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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

EGLISE SUISSE — SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

The Swiss Church in London in 1966

The Annual Report for 1966 of the Swiss Protestant Church in London comprises, as usual, the review of the Consistoire — in English, and the comments, in their respective languages, of the pastors of the French and German-speaking communities, in addition to the financial statements.

Fittingly, the opening paragraphs of the Consistoire's review give praise to the Lord for His untold blessings bestowed upon the Church in so many different ways, which have enabled it not only to maintain, but also to extend its activities and functions.

Many, indeed, have been the problems arising from present day secular developments generally and from the particular situation of the Church, having regard to the ever widening area in which resident members live and the unrelenting decline in their number through death or repatriation among the older generation, compared with but a modest number of newcomers on a permanent basis.

It is thanks to the energy and initiative of, and the close co-operation between the four pastors that despite the many adversities and some after effects of recent years of stagnation, we can again look back upon a year of much increased activity and progress. It is natural in the prevailing circumstances, though not accepted in all quarters, that much of present efforts must be directed to the needs of the younger, i.e. essentially temporary members. Even so, pastoral dispensations and social activities amongst the elderly, it can be claimed, have been more than maintained. Thus, the organisation of regular visits to the sick and aged by lay members of the church has been extended successfully and is appreciated.

The "Réunion de Couture" and "Frauenverein" have met regularly, but here also as is the case with Church membership generally, there are empty spaces to be filled from the ranks of the younger generations. Apart from the practical help provided to the needy, these "work" meetings frequently lead to happy and social contacts which might not otherwise have been made.

Sunday school is again held regularly in collaboration with the "Eglise Française" of Soho Square. Participation is still modest and further support is urgently needed. Sunday School is also being held twice a month at St. Mary Woolnoth's.

Thanks are expressed to the group of ladies who provide the delectable Sunday luncheons at Endell Street to an average of about 40 participants, with an occasional 50 or 60 or even more, from both congregations. To offer such a complete meal at 3/-, without any subsidy — calls for not a little ingenuity in addition to the time and effort in the preparation of the food. The happy atmosphere which prevails at all these repasts must give satisfaction to the "providers", and there can be little doubt that they represent an exceptional opportunity for closer contact amongst all sectors of the congregations.

A group of ladies of the "Frauenverein" provided food on occasions such as a Communal Service with the Anglican Community of St. Mary Woolnoth's

A successful Ecumenical Service took place with our R.C. friends at their Church of St. Ann's in Westminster.

No material changes have been made to the church building at 11 Endell Street during the past year. Certain projects aiming at the provision of accommodation for the German-speaking community had to be abandoned owing to the high cost and doubts regarding their ultimate adequacy. Uncertainty concerning official plans for the re-development of the Covent Garden area was another factor in the decision not to go ahead for the time being.

Finances: Response to the President's urgent appeals to members for additional support has been generous and with the £1,301 record proceeds of last autumn's bazaar and the 50% increase in the contribution of the Federation of Protestant Churches of Switzerland, the financial anxieties of recent years have at least temporarily disappeared. The final result, after eliminating the deficit of £377 brought in from 1965 and the transfer of £500 to "Repairs Reserve", was a surplus of £276.

The Consistoire hope to be able to set aside in the future a substantial part of the annual revenue of the Bi-Centenary Appeal Fund with a view to building up this Fund for the time when the construction of the required accommodation becomes feasible.

After years of study and argument, a new Constitution which brings about profound alterations in its functions, has been adopted by the Consistoire. Principal changes include the creation of Parochial Councils for the separate communities, an annual Church Assembly, the election in place of co-option of future members of the Consistoire and the reduction of their number to 12 from 20 hitherto. The reduction is to be brought about by members automatically becoming "Honorary Members" with consultative powers only on reaching the age of 70.

The first Church Assembly took place on the 4th of June. It gave members the opportunity of directly submitting to the Consistoire *in esse* their problems and *desiderata*. It is to be hoped that this faculty will be freely taken advantage of in future and lead to the closer contacts and understanding desired by all.

E.Z.

A PROMISING LECTURE AT THE N.S.H.

Reserve Thursday Evening, 22nd June

The Council of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique have great pleasure in announcing a lecture of particular interest on Thursday, 22nd June, 7.45 p.m. Dr. Gian Andri Bezzola, Prof. of History and History of Art at the Cantonal School in Solothurn, will give a talk in German "Um die Erhaltung des Schweizerischen Bürgersinns".

Prof. Bezzola will take part in one of the regular international conferences at Wilton Park. This time, he is the only Swiss present at the meeting arranged by the British Foreign Office for an exchange of views on current affairs.

The Lecture (at Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9-11 Belsize Grove, N.W.3) promises to be extremely interesting, and all Swiss and their friends are invited.