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# NEWS FROM THE COLONY

## SWISS FORUM ASSURED

The establishment of the FORUM OF SWITZERLAND on the 3rd floor of the SWISS CENTRE in London may now be regarded as definitely assured. The total cost of 3.4 million francs as estimated last October will be financed as follows:

Federal Government	2,200,000*
Collection in Switzerland	520,000
Promise by one firm to pay in England	51,500
Collection in England (Ambassador's Appeal)	115,000
Swiss Societies in London	103,500
Bundesfeier-Spende	100,000
Swiss hotels in Switzerland	at least 100,000
Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Bank Corporation (together covering the final gap)	say 210,000**

GRAND TOTAL	3,400,000
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\*half as a loan.

\*\*form of contribution not yet known; may be partly as loans.

The decisive step was the approval by the Federal Parliament of a subsidy of 1.1 million francs and a loan of up to the same amount towards the end of 1969.

Since then the Central Committee of the "Bundesfeier-Spende" has agreed to donate 100,000 francs. The appeals to Swiss firms and organisations in Switzerland have yielded as per 20th March 1970 a total of 520,000 francs, while our Ambassador's personal letter to the Swiss in Southern England brought in, to the end of April 1970, over £11,000 (say 115,000 francs). In addition £5,000 in five yearly payments of £1,000 has been promised by a leading Swiss firm. Various Swiss societies and organisations in London have long since engaged themselves to contribute about £10,000 on conditions satisfactory to their trustees. These contributions and promises total about 3,090,000 francs. Various Swiss hoteliers have promised a total not yet definitely known, but probably amounting to at least 100,000 francs on condition that their names be inscribed as donors in a suitable place. Finally, the Swiss Bank Corporation and the Swiss National Tourist Office have undertaken to make up the remaining gap of 217,000 francs plus, if need be, a moderate margin for possible cost increases. Although the necessary finance is thus assured, *outright contributions will still be most welcome so as to reduce the loan element of the promised assistance.*

### Summary of the Project

As responsible body to receive the contributions and carry out the whole scheme a FOUNDATION FORUM OF SWITZERLAND will shortly be established in Berne under Swiss laws in which no doubt also our Colony as an important contributor will be duly represented.

According to the Federal Council's report to Parliament the FORUM shall represent Switzerland's manifold cultural, social and economic life in the British capital by means of exhibitions, lectures, concerts, filmshows, receptions, etc. It comprises a large main hall with additional rooms and a total area of some 8,000 sq. ft. holding up to 350 persons. The cultural programme will be mainly in the hands of the Foundation Pro Helvetia and other organisations in Switzerland. When not needed for Swiss purposes the rooms will be utilised commercially by Swiss Fair Ltd. so as to relieve the FORUM of all basic running costs.

### Swiss Colony Room

While the general accommodation of the FORUM will be available also for special Swiss Colony functions at privileged terms, a separate Swiss Colony Room of some 620 sq. ft., seating up to 80 persons in comfort, is reserved permanently for the rent free use of our societies and all Swiss visitors. From 3 p.m. it may daily serve as a welcome pied-à-terre especially for the many young Swiss in London. In the evenings the societies can claim the room by reasonably early notice. Machines for hot and cold drinks are provided in an ante-room with lockers for the societies who can also make their own arrangements for refreshments or call on the restaurant service. These highly favourable conditions, visualised in the present plans will, it is hoped, soon be confirmed contractually in return for our considerable financial contribution.

(E)

## CITY SWISS CLUB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's Annual General Meeting was exceptionally well attended and lively. After a filling meal capped by a large slice of raw pineapple with caramel mousse, Mr. A. Kuhn initiated the proceedings of the evening by welcoming us all in such large numbers. Mr. L. F. Ackermann, the Secretary, read the minutes of the last meeting, which were duly approved and two new members were elected. Mr. Kuhn then reported on the activities of the past year. He said that he considered it to be both a pleasure and an honour to be President of the City Swiss Club, even though he sometimes said unamenable things on its members. The two highlights of the year had been a very successful Summer Dance which had been blessed by the weather and a very well attended and profitable Annual Dinner and Ball. The Christmas Dinner had also been a great success and the Club had enjoyed an exceptional after-dinner speaker. Mr. Kuhn thanked Messrs Walter Bion and Eddy Tobler for their help in making the Family Evening a success. Besides the card evenings there had been two monthly meetings with speakers, the first of which had been devoted to "Collisions at Sea" and the second to "Pollution". This second evening had unfortunately been very poorly attended and Mr. Kuhn urged us all to come in force at future monthly meetings and thus honour our invited speakers.

