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16th April. Talk by Dr. Robert Schneebeli, Director of Extra-Mural Studies of the Canton of Zurich on "Observations and Reflections on Young Troublemakers in Universities and elsewhere".

28th May. Talk (in German) by Dr. Franz Birrer, First Secretary of Embassy in charge of cultural affairs, on "Ist die Schweiz überfremdet?"

25th June. Open Meeting and Discussion on "The Total Revision of the Federal Constitution".

24th September. Talk by Mr. Franz J. Fraefel, General Manager of Swissair U.K., on "23 Years with Swissair—a Look behind the Scenes", followed by a new film "One Minute of Swissair".

22nd October. Talk by Mr. Fritz Adams, Swiss Consul in London, on "A Swiss Abroad of the Second Generation: Vienna-Roumania-London", illustrated by a film.

19th November. Talk (in French) by Miss Andrée Weitzel, Chief of Women's Auxiliary Services, on "La Femme Suisse et la Défense Nationale".

17th December. Christmas Dinner at Glendower Hotel.

1971

14th January. Talk by the Rev. M. Dietler, Minister at the Swiss Church in London, on "Faith and Ferment", reflections on a Swiss group journey to the Soviet Union illustrated by slides and recordings.

No meeting could be arranged for February due to the postal strike in Great Britain.

On the whole, there has been good attendance at these meetings, and it is gratifying that membership has been maintained. We lost two members through death, Mr. Andrea and Mr. Graf. Ten members resigned, mainly due to ill health or departure for Switzerland. On the other hand, we have been fortunate in getting 15 new members, many of them young Swiss. It has now been established that membership of the London Group may be carried on in Switzerland, and it is also possible that one may be at the same time a member of the London Group and the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in Switzerland.

The Society have again enjoyed the active support of the Embassy, in particular of the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Keller. Their premature departure is much regretted, and members had an opportunity of saying goodbye to their Hon. President and his wife at the Christmas Dinner when the President expressed the Group's gratitude, as well as best wishes to

Monsieur and Madame Keller in their new and important task in Berne.

Another loss is that of the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Franz Bischof, whose transfer to the Swiss Embassy in Ghana deprived the Society of an efficient secretary. We are grateful for the services he rendered and wish him and Mrs. Bischof success in the new post. We have been fortunate in getting a successor in the person of Mr. M. Schneiter, a member of the Consular Section of the Embassy, who has kindly agreed to take on the job. The Council co-opted him at their last meeting on 25th January, the third meeting they held in the course of the year. His appointment is another proof of the ready support given us by the Embassy, and we are grateful also for the help given by two other members of the Embassy on the Council, Dr. F. Birrer and Consul Adams. At the A.G.M. the following members were elected or re-elected to the council:

Mr. L. Ackermann; Mr. F. Adams; Mr. L. S. R. Asch, Hon. Treasurer; Mr. R. Baumann, Vice-President; Mr. P. M. Béguin; Mr. V. Berti; Mr. P. Bessire; Dr. F. Birrer; Mr. F. Bischof, Hon. Secretary to end of 1970, replaced by Mr. M. Schneiter; Mr. J. W. Bonjour; Mr. H. W. Egli, Hon. Vice-President; Mr. H. Gruening; Mr. A. Kunz; Mrs. M. Meier, President; Mr. W. Renz; Mr. W. Schedler; Mr. J. Schmid; Mr. M. Schneebeli.

The officers were confirmed at the first meeting of the Council following the A.G.M.

Dr. Egli and the President represented the Society at discussions in connection with the Swiss Cultural Forum. As in previous years, Mrs. Meier attended the Assembly of the Swiss Abroad last August, partly representing the NSH and mainly as delegate for Great Britain South to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. Following the interesting discussions on the possible total revision of the Federal Constitution in June, the President made a detailed report, and as a result she was asked to take part in a round-table discussion at the Assembly at Zofingen. The close relationship with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in Berne was also expressed in the presence of Miss Weitzel in London in November, who, at very short notice, took the place of another member of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad who was prevented from coming through military service.

