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NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE
(London Group).
Council's Annual Report for 1953/54.

Meetings.

The last Annual General Meeting took place on January 23rd 1953 at the Vienna Café, followed by the Annual Dinner. The chief decision taken reluctantly at the Meeting was to increase the annual subscription from 10/- to 15/-.

Since then the following Open Meetings were organised by the London Group of the NSH.

- 1) Feb. 24th at the Vienna Café: "Winter and Summer Climbs in the Engadin and the Valais" a talk in English (illustrated by coloured Lantern Slides), by Mr. W. Kirstein, London Member of the Swiss Alpine Club.
- 2) March 17th at the Vienna Café: "Geneva's International Institutions and the Problem of Refugees", a talk in English by Dr. Gustave Kullmann, Chief of the United Kingdom Office of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees.
- 3) April 30th at the Swiss Club "Schweizerbund": "Das schweizerische Stratfrecht" a talk in German by Dr. Jakob Heusser, Obergerichts-präsident des Kantons Zurich.
- 4) May 21st at the Schweizerbund: "Why do the English not read more Swiss Literature" a talk by Prof. L. W. Forster, of the University of London.
- 5) November 6th at the Vienna Café: "Press- und parteipolitische Aktualitäten", a talk in Swiss German by Dr. E. Richner, Editor of the NZZ and Member of the Kantonsrat Zurich.
- 6) January 18th at Londonderry House, Park Lane: "Zermatt and the Matterhorn", a talk in English (illustrated by slides and films) by M. Edmond D'Arcis, Président Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme.
- 7) February 16th at the Schweizerbund: Broadcasting in Switzerland and elsewhere" a talk in Swiss German (with technical illustrations by B.B.C. Staff) by Mr. Th. Haller, London representative of Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and of the National Zeitung Basel.

Entertainments.

On April 13th it was our privilege to organise a concert for the Trio Michels from Basle in the Great Drawing Room of the Arts Council of Great Britain, 4, St. James' Square, S.W.1. It was well patronised and a great artistic success. All costs were recovered by the takings with a small surplus for the artists.

On December 8th, a film show was held at the Vienna Café preceded by a dinner. The annual summary of Swiss events in news reels (Journal parlé) put at our disposal by the Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat was shown on this occasion. This film was again obtained only with considerable difficulty by the good offices of the Minister and our Council member Consul Huber to whom we are much indebted for his tireless efforts on our behalf.

On January 16th we organised a Children's Entertainment in the afternoon, jointly with the Anglo-Swiss Society, at Londonderry House, Park Lane. Apart from a showing of Swiss films and English comics we had the co-operation of Mr.

Marshan with an attractive programme of conjuring. Mrs. W. Meier conducted most successfully some singing of Swiss and a few English songs by the Children and the grown-ups. We were particularly delighted to count amongst those present a considerable number of English friends and their children. Our co-operation with the Anglo-Swiss Society in fostering friendly relations between our Colony and Switzerland's friends in England is beginning to bear most gratifying fruit.

At all our functions the Minister, M. H. de Torrenté, our Honorary President, or other members of the Legation were present whose untiring interest in the work of our Society is much appreciated. The showing of films and slides was made possible on each occasion by the generosity of the Swiss National Tourist Office, whose London Manager, Mr. H. O. Ernst and Publicity Manager Mr. A. Kunz are giving us invaluable support. Those Meetings not requiring a larger room were once again held at the Vienna Café, whose owners Mr. and Mrs. Dubs continue to put their room at our disposal free of charge, for which we record our gratitude. Similarly we continued to enjoy the support of the "Swiss Observer" in all our activities, for which thanks are due to the Editor Mr. A. Stauffer and the publisher Mr. O. Boehringer.

Journee des Suisses à l'Etranger.

The annual gathering of Swiss from our colonies all over the world, whose proceedings are followed

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year by year with growing interest in Switzerland, was held at Chur, on September 4th-6th. It was attended by Mr. Hermann Boeschenstein, Dr. H. W. Egli, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Suter, all on behalf of the NSH London, as well as Miss H. Heckendorf Swiss Club Torquay. It is most regrettable that not more interest is taken by the other Swiss Societies in England in this annual conference. A full report on it was published in the "Swiss Observer" in September.

