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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.
(London Group.)
Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the N.S.H., which was held on Tuesday, March 18th, at the Vienna Café Baker Street, N.W.1, had three virtues. It started with a good dinner, was followed by a most interesting lecture and concluded with a surprisingly short business part.

The Meeting was attended by about 60 members and friends, and the principal guests were the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté — who immediately after dinner gave the company a short address — and Dr. and Mrs. G. Schuerch Central President of the N.S.H. in Switzerland.

The latter, partly in "Bärndütsch" and partly in French spoke, to begin with about the London Group, which he said, was, and is always considered to be the most important one of all the foreign sections.

He gave the Meeting a concise and lucid exposé of what Swiss neutrality means and entails, and finished up by stating Switzerland's military position at present and its rôle in an eventual armed conflict between East and West.

This most excellent talk was greatly appreciated and the President, Dr. H. W. Egli, warmly thanked the lecturer for dealing, in such a competent manner, with subjects which are of paramount interest to our country. After a short discussion, the President declared the Annual General Meeting as opened. The Council's report, which follows this article, was considered as read, as it had previously been sent out to the members. Mr. R. Weist, the Hon. Treasurer, went through the various items of the accounts which were accepted unanimously.

Mr. A. F. Suter, a former President of the N.S.H. (London Group), acted as Chairman *pro tem* during the election, expressing, on behalf of the members thanks to the President and his colleagues on the Committee for the work they had so successfully rendered to the Society during 1951/1952.

The voting slips for the new Council were distributed, and bore, apart from the old ones three new names, namely Mr. J. J. Huber, Consul, Mr. A. Kunz, Publicity Manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office in London, and Miss M. Wolfer, Welfare Officer for Swiss Girls, who are replacing Dr. A. R. Lindt and Mr. Gottfried Keller.

All the old Council members as well as the new ones were elected, namely: Mrs. A. Bachofen, Mr. and Mrs. P. Bessire, Mr. and Mrs. A. Boller, Dr. H. W. Egli, Miss A. Gretener, Mr. Th. Haller, Consul, J. J. Huber, M. S. Marcuard, Mr. W. Renz, Mr. R. Schneider, Mr. R. Weist, Miss M. Wolfer and A. Kunz. As auditors were elected Mr. M. Rothlisberger and Mr. Bonnet.

Dr. H. W. Egli was confirmed as President, and so were Miss A. Gretener as Hon. Secretary, Mr. W. Renz, as Vice-President, and Mr. R. Weist as Hon. Treasurer. Dr. Egli, in resuming the Chair again, thanked the members, also on behalf of his colleagues for the confidence shown to him and them.

A silent tribute was paid to the following members who had passed away since the last General Meeting: Messrs. H. Joss, J. Weber, W. Kilchenmann, G. Miller and Hungerbühler.

The Meeting closed shortly before 10 p.m.
ST.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.
(London Group.)

COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 1951/52.

Meetings.

Since the last A.G.M., held on Jan. 25th, 1951, the following Open Meetings, lectures and film-shows were organised by the London Group of the N.S.H.:

- 1) 12 March: A Dinner was given at the Dorchester Hotel in Honour of Dr. E. Landolt, Stadtpräsident of Zürich. Miss Huggenberg contributed a short Piano recital.
- 2) 20th March: Gottfried Keller: "Ambassadors of the People" a talk on his experiences as President of the Foreign Press Association.
- 3) 17th April: Prof. E. Egli, Zürich, "Die Schweiz im neuen Flugbild" illustrated by lantern slides.
- 4) 1st May: Dr. A. Tissières, Cambridge, "Expedition to the Himalayas", illustrated by lantern slides.
- 5) 18th May: Film Show: "Skiing Patrols in Action", directed by Col. Erb, Zürich. Introductory talk and comment by Dr. V. Umbricht, Commercial Attaché, now Counsellor, Swiss Legation, London.
- 6) 29th May: Dr. J. Bourquin, Lausanne: "De la Liberté de la Presse à la Liberté de l'Information."
- 7) 18th Sept.: Prof. Donald Brinkmann, Universität Zürich, "East Africa and we", illustrated by lantern slides.
- 8) 9th Oct.: Robert Staeger, Wohlen, Aargau: "Ernsts und Heiters usem Dorf läbe".
- 9) 30th Oct.: Dr. E. Zellweger, former Swiss Minister in Belgrade, "Die Schweiz und der Osten".
- 10) 18th Dec.: Dialect records "So redets dihäi" by courtesy of the A. S. W. Berne and Film "Freudentage — Sorgentage".
- 11) 15th Jan. 1952: Dr. A. Boos (Arlesheim) "Die internationale Bedeutung der Schweizerischen Neutralität".
- 12) 29th Jan.: Dr. Ernst Mörgeli, joint-director, Secrétariat des suisses à l'étranger: "Current problems of the Swiss abroad", followed by film show.
- 13) 19th Feb.: A. Masnata, director Office suisse pour l'expansion commerciale, Lausanne: "L'histoire des industries suisses", illustrated by films.



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The A.G.M. of January 25th, 1951, held at the Dorchester, was followed by the Annual Dinner and an enthusiastically applauded piano-recital by Mr. Albert Ferber.

We have been happy to welcome the Minister and/or other members of the Legation at most of our functions. The attendances at these lectures and film shows were on the whole satisfactory. These meetings are always open to any Swiss and friends of Switzerland free of charge. Very special thanks in this connection are due to Mr. H. O. Ernst, London Manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office and his publicity manager, Mr. Kunz, who have always so readily put films and projectors — as well as the ever willing operator, Mr. Sage — at our disposal.

