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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

NOTICE

In order to have this issue out on time before Christmas, we have been compelled to "skip" the issue scheduled for Friday, 24th November. The expiry of all subscriptions due on or after that date will naturally be postponed by one issue. The Christmas break will allow us to resume punctual deliveries of the Swiss Observer.

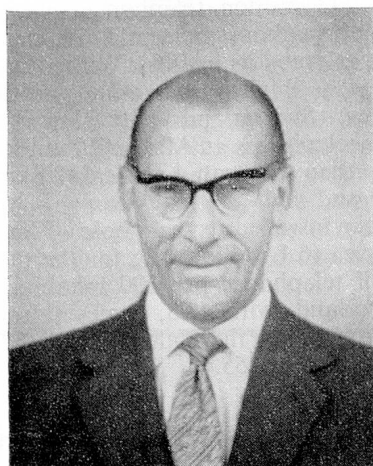
We should like to apologise to readers for the delays incurred during the past 18 months and urge them to continue their support to our Colony Paper by renewing their subscriptions once they have expired. Over two hundred subscriptions are presently overdue. We shall be sending reminders to the readers concerned in our January issues. Needless to say, gift subscriptions and donations, however small, are always appreciated.

Next 26th January will be a landmark in the history of the "Swiss Observer". We shall be sending out to all the Swiss of this country a special issue prepared in conjunction with the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad. These special issues will be repeated four times a year. As they will be distributed to over 8,000 families, they will serve as an ideal medium for small adverts and we welcome any enquiries.—Editor.

"ADIEU" TO OUR OLDEST SOCIETY

Nineteen years ago the Société de Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres proudly celebrated its 250th anniversary. Today it is no more. On the 31st December, 1971 it ceased to function officially and on 17th November, 1972 its surviving members met once more for an "Adieu" Dinner at Bertorelli's Restaurant in Charlotte Street, the many details of the society's dissolution having been settled in the meantime.

It was at once a melancholy and yet a spontaneously friendly and happy gathering of old friends no longer in need of this ancient organisation of mutual self-help. Its purpose and task of providing its members in sickness with a modest weekly benefit having been superseded by the more richly endowed National Insurance scheme of our host country in 1948, the raison d'être of the Secours Mutuels vanished. Though it remained in existence another 23 years it did so mainly on sentimental and social grounds and its demise became inevitable as old members passed out without being replaced from the younger generation. Its very mixed membership of nearly 200 in the previous cen-



Mr. Adolf Gandon the last President of the Société des Secours Mutuels

tury had already shrunk to 100 before the last war and dwindled to under 40 when the dissolution had to be decided on. Yet it can be truly said that this worthy organisation has nobly fulfilled its task and not folded up before the continuance of the far superior aid of the state-run social insurance was assured.

Thus the remaining members had every reason to look back with pride on the Society's long existence and celebrate its fully completed work at this farewell dinner as a joyous occasion. Nearly 30 of them were present, while the Embassy was represented by Mr. Fernand Robert, Vice-Consul, and the Colony by Dr. H. W. Egli, as President of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom. Mr. A. L. Gandon, President of the Société Secours Mutuels these last 25 years, chaired this last function with his customary distinction.

Amongst the members, no fewer than three generations of the Delaloye family were present: Mr. Fernand Delaloye, so well known in our Colony as former Manager of the Trocadero, who never missed a meeting of the Secours Mutuels in 50 years and never claimed a single benefit, his sons Marcel (Vice-President), and Denis and his grandson Peter Delaloye. The oldest member—since 1906—Mr. H. J. Gugerly, was present in the pink of health and high spirits.

After an excellent dinner, preceded by a cocktail reception, Kirsch was served—traditionally and for the last time—from the belly of a china cow, in the Society's possession for many years. All those present also received as a memento one of the old copper tokens marked "6 pence", the so-called "marrone", with which attendance at meetings used to be rewarded for buying a pint of beer and a sandwich at the bar of the Swiss Club Schweizerbund that, alas, also

closed down many years ago owing to insufficient support from the Colony.

The speeches were short and to the point. The Chairman welcomed his fellow members and guests, thanking them for their loyal support and the officers, E. A. Nussle, secretary and H. Humbel, treasurer, for their devoted co-operation. Vice-Consul Robert conveyed the Ambassador's compliments and high appreciation of the Society's important work and achievements, which sentiments were warmly echoed by Dr. Egli, praising the members' untiring patriotic attachment though many of them were born here.

