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# NEWS FROM THE COLONY

## SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

### Annual General Meeting

The President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Dr. X. M. Speckert, welcomed some 30 officers and members to the 1971 Annual General Meeting which took place at Swiss House on 19th April. The Society's Hon. President, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Weitnauer, was present, as were the two regular members representing the Embassy at the bi-monthly committee meetings, Dr. C. H. Bruggman and Consul F. Adams. This was not only a sign of close co-operation, said the President, but also an indication that the Embassy was the SBS's "best customer". They sent the Society most cases and also the largest single financial contribution in the annual subsidy from the Confederation.

The Ambassador stressed how happy he was to be again amongst the Swiss in London in general and the Swiss Benevolent Society in particular. Not only was he in love with London, but to his generation Great Britain still meant greatness and importance, the same way the young Swiss of today looked up to America. He thought the Swiss Colony in London was so well organised and the Benevolent Society so well run that neither of them looked like needing his help. But he and the Embassy would at all times be happy to give assistance. He felt his compa-

riots in Great Britain were amongst the most faithful Swiss in the world.

Before Dr. Speckert put the Annual Report to the meeting (*see last issue of the S.O.*) he expressed thanks to

**Mr. Maurice A. Rothlisberger** on his retirement as Hon. Treasurer after 40 years of devoted work. This may be the moment to recall the many services this indefatigable septuagenarian has rendered to the Colony.

Born in London, but brought up in the Canton de Vaud, he became a banker. After a short stay in London and some time in Greece, he settled in G.B. in the service of the Ionian Bank. He was Accountant, Assistant Manager and Manager in succession, and retired at the end of September 1965.

Retirement is hardly the right term, for he is still most active in several Swiss societies, and whilst he has resigned as Hon. Treasurer of the S.B.S., he is still a Vice-President to which office he was elected in 1961. He will go on giving his services on the committee.

The President also thanked Mrs. A. R. Sharp, the Secretary, for her efficient work. He said that due to the close co-operation with the Swiss Welfare Office which was now housed at 31 Conway Street, and to Mr. J. Zimmermann's (former Secretary) occasional assistance, the Society was now

able to carry on its work without an assistant secretary.

The new Hon. Treasurer, Mr. L. S. R. Asch, presented the accounts. For the first time, they showed comparative figures for the previous year. On the whole, it must be said that most receipts have gone down, and most payments have increased. There is a deficit of £2,746 as compared to a loss of £2,608 in 1969 (which included a large sum of £1,482 spent on the installation of central heating at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, the building of which is owned by the Society).

The accounts were accepted with thanks to the Hon. Treasurer and the two Hon. Auditors.

The elections were dealt with expeditiously in spite of a change at the helm. The President, Dr. Speckert, announced his retirement after six years in the chair. He said that he had enjoyed his term of office and in spite of moving to Gloucestershire shortly, he would like to remain a member of the Committee; to work in the interest of those less fortunate than oneself, had not only a humbling, but also a rewarding effect. He praised the excellent teamwork and thanked his fellow committee members as well as Mrs. Sharp and Mr. Zimmermann for their ever willing co-operation.

The temporary Chairman, Dr. Bruggman, expressed thanks to Dr. Speckert for his devoted work and the

CITY SWISS CLUB

## "Informal Dinner Dance"

**FRIDAY, 25th JUNE, 1971**  
**at The Thatched Barn,**  
**Barnet By-Pass, Herts.**

COCKTAILS AT 7.30 p.m.

DINNER AT 8 p.m.

DANCING UNTIL 1 a.m.

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efficiency with which he had carried out his duties. He also added the Embassy's thanks.

The meeting then elected Mr. Mario Schneebeli as the new President. He affirmed his intention to serve the Society to the best of his ability and in the interest of his countrymen in want.

(MM)

### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The 82nd Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, 7th April, with Mr. A. Jaccard presiding.

Dealing with the accounts for the past year, as circulated, the Chairman stated that the results for the period under review could be considered satisfactory despite the rising overheads, which had necessitated a further increase in the school fees.

In the introductory remarks of his report on the Society's activities during 1970, Mr. Jaccard dwelt at some length on the economic problems besetting this country, with whom our members had such close ties, both business and private.

On the whole, the SMS had again fared well and the fall in the membership, for the time being, at least, was contained. The general arrangements for meetings, lectures, socials, etc., followed the usual pattern, and the main functions, in particular, were again well supported.

Reporting on the scholastic activities, the Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. F. O. Hausermann, pointed to the shortage of accommodation at Swiss House due to the continuously growing number of applications for admission which made it advisable nowadays to enrol at least six months prior to entry in order to have a reasonable chance of securing a place.

A total of 670 students had started their studies at the College during 1970, the average attendance being 272, compared with 661 and 268 in the preceding year.

