

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1971)

Heft: 1612

Rubrik: Swiss Benevolent Society

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

CENTENARY APPEAL FUND

At the close of the Centenary Appeal Fund, a total of £1,710. 17. 5 had been reached. This is a most satisfactory result and the Executive Committee would like to express their warm thanks to all contributors on their own behalf and on behalf of the beneficiaries of this fund.

The whole amount has been distributed to our Pensioners as a gesture to celebrate our Centenary Year. It has been an unexpected, and in a year of inflation, a very specially welcome additional support.

Thank you all for having made this possible through your generosity.

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

The Executive Committee

THE SWISS NATIONAL SERVICE AND THE OSWALD REPORT

The Oswald Report, I believe, has met with the general approval of the Swiss Press. Society is constantly changing in order to adapt itself to a new environment which alters with alarming speed. It follows that changes in many fields are not only inevitable but desirable, and if these changes are based on mutual understanding and respect, nothing serious is likely to go wrong.

To suggest that National Service is nothing more than instruction in the art of killing is surely naive. Whilst admitting that the most satisfactory way of achieving military objectives is to slaughter the enemy, this does not mean that the combatants desire their deaths as such, and no respectable and responsible government would tolerate indiscriminate slaughter. National Service at its best can foster both individual responsibility and a spirit of comradeship, and without doubt also does much to develop the element of discipline which is notoriously lacking today. Reverence for life can also be upheld by participation in peace keeping forces and assisting with emergency aid in disaster areas, a combat unit ready to fight and ready to succour. In my view, the philosophy of pacifism is as untenable as a philosophy of total aggression and we should beware of the danger of sweeping generalisations.

Traditional attitudes and old ways of thinking, however, tend to persist much longer, largely because they are identified with values which are very deep rooted and any attempts to modify them is likely to be described as "a lowering of statutes of long standing", or in such terms as "the moral crisis of our time". Unless social change is smooth, the persistence of traditional

against a new background may have dangerous results.

The social structure of modern society is much more complex due to the existence of class difference, regional groupings, and different racial, religious or political groups within the national boundaries. Thus, though all Swiss share some attitudes in common and which can be described as the national character, there are, nevertheless, divergences of public opinion, of language and established customs.

Many people are thrust in positions of leadership by reason of their wealth or social standing. Oddly enough, the capability of leadership is most frequently found in those who have had a good home, college or university education. But leadership in the Army, which of its very nature is authoritarian, is to select the best man for the job, which is within any one possessed with the ability to be a leader in a given situation, and able to make himself acceptable with confidence and respect to his subordinates whose individual responsibilities must still play a part.

The astounding military achievements of our ancestors for liberty won for the Swiss the regard and admiration of all Europe. Morgarten, Laupeu, Sempach, Naefels, Morat, Grandson, are the hallmarks of battles that built the unity of Switzerland.

History has proved the inborn love of the Swiss people for freedom, and one of the strongest bonds that unite all Swiss is the Army, and the venerable White Cross on a red field that inversion of colours makes the emblem of universal charity.

Pierre Savoie

RACLETTE PARTY IN KNUTSFORD

Members of the Swiss Club, Manchester, and their many friends met on the evening of Thursday, 11th February, 1971, at the Cotton Hotel, near Knutsford, for an eminently social function, exquisitely Swiss in character. It was the yearly "Raclette" always well attended and this year was no exception. More than 160 people were present, many of the young with the middle-aged and elderly giving a good show of themselves and fitting in very nicely as it should be on such an occasion.

People gradually gathered at the Hotel and on arrival were immediately enveloped by the warm friendly atmosphere, then took full advantage of the well-stocked bar, and were soon chatting with their friends and acquaintances—topics for discussion certainly not lacking, they were just there for the picking; the Rolls Royce affair, the postal strike, and other so-called com-

forts of every day life, and then, of course, there was the "Frauenstimmrecht" at home which according to some of our British friends has allowed Switzerland to enter the ring of "the highly civilised and sophisticated Nations". We also had time to look at the raclette arrangement consisting of five unities and to get a glimpse of the general table plan, securing (if in time) strategic advantages. Strangely enough most of us got what we wanted in spite of the last minute rush.

Whilst the raclette machines were warming up our President, Mr. Bernhard Simon, welcomed us with his special brand of warmth and wit, making us feel comfortable and happy. Amongst the people present we were delighted to see our Consul and Madame Born, some other prominent visitors, and veteran members and friends of our Club. Discreet background music, consisting mainly of laendlers and yodlers, gave a special touch to the evening.

Soon the long, patient, disciplined trek towards the food centres started and lasted for a good part of the evening. It was all a first class work of organisation, speed and good quality, with a variety of titbits accompanying the processed Oberwalliser Gomser Kaese. Everyone was full of admiration for the unceasing work of our "Racletteurs", led by our popular President and manned by some of the "top brass" in our Club. Later on in the evening they were duly singled out and thanked by Mr. Simon.

The excellent "Féchy" of the caves of our Vice-President Dr. H. R. Bolliger, contributed greatly to the success of the evening and this was unmistakeably expressed to him by everyone present. It was also explained to us

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