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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MALE CHOIR

It was a sombre occasion for the members of the Swiss Male Choir when they assembled for their Annual General Meeting at the Glendower Hotel on the 19th April.

The Chairman, Mr. F. G. Sommer, in welcoming the dozen or so remaining members, said that the Vice-President, Mr. Leon Jobin, and Mr. Eugen Weber regretted they were both unable to attend through absence abroad, but sent their greetings. He also had to report that since the last meeting three members had passed away, Mr. Wehrli, Mr. Wyss and, more recently, Mr. Paul Dick, who had for many years been the Choir's Conductor. The Meeting stood in silent tribute to the memory of these departed friends.

Not alone among the organisations of the Swiss Colony, the Choir had for years past found it difficult, and latterly impossible, to recruit new members to fill the gaps arising through retirements from business and — alas! — through death. This inability to find new blood seems to stem from a reluctance on the part of the younger generation to join in choral music. The same trend is apparently to be found in the Homeland, once so famous for its local choirs.

Already some years ago the "Männerchor" realised that they could no longer accept invitations to appear at functions but they felt that the pleasure which they derived from meeting for occasional practices was reward enough to keep the Choir going.

And so it came about at this A.G.M. that the choir had to face inexorable reality. The Chairman voiced the feelings which each member had in his heart and a unanimous decision was taken to liquidate the choir. Unanimous? Well, perhaps not quite. One member, Mr. Alfred Sommer, was seen not to raise his hand. When pressed, he admitted the inevitability of the decision but he could not bring himself to raise his hand to the 'death sentence' of such an old friend!

Indeed, those Friday evening meetings at the Schweizerbund — supper served by the nimble hands of Madeleine and a cosy chat over 'a glass' or coffee, then an hour or so of songs in French, German and Schwyzerdütsch — will leave nostalgic memories in the hearts of members.

Mr. F. G. Sommer reported that despite exhaustive searches it had been impossible to find certain Choir records which had been kept by the late Mr. Dick and that he would therefore be unable to notify personally the Life and Passive Members of the decision to terminate the Choir, which otherwise he would certainly have done.

In further discussion it was decided to distribute the remaining funds of the Choir as to £10 each to the German-speaking and French-speaking sections of the Swiss Church in London, £10 to the Committee of Swiss Catholics in London, whilst the remainder is to be donated to the Swiss Benevolent Society.

The only other assets, viz., the Song Books and Music as well as the Piano, are to be given to the Swiss Mercantile Society, whose President, Mr. A. Jaccard, present at the Meeting, said the Society could make good use of them and expressed his cordial thanks on their behalf.

And so another chapter closes in the life of the Colony. Well, perhaps not quite. The members of the Choir felt that they could not just shake hands and scatter for ever,

so Mr. Jaccard is 'keeping tabs' on the few remaining members, who intend to meet about once a year to preserve their happy 'esprit de corps'.

G.N.R.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

There was a good crowd at the Manchester Swiss Club meeting in April, when the members and their friends met to greet Mr. Richard Muller, President of the Leeds Swiss Club.

Mr. E. Berner greeted Mr. and Mrs. Muller on behalf of the Manchester President, Mr. B. Simon, who was unable to be present owing to a business meeting. Regret was expressed that Mr. Henri Monney could not be there, as he was ill in hospital.

Members looked forward to Mr. Muller's illustrated talk, for the subject was "Zermatt and its Mountains".

Mr. Muller described the great pleasure he and his wife had had in climbing in the Zermatt area, and illustrated his talk by superb transparencies of the area, starting out from that fairytale village of Saas Fee, travelling down and up again to Zermatt itself, with a brief look at the town, but the journey was in the valleys and to the mountains, climbing over the Allalin Pass, on to the Breithorn and a most exciting climb to the Obergabelhorn, finally to the summit of the Matterhorn itself.

This written description does not convey to the reader the climbs, the great beauty of the sun rising and the rays turning the snow into wonderful hues of red and pink, and the glorious flowers to be found at high altitudes — Alpine Crocus, Anenomes, Spring Gentian, and a glorious close-up of a growing Edelweiss.

Mr. Muller spoke in an easy manner, but with great knowledge of his own Switzerland. Mrs. Muller was the projectionist, which it was difficult to believe at times as we saw her so high up on the mountain slopes, caught by the camera of her husband. It was a most enjoyable evening, and the time passed all too quickly. Despite what has been said of Zermatt in recent days, both Swiss exiles and their British friends, were loath to bring such a wonderful feast of colour and description to an end.

A simple "Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Muller" may seem to express little appreciation, but the sincerity in those few words sums up the feelings of all who were privileged to be the meeting.

S.H.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

London Group

OPEN MEETING

Thursday, 23rd May, at 7.45 p.m. at Swiss Hostel
for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3.

Dr. F. HUMMLER,
Delegierter für Arbeitsbeschaffung

will speak in German on

"Wirtschaftspolitische Probleme der Schweiz"

Discussion to follow

All Swiss are cordially invited to hear this prominent Swiss high official talking on some of the most vital questions for our country.