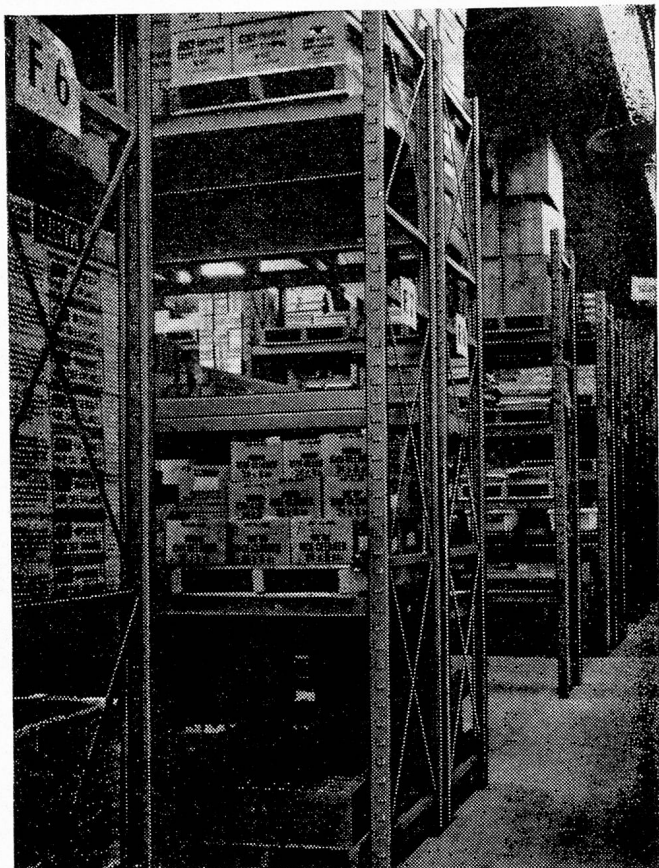
Mr. H. J. Keller, the Club's Treasurer then commented on the accounts. They looked very healthy in-

deed. Total income from membership fees, interest and dividends from the Club House Fund and Bank Account plus receipts from the Annual Banquet and Ball totalled £1,366 11s., an excess over expenditure of £711 10s. 8d. Mr. Keller thanked the members who had helped in making the Annual Ball such a financial success.

Mr. C. Natter raised the point that the £237 accruing from the Fund ought in fairness be devoted to or accounted to charity since the Fund was a charity fund. Mr. L. Chappuis said that he was greatly surprised to see that the money collected at the Tombola (£419, not counting the profit on Annual Ball tickets) which in former days was publicly known to be given to the Swiss Benevolent Society should just be engulfed in the Club's general account. He said that he and his guests at the Ball had willingly given money away on the understanding that it was to be given to the Swiss Benevolent Society. The Annual Banquet and Ball had always been considered as a charity ball in the past and there were no reasons why this practice should change. Mr. C. M. Suess enlarged on this point of view and said (noting that not much over a third of the proceeds of the Annual Ball had been allocated to charity this year) that we were made to give money "on false pretences" and that he was tempted to waive his usual contribution to the success of the Tombola. Mr. Kuhn pointed out that although the collected money was not explicitly allocated to charitable or religious institu-



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*A happy gathering during the reception given by Mr. and Mrs. Max Keller, until recently General Manager of Swissair in the U.K., to mark their departure. From left to right: Mr. Max Keller, Monsieur et Madame Rene Keller, Mrs. Max Keller, Mr. Franz Fraefel, the new General Manager.*



*Farewell reception to Mr. Max Keller in Manchester. From left to right: Mr. Max Keller, The Lord Mayor of Manchester (Alderman N. J. Westbrook), Mr. Franz Fraefel, The Lady Mayoress (Mrs. Westbrook), Mr. W. Zellweger (Swiss Vice-Consul in Manchester) and Mr. W. Kunz (Swissair Manager for the North).*



*The new and gleaming Zurich Insurance 17-storey tower block in Portsmouth.*

tions, it was still there and nothing could be easier than to give it away when a worthy opportunity came about. Mr. C. Natter said that the problem of accounting for Tombola money wasn't a question of mistrust, only a question of principle. If the funds were to be spent in charity, they should appear in a separate charity account. The treasurer justified the way in which money for charity had been dealt with in the past by pointing out that this year's proceeds had been exceptional. It was not possible to give away all the money that had been collected in a particular fruitful year because it was necessary to provide for the lean years. The Swiss Churches and the Swiss Benevolent Society could only count on regular donations if this policy were maintained. Many impassioned interventions followed. Mr. Edgar Bonvin repeatedly insisted that the question of charity funds should be discussed under the item of "donations". Mr. G. A. Ronus expressed his surprise over this debate: we had accepted the way the money was being managed for so many years, why should we all of a sudden want to change everything? This rallied the opinions of many members and we closed this point of the debate (which had lasted for an awfully long time) by entrusting the Committee with the opening of a new charity account.

Mr. E. Tangemann, speaking on his and Mr. P. Gut's behalf, reported that the accounts had been audited and found well-kept and correct.