In June Dr. Egli attended a special meeting of the "Auslandschweizer-Komitee" at Berne in view of the particular importance of the agenda in connection with the question of war damage compensation to Swiss nationals in Germany, Austria etc. In February 1954 our Council Member Mr. Th. Haller represented the London Group of the NSH at an emergency meeting of the Auslandschweizer-Komission in connection with the same urgent question as well as a meeting of the Zentral-Komitee of the mother-society in Switzerland.

Children's Holiday Scheme.

Once again our Vice President Mr. W. Renz, assisted by Mrs. Renz, carried through the onerous task of organising the children's Holidays in Switzerland under our usual scheme, which is so generously sponsored by "Pro Juventute" in Switzerland and supported by the Swiss Benevolent Society here. (Swissair again facilitated the transport of the children. In all 30 children benefitted from the holiday scheme and the devoted work put into it by its organisers.

The Swiss Youth Club.

This Club formed by the initiative of the NSH is



now 6 years old and continues to prosper under the care of our Council Member Mrs. Bachofen as acting President and Mr. Bachofen as Treasurer. The Saturday evening dances continued until recently at Duke Street, thanks to this accommodation being made available so long by our Minister. When the Duke Street premises could no longer be used alternative accommodation was found for Friday evening dances at St. Mary's Institute, 37 Crawford Street near the Legation. In the course of the year, Mrs. Bachofen graciously handed over to the Minister's care a considerable sum collected at the Swiss Youth Club, as a first contribution from the Colony to a fund for the future Swiss Youth Centre. Our deep gratitude is due to Mrs. Bachofen and her husband for their selfless social work of great importance and the accumulation of this fund. Mrs. Bachofen would appreciate offers of help in the practical work involved.

Publications.

A considerable supply of the 2nd Edition of the *Guide to our Colony* still being available there is no present need for a 3rd edition.

Of the free copies of "Ma patrie", "Meine Heimat" and "Il libro del cittadino" obtained from the Sécrétariat des Suisses à l'Etranger for presentation to young Swiss on their coming of age a few are still available to all Swiss Societies for this purpose free of charge on application to the NSH. A copy of "Ma Patrie" was presented by our group to Miss P. Bessire the daughter of our Council members Mr. and Mrs. P. Bessire.

A Centre for the Young Swiss.

The question of establishing a Centre for the Young Swiss raised by the NSH years ago, has been further pursued on behalf of an Organising Committee in London, with the Minister as President and a Sub Committee whose final report is due shortly. It is hoped that further steps for the realisation of the project may be taken in the course of this year.

Council Affairs.

The Council held 8 Meetings during the course of the year from the last to the next A.G.M. Those elected to the Council at the last A.G.M. were: Messrs P. Bessire, A. Boller, H. Boeschenstein, H. W. Egli, Th. Haller, Consul J. Huber, R. Keller, W. Renz, R. Schneider, as well as Mrs. Bachofen, Mrs. Bessire, Mrs. Boller, Miss A. Gretener and Miss M. Wolfer. The Council Meetings were also attended regularly or frequently by Mr. A. F. Suter, Hon. Vice-President, Mr. J. E. Schneider, Delegate of the S.M.S., Mrs. Suter and Mrs. Mariann Meier.

Once again we have to record the sad loss of 4 members who died in the course of the year — Mr. A. Hinderling, Mr. Ch. Kunzle, Mr. P. de Maria, Mr. E. Steiner — while no less than another 31 members have resigned mainly owing to departure from London. Amongst those the Council has lost a most active member, Mr. Hermann Boeschenstein due to his much regretted return to Switzerland. On the other hand we have secured the support of 18 new members in the course of the year, which rejuvenation however still leaves the total figure of paying members 14 down at 187.

On behalf of the Council

H. W. Egli, President.