Age and Dependent's Insurance which the Swiss abroad could join voluntarily. The Society had advised some of the compatriots on their books to join. This meant that the Society would have to pay the premiums, but it was well worth while as they would be more than compensated once pensions could be drawn from Geneva.

Mr. Ritter also reported that the Society again and again have had to help young Swiss girls who left domestic employment from one day to the next, often without reason and even without giving proper notice. Young men still arrived in this country with £5 and the hope of finding commercial employment and finally had to be repatriated by the S.B.S.

During the following elections all the officers were re-appointed. Two new pensioners were then elected, bringing the total up to 63.

Appreciation was expressed to Mr. Bertschi for donating to the S.B.S. advertising space in the Swiss Observer, and with this one of the shortest and most efficiently conducted Annual General Meetings in the Swiss Colony came to an end.

Mariann.

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SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON.

On Sunday afternoon, April 24th, the Swiss Catholics met for the Annual General Meeting at St. Peter's Hall, Westminster. The preceding Easter Service at St. Edward's was not so well attended as usual, the nice weather no doubt drawing many families into the open fields and countryside.

The service consisted of Sermon by Pater Gut, of Immensee, and Solemn Benediction was given by another Missionary Father, the mixed choir rendering the chant.

At the Annual General Meeting, at which Mr. C. Berti presided, the report and accounts for 1948, which had been circulated, were approved, and the present committee re-elected.

The Chaplain, Fr. Lanfranchi, was thanked for his untiring work under, at times, somewhat difficult circumstances, and Mr. Boos, the Hon. Secretary, appealed for continued and even bigger financial and moral help in support of the mission.

The work has grown so much that it may be necessary to have two priests in London, and negotiations are in progress with the Hierarchy here and in Switzerland to put our mission on a more settled basis.

The remaining part of the evening was spent in a happy social atmosphere, Swiss films, songs and music suitable for old and young, providing the programme.

Anyone who has not received, and is interested in, the 1948 report should get in touch with the Chaplain, Fr. Lanfranchi, whose address now is:—

58, Queen's Gate, Kensington, S.W.7.

J.J.B.

A WELCOME INNOVATION ON THE ROUTE SWITZERLAND—EGYPT—IRAQ.

With effect from April 30th, 1949, the Swiss service to Cairo and Basra will be operated once a week from Geneva as well as from Zurich. The Swissair planes will no longer call at Cointrin and Kloten alternatively, but every week at both airports, on the outward and on the return journey. This is also the case with the New York service inaugurated on April 29th, 1949.

Thus, passengers leaving or flying to Switzerland will have the opportunity of choosing the airport they find the most convenient.

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