Mr. Bonvin then chaired the election of the Committee, of the Trustees, the Auditors and the Press Reporter. All the names on the ballot sheet were proposed, seconded and accepted. Before launching the election, Mr. Bonvin had a few harsh words over some of the reactions that had been voiced on the way charity funds were being used. Visibly angry, he lashed out at the members who had outspokenly mistrusted their Committee and said that this mistrust was particularly unjust when he, for one, had been "pulled to pieces" for having instituted regular and equitable contributions among the three Swiss churches.

The time had come to discuss the item "Donations". There was a good deal of semantic haggling because the Swiss Observer (which receives £31.10 from the City Swiss Club), the Christmas Tree, the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Federation of Swiss Societies were all listed under "subscription" whereas only the last item deserved this qualification. A member suggested that all of them save the Federation should be listed under "Donation". When another member claimed that the Swiss Observer didn't deserve such a title, your Editor pleaded that the paper, a non-profit publication which needed and much appreciated the support of Swiss societies, could well be put down under "donations" if the term "subscription" was inadequate. The Swiss Churches and

the Swiss Benevolent Societies are the only items referred to as "donations" in the account. It was finally decided to term as "annual contributions" the outgoings which were neither expenses, donations or subscriptions. It was furthermore decided to raise the donation to the Swiss Benevolent Society from £60 to £100 for its centenary year.

It was nighing ten o'clock when the most anticipated topic of the evening, the liquidation of the House Club Fund for the benefit of the Swiss Forum, was introduced by one of the Trustees, Mr. E. Tangemann. He said that the Committee had received the mandate from the Club to decide on whether or not to devote some £6,600, almost all the Fund accumulated by past members, to the Swiss Forum. The Committee had decided in favour of the project and wished to know the feelings of members on this decision.

Mr. Suess suggested that we should be put in the picture by Dr. Egli. This he did and said in essence what he has written for us in the above article.. He also pointed out that the money was not so much for the good of the Club, which could live quite happily without a Colony Room, but for the great purpose of spreading out Swiss Culture in Great Britain. Mr. Kuhn said that the decision to bequeath the Fund to the Swiss Forum had been a good one. The money had been raised by our forefathers and was not ours. It was only natural that we should use it for a purpose which both honoured their generosity and which would have met with their full approval. He was backed by another member who said that, as the money was originally intended for a hypothetical "Club House" which could never see the day, it was well to give it to the Forum and the Colony Room.

The question of the conditions was raised and some members wanted to know whether the money was really being given without any strings attached. Mr. Kuhn said that the Club's gesture towards a Swiss cause was a *gift* and should therefore remain free of conditions. Mr. L. Jobin said that, however mean he may sound to be, he stood by his position at the Committee, and regretted that all this money was being given away to something which was of little interest to the Club. Monsieur Iselin, who with Mr. Adams, represented the Embassy at the meeting, specified the necessary distinction between a far-away "Swiss Forum Foundation" based in Switzerland and an effective Council running the Forum. It was at this latter body that the Societies should be represented and it was through this body that their interests should be safeguarded.

The operational details of the Forum (supervision, vending machines, furniture, arrangements with Swiss Fair, etc.) were not discussed. But the Meeting broadly approved, perhaps with mixed and not very responsive feelings, the decision taken by the Com-

mittee to give away the Club's House Club Fund to the Forum. Dr. Egli will then be able to attend the founding meeting of the Swiss Forum Foundation in May with good news from Great Britain.

(PMB)

## Opening of the New Administrative Headquarters of the Zurich Insurance Co. in the U.K.

The Zurich Insurance company opened its new British administrative headquarters in Portsmouth on April 23rd. The gleaming 17-storey block was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth.

The company had decided to move out of London into the provinces in 1965 already. London has many well known disadvantages. The cost of office space is irrationally high and would have compromised the expansion plans of the company. Wages in London are also higher and it is harder to find adequate personnel. The greatest disadvantage of all is perhaps that London employees have to commute into the town for work and arrive in the morning already strained by a long train or underground journey. This not only costs time and money but has adverse effects on the performance of the staff.

All these disadvantages prompted the management of Zurich Insurance (U.K.) to look for some better location outside London. With the help of the official Office Location Bureau it surveyed some twenty provincial cities. The criteria for a suitable location were its social amenities, the cheapness of land or rent, the ease with which housing could be found for the displaced personnel, schooling facilities, the availability of both clerical staff and school leavers with "A" levels who could be trained to eventually assume executive positions and good connection with London.

Portsmouth met these requirements better than any other provincial city. The beautiful new administrative headquarters stand proudly above Portsmouth harbour, well in view of the "Victory". In fact, every office has a view of the famous flagship, as well as on Royal Navy cruisers and aircraft carriers, on the docks, St. Ann's church and the distant sea. The building will eventually house a staff of 500 and the Zurich Insurance company will be the most important employer of clerical staff in the town.

It was necessary to displace key personnel from London to Portsmouth