We appreciate this close co-operation of the ASO, as we value the support of the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" and of the Swiss National Tourist Office in London (help with films and slides). The fact that we have been able to enrol three new members from outside London, i.e. the Vice-Consul in Bournemouth, Mr. F. Schillig, and two prominent members of the Manchester Swiss Club, i.e. Mr. B. Simon (President) and Dr. H. R. Bol-



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Swiss Embassy,
77-81 Gloucester Place,
LONDON, W.1. (Tel. 723-0701).

Swiss Consulate,
Sunley Building, 18th Floor,
Piccadilly Plaza,
MANCHESTER (Tel. 236-2933).

liger (Delegate to the Commission of the Swiss Abroad for G.B. North) augurs well for the future, and we hope that we may count on closer co-operation with other Swiss societies in London.

The President wishes to put on record her appreciation of the help and support given her by the officers and Council members during her first 18 months in office.

The Council trust that the search for suitable lecturers may be fruitful in the coming year and that the Society with the active support of its members, may continue to play an important part in the life of the Swiss community in London.

*On behalf of the Council:
Mariann Mier (President)*

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY Report by the President

Dear Friends and Compatriots,

When we presented our 100th Annual Report last year, we did not expect, even in our wildest dreams, the generous response that you have given to our Centenary Appeal which brought in just over £1,170. In the late summer, we were in a position to make a first payment to our needy compatriots, which to them was as welcome as it was unexpected. The balance has now been distributed and your kindness has given much extra joy and relief. We need hardly tell you how grateful we are to you all for this magnificent gesture.

The year 1970 brought along all the familiar problems. As usual, the house at Conway Street and the Swiss

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Hostel needed a considerable amount of attention, time and resources.

The central part of our activities was, of course, the care of those compatriots who, for some reason or another needed either financial support or advice and sometimes both. In the course of the year we helped 336 people (111 men, 171 women and 54 children). We had 550 interviews of which 112 were visits to homes or hospitals. These figures, however, mean very little by themselves and we shall now try to give you some idea of the activities that we have been pursuing.

The distribution of financial help was, and presumably always will be, a very important aspect of our work, whether it be in the form of pensions or as casual help to tide someone over a difficult period.

The number of pensioners keeps going down. During the year, we helped 53 of them but the sums paid out to them have increased considerably. Among the elderly people we also discover a new problem requiring a different approach. Thanks to the English and Swiss Old Age Pensions and, in a number of cases retirement pensions from employers, we have a growing number of people who do not need financial help and manage reasonably well on their own until illness or general weakness forces them to consider giving up their home and independence and look for another solution. For various reasons, they do not really qualify for emergency accommodation from the local Council. The waiting lists for admission in the normal way are long and, more important, they do not want to go to one of these homes, whatever their merits. When they come to us, we endeavour to help them to find a place that suits both their wishes and their means. If they have any family or friends able to get about, this may simply mean one or two visits and putting them in touch with the right agencies. When they are completely alone, and many are, it can imply a lot of work, sometimes in conjunction with a local social worker. This activity is very time-consuming but we feel it to be an essential service that we must provide as the time of decision to give up one's independence is a period of great stress when lengthy discussions are required to weigh all the advantages and disadvantages of such a step. The number of good private homes at reasonable prices is not at all large and this adds considerably to the difficulties.

Young people have again come to us for help and we believe that enabling them to get back to Switzerland is particularly valuable in the case of the very young, sometimes only 16 years old who, left to themselves, might get into all sorts of difficulties.

Christmas brought us the usual bustle and we were happy to send out

over a hundred parcels benefitting 157 people. Mesdames Raulin and Kaluza spent many hours preparing them, and when it came to the packing and distribution, we were lucky to enlist the help of Mmes. Harding, Burri, Gisler and Harhalakis as well. Virtually all the parcels in the Greater London Area were again delivered by hand. Faithful as ever, the Frauenverein and the Réunion de Couture supplied us with a great number of beautiful garments and our thanks go to all those who have helped to make them. A number of Swiss firms have given us some of their products for inclusion in the parcels.