We also record once again our great appreciation of the free use of the lecture room at the Vienna Café thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Dubs. The Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger at Berne, maintained by our Mother Society, the N.S.H. in Switzerland, with the aid of various other organisations and a small federal subsidy, has always been most helpful in securing lecturers, films and dialect records for us and also sharing in the expense.

Parliament of the Swiss Abroad.

Last year's Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger, which was held on 1st-3rd Sept. at Basle, was attended on behalf of the N.S.H. London Group by the President, Dr. Egli, the Hon. Vice-President, Mr. A. F. Suter, accompanied by Mrs. Suter, and the Hon. Secretary, Miss A. Gretener. A full report was published in the *Swiss Observer* of Sept. 28th, 1951, and the *Echo* of Sept./October Nos. 9/10. Two resolutions of the Assembly of Presidents of the Swiss Societies in Great Britain emanating from the N.S.H. London Group, were submitted to the Journée, one pleading for the employment of Swiss nationals by Swiss employers in positions abroad wherever possible, the other advocating increased facilities for the repatriation of savings, pensions and so on. Both resolutions were received with much sympathy. Great progress was attained concerning the revision of the law regulating the acquisition and loss of Swiss citizenship. Many of the suggestions elaborated by the Presidents' Assembly have been adopted in the final draft to be passed into law before the end of 1952. The London Group of the N.S.H. can take particular pride in the satisfactory functioning of the Presidents' Assembly which was formed two and a half years ago at our group's initiative.

Guide to our Colony.

A second edition of the "Guide to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain" was completed and published at the end of the year, mainly thanks to the devoted work of our Hon. Secretary, Miss A. Gretener. Due to higher costs of paper and printing the charge for the Guide had to be raised from 6d. to 1/- (9d. in bulk). Unfortunately it can be given away only in exceptional cases. Even so it is doubted whether a surplus will be realised for the benefit of the Swiss Benevolent Society.

Children's Holidays Scheme.

For the fourth time in succession our Council Members, Mr. A. Boller and Mrs. Boller, assisted last year by Mr. Schuler, have carried through the holiday arrangements for children of our Colony. Thanks to their untiring efforts 27 children from England were

enabled to spend unforgettable holidays in Switzerland where "Pro Juventute" and in some cases "Pro Helvetia" were responsible for their welfare, apart from those children who had private invitations. "Swissair" again assisted most generously in the transport of the children. This year the work of these holiday facilities will be carried on by our Vice-President, Mr. W. Renz, and Mrs. Renz.

"Swiss Youth Club."

The Swiss Youth Club, formed four years ago at the initiative of the N.S.H. London Group, prospers excellently under the able management of our Council Member, Mrs. A. Bachofen, and Mr. Bachofen. The attendances at the Saturday Dances remained stable around 180 throughout the year. The rooms at Duke Street are generously made available by our Minister. Warm thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Bachofen and their loyal staff.

"Coming of Age" Presentations.

A suggestion of Pasteur C. Reverdin, sponsored by the N.S.H., for presenting a substantial book on Switzerland to young Swiss, boys and girls, on attaining the age of 20, as a token of their welcome into our community as full Swiss citizens, has been adopted by the Presidents' Assembly. The N.S.H. has obtained free copies of "Meine Heimat", "Ma Patrie" and "Il libro del cittadino" on behalf of the Colony from the Secrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger.

A Centre for the Young Swiss.

A report on the first years of work and experience of the Welfare Officer, Miss M. Wolfer, has confirmed most decisively the justification of the old plea of the N.S.H. for a social *pied-à-terre* for the young Swiss in London who have no homes, small means and hardly any friends in this capital city. A modest social centre would not only be a useful addition to the facilities and help already provided by the churches and Miss Wolfer; but it is a necessity. The bigger schemes for a Centre for the entire Colony having failed through lack of interest and co-operation, it may be that the more modest ambition on behalf of the young Swiss temporarily in this country might be more fruitfully pursued, with the support of the Presidents' Assembly already assured in principle.

Council Affairs.

The Council held 8 Meetings during the course of the year to the next A.G.M. Those elected to the Council at the last A.G.M. were:— Messrs. P. Bessire, A. Boller, Dr. H. W. Egli, G. Keller, Th. Haller, Dr.

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A. R. Lindt, S. Marcuard, W. Renz, R. Schneider, M. Schuler, as well as Mrs. Bachofen, Mrs. Bessire, Mrs. Boller and Miss A. Gretener. The Council Meetings were also attended regularly by Mr. A. F. Suter, Hon. Vice-President, and Mrs. Suter, Mr. C. Campart, as Hon. President of the Secours Mutuels and Hon. Member of the N.S.H., Mr. P. de Maria, President of the Unione Ticinese and Miss L. Bonetti, Delegate of the Sezione Femminile, Unione Ticinese. Unfortunately again the ranks of councillors were depleted in the course of the year by the departure to Switzerland of our Hon. Treasurer, Mr. M. Schuler. He has been replaced on the Council and as Treasurer by R. Weist by co-option. The special offices of the Society were distributed as follows at the first Council Meeting after the A.G.M.: Dr. H. W. Egli, President; Mr. W. Renz, Vice-President; Mr. M. Schuler (now Mr. Weist), Hon. Treasurer; and Miss A. Gretener, Hon. Secretary.

In all our activities we enjoy the ever ready co-operation of the "*Swiss Observer*" and its popular Editor, Mr. A. Stauffer. We record our special gratitude to him, as also to the publisher, Mr. O. Boehringer. It is gratifying to know that a more definite supporting action for the "*Swiss Observer*" has been organised in the Colony.

The *Membership* of the N.S.H. is now 219; there are 16 new entrants against 9 resignations. We also lament the loss of 3 members who died in the course of the year: Mr. E. Hungerbuehler, Mr. W. Kilchenmann and Mr. G. Miller.

On behalf of the Council:

Dr. H. W. EGLI, President.



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