The high standard required for obtaining the diploma of the College, which was widely recognised by employers in Switzerland, had been fully maintained. Out of 413 candidates who sat for this examination last year, 385 or 93% were successful.

As in the past, the Society had continued to provide evening tuition for our young compatriots in temporary employment here. A total of 38 courses was held, with 716 enrolments and an average attendance of 19 students per class. The syllabus included English language, grammar, translation, commercial correspondence and shorthand, as well as preparatory courses for the examinations of Cambridge University for the Lower Certificate and the Certificate of Proficiency in English. The number of candidates entered for these examinations by the College for both

day and evening classes totalled 275 and 59 respectively. The results were on the whole very satisfactory, and it was noteworthy that in the CPE examinations, one candidate had obtained a first class pass, a rare distinction, and 14 candidates were awarded a second class, nine of them in Division I.

The language laboratory, installed at the end of 1968, was proving a valuable acquisition in raising the standard of the spoken language and giving the students a greater opportunity of individual, supervised work.

The traditional Thursday afternoon lectures by teachers of the College and outside lecturers, notably Swissair, British Transport and the British Steel Corporation, on a wide variety of subjects, again played a prominent part in the curriculum. Many of these were illustrated with sound films and slide shows, for which full use was made of the Society's projectors.

Full day excursions to places of cultural, historic and general interest under the guidance of teachers, as well as class visits to commercial undertakings, the Stock Exchange, the General Post Office, etc., proved as popular as ever. The customary Saturday outings to places in and around London, including rambles into the countryside, continued to be a regular feature of a varied programme.

A certain amount of relaxation was provided in each term at social evenings with musical items, film shows and play acting, in which both students and teachers had taken part. Students' dances and theatre parties to West End shows and plays were generally well supported.

The College football team had a very successful season during 1969/70 and finished third in the Intermediate League and as runners-up in the Intermediate Cup of the West End (London) AFA. In the annual Lints-Smith Cup match versus The Times, the College lost a hard-fought game by 2 goals to 3 after extra time (the Cup has since been regained by 3-0 in a recent match).

Regular bookings of tennis courts were again made at nearby Regent's Park, where a larger number of students made full use of the facilities offered there throughout the summer and winter seasons.

The College magazine, "The SMS Student", was again published twice every term and, apart from general College news, contained many interesting reports and articles contributed by students and teachers on a great variety of topics. The magazine was, as in the past, edited by Dr. G. Tier, whose personal contributions were as interesting as ever and to whom thanks were expressed for maintaining the high standard of this publication.

In conjunction with the Swiss Commercial Employment Service (S.K.S.), the Society continued to assist students in finding suitable employ-

ment here on completion of their course of studies. Due to the increase in the Selective Employment Tax and other economic factors, the number of vacancies notified by employers was considerably lower than in previous years. It was nevertheless gratifying to record that 37 applicants had obtained clerical employment with the help of the SMS in the course of last year. Mr. S. Baumgartner, Manager of the SKS, had visited the College during the summer and autumn terms and given students professional advice regarding their future careers. On his second visit, he was accompanied by Dr. F. Hess, President of the Advisory Committee of the SKS in Zurich.

Finally, Mr. Hausermann stated that the College were fortunate in having a staff of 16 well qualified and experienced teachers, both from a language and commercial point of view. The Committee had at all times endeavoured to attract and maintain a first-class staff in order to keep abreast of other similar schools.

Concluding the Council's report, the Chairman thanked the Swiss Ambassador and his staff for their support throughout the year. Likewise he expressed the Society's appreciation of the financial assistance received from B.I.G.A. in Berne, as well as from private firms and individual donors. He also gratefully acknowledged the ever-ready and invaluable help and co-operation of the officials at the Central Secretariat of the S.K.V. and the constant assistance of the Manager of the Swiss Commercial Employment Service in Zurich.

*Elections:* Mr. O. Grob, a former President and Hon. Member of the London Section, was appointed temporary Chairman to conduct the elections. He thanked all who had contributed to another successful year of activities, and complimented the Chairman and President, Mr. A. Jaccard, for the efficient manner in which he had again conducted the Society's affairs, and the Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. F. O. Hausermann, on another successful year at the College.

The Chairman, having stated his willingness to serve for another term of office, was re-elected with acclamation. All the remaining members of the Council and the Committees having agreed to continue in office and there being no further nominations, they were fully declared duly elected as follows:—

*Council:* Chairman: Mr. A. Jaccard; Trustees: Messrs. R. Chappuis, O. Grob, H. Knoll, F. G. Sommer; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, F. Burri, J. F. Carlen, F. O. Hausermann, E. M. Huber, J. E. Schneider, R. Senn, F. Streit.

*General Purposes & House Committee:* President: Mr. A. Jaccard; Vice-President: Mr. F. O. Hausermann; Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. E. Schneider; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R.