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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

THE LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY'S ANNUAL DINNER

The Swiss Philatelic Society's Annual Dinner, a merry family affair, took place in the Stanhope Suite, in the basement of the Dorchester Hotel.

After we had all enjoyed a very satisfying lunch, Mr. W. Burren, the President, rose for a short address and spoke of various philatelic events in London. He mentioned the "Stampex", an annual event held in the horticultural hall of Westminster, where the Honorary Secretary, Miss A. Grunberg had won a silver-bronze medal. She is a distinguished collector and a specialist in Swiss stamps. In this quality, she has recently been elected a member of the Royal Philatelic Society, a fact that was not overlooked by Mr. Burren. He also spoke of the world stamp exhibition at Olympia, which will be called "Philympia" and will be held from 16th to 26th September. During that time, there will be an exhibition of Swiss stamps organised by the Swiss P.T.T. and the S.N.T.O. at the Swiss Centre. The London Swiss Philatelic Society had been asked to participate at this exhibition, together with the Helvetica and Lichtenstein philatelic societies.

Mr. Burren then gave me the honour of handing out the customary cups to the worthiest collectors of the Society. Mr. Jack Beken, an honorary member and specialist in Lichtenstein stamps, received the Challenge Cup. He also received the plaque for postal history. Mr. F. Streit was awarded the plaque for thematics. Unfortunately, he was kept away because of illness and it was his attractive daughter who received the trophy. The replica of last year's Challenge Cup was given to Mr. D. W. Langley.

The prize-giving gave way to the raffle, organised by Mr. M. Uehlinger, who was carrying the ticket-basket and by Mr. D. Pashoud, who took care of the cash dish. The raffle raised £25 for the benefit of the Society. There were plenty of prizes and these ranged from the luxury box of chocolates to the roll of hygienic paper daintily wrapped in frilled paper. When the treasure-table was left empty, Mr. Uehlinger auctioned numerous lots of stamps as well as stamped envelopes and "first covers, with and without silk thread".

Over £20 were raised in this way. Half the money was for the Swiss Benevolent Society and the other half for the Marie Curie Foundation. Mr. M. Rothlisberger, who is treasurer of the Swiss Benevolent Society and connected with the work of the Marie Curie Foundation, thanked us all for our contributions.

Mr. Burren closed the evening officially and welcomed us all to next year's Annual Dinner.

(PMB)

THE NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A good forty people were present at the Annual General Meeting. Some of the members of long standing were absent however, and the new President, Mrs. Meier, regretted that Messrs. P. Bandy, P. Inebnit, J. Zimmerman, J. Schmid and O. Grob could not be with us.

Reviewing the past year, Mrs. Meier was pleased to note that membership to the N.H.S. had been maintained. Two revered members had passed away in the course of the year, Mr. M. H. Ochsner and Mr. C. Chapuis. We stood up and commemorated their memory with a minute's silence.

The main task of the N.H.S.'s President was to get hold of good speakers. The record for last year had not been bad at all and lecture fees had been non-existent. The only expense on this account had been a voluntary contribution to the work of one of the lecturers. Mrs. Meier said that she had asked a member of the Wahlen Committee to come to speak on the total change of the Federal Constitution. This will be the subject of a debate at the London N.H.S. and, if I understand rightly, the Wahlen Questionnaire will be submitted to the Society.

Two new Council members were voted: they were Dr. Franz Birrer, the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy, and myself.

Mr. L. S. R. Asch, the Treasurer, commented on the accounts of the year. They were confirmed by the voluntary auditors, Mr. M. C. Rothlisberger and Mr. D. E. Bonnet.

Two important topics were on the agenda: the election of Dr. H. Egli, the outgoing President, to the title of Honorary President, and the confirmation of N.S.H. support to the Swiss Forum.

Mrs. Meier asked Dr. Egli to retire, which he gracefully did, while we unanimously voted in favour of his new honour.

Concerning the question of support to the Swiss Forum, we were told that the Council of the N.H.S. had decided to earmark £600, well over two-thirds of its capital to the project. Mr. R. Baumann asked for some precisions, namely, was this money actually promised, or only "reserved for" the Swiss Forum? Shouldn't the Meeting confirm the Council's decision?

This called for some explanations by Dr. Egli, the main promoter of the Swiss Forum. He told us that the money had not been promised unconditionally and was not committed yet. Among the conditions set by the London societies, the Forum will have to be open and free to all of them. The money was still in the Society's coffers and would stay so until work definitely got under way.

Dr. Egli thought that the Society's effort was a very good show and an example to all.

Mrs. Meier said that nothing would be undertaken concerning this contribution unless all were satisfied of the conditions. She assured the meeting that the Council wouldn't commit the Society's money without full assurances and would call an extraordinary meeting if this were necessary.

Dr. Egli informed us that auguries for the Forum were quite encouraging. The City Swiss Club had reserved £6,000, the Swiss Youth Club Fund £2,000, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique £600, the Unione Ticinese £750, this in addition to the contributions of other societies summed up to about £10,000.

The meeting was followed by a half-hour reception and then by an informal dinner in the Swiss Hostel's refectory. The pretty boarders of this institution mingled with N.H.S. members and conversation was so animated that it was hard to be heard without raising one's voice.

Mrs. Meier rose for her address, whose text we now reproduce:

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Madame Keller, Ladies and Gentlemen. Having said this, I should like to scrap it at once and simply say "dear friends all". For it is true to say that the annual dinner of the N.S.H. has no high social claims, it is not a function of great prestige value. Throughout the year, we offer our members lectures, films, discussions which keep them informed on matters concerning Switzerland, but when we meet for our AGM, we simply take stock and sit down to dinner as a group of friends, sharing a genuine and lively interest in our homeland and finding pleasure in meeting in these congenial surroundings.

We are proud to count among these friends *Monsieur and Madame Keller*. The Ambassador is our Hon. President while in this country, but his regard for the Society goes much deeper. We value it and appreciate that he and Mme. Keller have spared us an evening.

We have always been able to count on the Embassy, not only for advice and practical help, but also for good representation at all our meetings; tonight is no exception: We welcome *Consul and Mrs. Adams* and *Vice-Consul and Mrs. Abegglen*, as well as a handsome number of Embassy and Consulate staff. We have had excellent relations with the cultural section of the Embassy and are looking forward to co-operating with the new Cultural Attaché, *Dr. Birrer*, recently arrived, and whom we have the pleasure of seeing with us tonight. I have had a letter from *Dr. Stauffer*, former Cultural Attaché and Council Member who has