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83rd "FÊTE SUISSE" & "BUERGERMUSIK" LUCERNE.

Is it nothing to you?

Slowly but surely the "Fête Suisse" is creeping up to its Centenary. Some of us may no longer be here when this happens, but whilst a kind Providence is allowing us to still dwell in this universe, which is often called the valley of sorrow, we surely ought to be there, to answer the roll-call.

Some of the younger generation may ask "What is the 'Fête Suisse'?" For their elucidation we might explain that it is the big annual "family party" of the entire Swiss Colony.

Many are the parties — perhaps sometimes all too many — which take place throughout the year in the Swiss Colony, and most of them are confined to a great extent to the members of the respective Societies only, thus bearing a more intimate character.

But once a year all barriers are taken down; rich and poor, young and old, meet together *en famille* to spend a few hours in happy and cheerful company.

It is one of the rare occasions when one has an opportunity of meeting and shaking hands with old friends and acquaintances whom one — for one reason or another — seldom meets.

There are no pretensions, everyone is more than welcome; and on that evening we once again feel that we all belong to one big family.

Though separated through circumstances from our mother country, we shall nevertheless be in thoughts with our kin folk at home also, and by singing or listening to those songs which we sang and heard in days gone by we shall be in intimate contact with that country which we call so proudly "La Patrie".

Perhaps a few *data* concerning the recent history of this popular entertainment might be appropriate. Whilst in olden days the programme could be supported entirely from local talent, prevailing conditions in post-war days have made this difficult or almost impossible, and the organisers were faced with the alternatives of discontinuing this annual festival or seeking help from outside.

Owing to the nature of this undertaking such help could only be procured from our homeland. So in 1949, for the first time, the "Chanson de Lausanne" made its appearance at the Central Hall, and this inauguration proved to be at once a big success. The following year — on the occasion of the 75th anniversary — various soloists well known in Switzerland, were the mainstay of the programme, and were complemented by local bodies such as the Swiss Male Choir, the "Corale" of the Unione Ticinese, the Accordion Club, as well as the children of the Colony.

In 1951 the "Stadtmusik" Solothurn provided the principal item on the programme; and the year after, the "Chanson du Rhône" gave a memorable performance. In 1953 the "Ländlerkapelle" and "Jodlergruppe" Wattwil appeared on the scene; and the year after our old friends of the "Chanson de Lausanne" reappeared.

1955 saw the "Röseligarte" choir from Berne, who gave a fine performance of Swiss folk-lore, and the following year the "Chanson de Montreux" and "La Musique de Huemoz" supplied the main items. Last

year we had the pleasure of welcoming the "Chanson de Gruyère" and the "Trio Domino".

This year the principal performers are coming from the German-speaking part of our country. As already mentioned in our last issue, the "Bürgermusik" Lucerne, one of the best-known bands in Switzerland, will render a popular programme; they will be supplemented by "Jodlers", Alphorn blowers and flag throwers.

The Colony will be represented by a soloist, Mlle. Hazel Schmid, accordion players, our old friends the Gandons, the "Corale" of the Unione Ticinese, and the youngsters, all in all over one hundred performers will present a most attractive programme.

As particulars are also given in the leaflet which is enclosed in this issue nothing further is to be said, apart from laying stress on a matter which on former occasions has often caused annoyance and inconvenience, the matter of the catering.

Although last year an improvement could be recorded, this year additional accommodation has been acquired, so that the former overcrowding experienced will now be eliminated.

* * *

And now one word to our compatriots. In presenting the Colony with such an ambitious programme considerable expenses are involved, and these can only be met by a large attendance at Central Hall.

The committee of the "Fête Suisse", and especially its President, Mr. A. Renou, have worked exceedingly hard to give us a first-class entertainment, which should appeal to everyone's taste, and it is hoped that their efforts will be rewarded by a "full house".

So often in the past organisers of various entertainments in the Colony have been "let down" by small and insufficient attendances. This time we expect that no such complaints will be justified, and that those who are giving their time freely and generously will be duly rewarded — and relieved of the worry of how to make both ends meet.

Is it nothing to you that a hardworking group, consisting of both performers and organisers, are doing their best to assure us of a really fine evening?

Whilst it is obviously foremost an evening for the Swiss in this country, our British friends, too, are welcome, and it is hoped that many of our compatriots will bring them along. We would also suggest that those of our countrymen who are prevented from attending should nevertheless buy tickets and present them to their friends.

We wish to impress on all those who intend coming along the need to order their tickets as early as possible. These will be sent out in strict rotation, and by ordering *now* any disappointment can be avoided.

We are most anxious that this year Central Hall should be filled to capacity, so as to show our guests from the homeland how much their visit is appreciated.

DO NOT FORGET — APRIL 17th
AT CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER!

ST.