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FÊTE SUISSE AND CONFRÉRIE VAUDOISE

Many are the social functions held throughout the year in the Swiss Colony: some are restricted only to certain societies or clubs, but the "Fête Suisse" is, and has always been for the last 80 years, a family party in the real sense of the word, where all members of the Swiss community regardless of class or age can take part.

From small and modest beginnings this annual gathering has, especially in latter years, become very popular. Whilst at one time the programme could be supported entirely by local talent, it has become necessary to look elsewhere for additional performers.

This step was not taken without a certain reluctance, because by choosing "outsiders" this reunion has lost a little of its former intimacy, but there were only two alternatives left, either to discontinue holding the "Fête Suisse" altogether, or to "import" artists from our homeland.

The organisers, very wisely decided, to carry on, and for the last five years the main items on the programme, were performed by choirs, bands and soloists coming from Switzerland.

So in 1949, for the first time the "Chanson de Lausanne" appeared at the Central Hall, Westminster, and proved a great success. The following year, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary, Monsieur A. Pini, then Vice-President of the National Council attended and addressed the audience, and amongst the soloists were Paul Sandoz, baritone, Mlle. M. Amsler, violinist, and Fr. L. Bähler, all very well-known artists in our country. In 1951, the "Stadtmusik", Solothurn appeared, and the following year the "Chanson du Rhône" gave a memorable performance. In 1953, the "Ländlerkapelle & Jodlergruppe" Wattwil performed, and in 1954, our old friends the "Chanson de Lausanne" once again paid us a visit. Last year the "Röseligarte" choir from Berne gave a fine performance of Swiss folk lore.

In some of these programmes the Swiss Male Choir, the "Corale" of the Unione Ticinese, the Accordeon Group and the children of the colony participated with no mean success.

This year once again we have the pleasure of welcoming artists from our home country. They are the "Chanson de Montreux", and "La Musique de Huemoz", who both enjoy a great reputation in

Switzerland. In addition a colour film of the "Cortège de la Fête des Vignerons" Vevey, will be shown, and the Swiss Male Choir, the "Corale" and the children of the colony will supplement the programme.

We can thus look forward to a really first class evening. Amongst the visitors from home will be members of the Government of the canton of Vaud.

To present the Colony with such an ambitious performance, which will involve the organisers in heavy expenses, it is of major importance that the Central Hall should be filled to capacity. This has so far only once been achieved (1951), and we see no reason why this could not be repeated again. By giving the committee unstinted support, we not only show our appreciation for the great work they are doing, but also relieve their anxiety with regard to meeting the heavy expenses.

Whilst it is foremost an evening for the Swiss residing here, our English friends too are very welcome. May we suggest that many of our compatriots will bring them along, and those who, for one reason or another, can not attend, would they buy tickets all the same, and present them to their friends, either Swiss or English.

It has been said that there is a certain *malaise* grooving in the Colony because too many functions of one kind or another being held so close together, there might be some justification for this, but nevertheless we again make an earnest appeal for the support of this year's Fête Suisse, which promises to be an outstanding success.

* * *

To celebrate the presence in London of our Vaudois countrymen, the "Confrérie Vaudoise" has arranged an evening at Berkeley Arms Hotel, Cranford (see advertisement), on Saturday, April 14th.

Whilst this function is principally arranged for our romande compatriots, in view of restricted accommodation, we hear that our German, Romantch and Italian speaking countrymen will also be welcome. Whenever the "Confrérie Vaudoise" arranges something it is usually done to perfection, and we have not the slightest doubt that they will live up to their reputation, and present us with a grand evening.

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