One important feature of the last year was the move of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls to our premises in Conway Street. Whilst each social worker has to deal with her own job, it has proved a valuable and mutually agreeable solution as a number of services can be rendered to each other in times of need.

The Committee met regularly twice a month to attend to all necessary business.

Just before the last Annual General Meeting, M. M. A. Rothlisberger informed us that for personal reasons, he could no longer carry on as Hon. Treasurer. We are more than grateful to him for all the hard work he has done for us, first as Asst. Hon. Treasurer from October 1931 and then as Hon. Treasurer since August 1937. We are happy that he is still on our Committee as Vice-President.

Our grateful thanks go to our former Honorary President, the previous Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur René Keller, for the interest and support given to our activities. We are sorry that he has been recalled to Switzerland so soon and we wish him and Madame Keller well in their new activities. Counsellor C. H. Bruggmann and Consul F. Adams alternately represented the Embassy at our Executive Meetings.

We want to thank all those who have helped us in our work in so many ways, the Swiss Federal and Cantonal Authorities, the Swiss Embassy in London, the Swiss Churches, the Swiss Societies, the "Swiss Observer", our Honorary Auditors, the many individual friends to all of whom we are very much indebted and, of course, the British Authorities for their kind hospitality and assistance.

Our Secretary, Mrs. A. R. Sharp has once more administered our Society with great skill in a difficult year and we wish to express our sincere appreciation for her devoted work.

On behalf of the
Executive Committee

X. Speckert
President.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

The article in your issue of 22nd January, 1971, entitled "The Glorious Days of the Swiss Rifle Association" stirred the Swiss blood in my veins—for even in early childhood, a rifle held a tremendous fascination for me. Well I recall my father, a "shot" of no mean repute, teaching me how to aim and fire—and this fascination is still with me today.

Mr. Adolf Schmid stresses "the need for new blood" . . . may I respectfully suggest a way to enlist a hitherto untapped source—i.e. "the Ladies". After all, we have been given the vote—so why should we not also be given the opportunity of showing our worth on a rifle range?—and gaining entrée to that Sanctum of Sanctums, the Swiss Rifle Club!

Start a Ladies Section, Mr. Schmid—I am already a member of the Surrey Club and once or twice joined my husband on "Swiss Day" at Bisley—but was only permitted to watch the gentlemen showing off their skills! I for one would be a regular attender if the ladies had their own section—for we too have the instincts of "Tell" and are well prepared to "shoot to defend our Country". . . Who was it that made the first warrior fall back, by flinging a pot of rice soup at his head, on the day the Genevise repelled the last attempts of the Dukes of Savoy to conquer the town? None other than Mère Royaume, a stout-hearted Swiss lady. So, Mr. Schmid, start recruiting the fair sex!

Ilde Boehringer.

THE OFFICIAL ANSWER

We raised these suggestions at the Annual General Meeting. Our President, Marcel Bucherer, explained why women were banned from the Swiss Rifle Association, despite the fact that many attempts had been made in the past to get them in.

The main reason for refusing admittance to the ladies at regular Swiss Rifle Association meetings is that they are not, in their overwhelming majority, experienced in shooting and in handling guns. To allow them to shoot at Bisley would inevitably require some devoted coaching from range officers or other responsible members of the Association.

This, in view of the already tight competition programme, would be impractical. The Association fights out one, and sometimes two, Cup competitions at every meeting and this programme would be perturbed if arrangements had to be made to provide for inexperienced female newcomers. Ladies, after all, do not have the luck of being part of a militia army that gets the chance and obligation of regular trials in marksmanship fitness!

For the very few ladies who may have shot before and who may be in-