Conscious of their interest to Switzerland the Society has presented its records and documents to the Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève, while its relics are entrusted to the newly founded Musée des Suisses à l'étranger at Coppet. These comprise an ancient flag presented to the Swiss of London by King George II in 1746 for having offered to provide a battalion of 500 against the Catholic rebels of the north, a newer flag given to the Society on its 200th anniversary by the ladies of the Colony, an ivory gavel and the said cow of china-clay. E.

1st AUGUST COMMITTEE

The 1st August Committee held a General Meeting on Monday, 20th November, to discuss the ways of improving the attendance at yearly National Day celebrations. The last such event, which took place as usual at Wimbledon, attracted a very poor attendance of Swiss residents and resulted in a deficit of over £140. This loss would in fact have been much larger had it not been for the welcome donations of Swiss companies and an increase in the price of entrance tickets. The total expense of holding the traditional 1st August fête in the Wimbledon Town Hall amounts to £544. This year's deficit led to a serious drop in reserves and could not, by any means, be repeated.

Mr. Virgil Berti, President of the 1st August Committee, thus invited not only its members, but also the Presidents of the London Swiss societies to reflect on the future of this annual event. Having surveyed the accounts, Mr. Berti left open the question of the Celebration's continuance. He noted that less than half the residents invited to the Reception had turned up and recalled that the 1st August Celebration was increasingly being attended by young people. Should the Colony organise a costly function, bring artists from Switzerland, stage a patriotic ceremony with the presence of the Ambassador for the sole benefit of young

people and au pair girls? In that case, Mr. Berti suggested that one could entirely do away with the patriotic and ceremonial half of the evening and devote it entirely to band music and dancing. This would naturally not be acceptable to residents, who would no longer attend. It was agreed that a compromise had to be found between the wishes of the young (mainly dancing) and of the elder residents (presumably to take part in a specifically Swiss gathering). One member suggested that the 1st August Celebration be abandoned in favour of a reception for the Colony in the Embassy. However, a member of the Embassy present said that this was quite unfeasible. Various possibilities, such as changing the venue and doing away with the reading of the Pact were suggested as a means of attracting more people, but it was eventually decided not to change venues and keep to the traditional programme. Whether or not the Federal Pact will be read in one of the national languages will be decided at a future 1st August Committee meeting. A film will probably be included in next year's programme.

The conclusion of the meeting was that it was premature to talk of abandoning the way our National Day has been celebrated in London for so many years. This traditional event, despite this year's disappointing attendance, should be given another chance by getting more and better publicity. Thus the 1st August 1973 Celebration in Wimbledon will be backed by energetic advertising, carried out not only by the Swiss Observer and the posters at the Swiss Centre and the Swiss Mercantile Society, but also by the Swiss societies towards their members. The 1st August Committee will see what kind of response will be obtained from more propaganda. It is essential to have more entries, as this is the source of nearly half the income. The Committee cannot afford to make such a heavy loss next year.

(PMB)

CITY SWISS CLUB ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

An exceptionally successful evening: such is the consensus of those who attended the 1972 City Swiss Club Dinner and Ball. About 210 persons were present. As usual, this turnout was largely composed of guests. The attendance was slightly smaller than last year and this was due to the absence of one or two prominent and regular members of the club who usually reserve whole tables.

Efforts had been made to concentrate on enjoyment and reduce the formality always associated with such functions to a minimum. Thus Mr. Walter Bion, the President, made a short welcome address to the gathering and our Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, delivered a speech mingling

humour with politics. Dr. Frank Ellis, a specialist who had spoken to the City Swiss Club last year on "spare parts surgery" was invited to speak on behalf of the guests. This he did in a most entertaining way.

Another innovation was the recourse to a new and younger band as a substitute to the Arthur Salisbury Band, the standing Dorchester Hotel Orchestra, which had performed at this annual function for many years. Unlike previous functions, no entertainer was invited and this helped to keep costs down. Tickets, in fact, remained at the same level as last year. The band had a vocalist which dispensed with the need for a solo vocalist anyway.

The food was, by general agreement, excellent. The attendance greatly appreciated the shortness of the speeches and the lively but still conventional tempo of the orchestra. As usual, a Tombola was organised with three days for two in a five-star hotel in Amsterdam as first prize. It was won by Mr. Armin Loesch, who had never come to the Annual Dinner and Dance before. The money raised was equivalent to the value of the prizes. Net proceeds amounted to just under £500 and will be entirely given to the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Churches of London. This will make the forthcoming AGM of the club somewhat less tumultuous . . .

(PMB)

COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Many of our compatriots and friends have been kind enough in the past to support our Christmas Draw for the benefit of our Chaplain and the welfare of our young Swiss.

On account of the increased cost of postage, the printing of the Draw tickets and the decrease in the sale of these, we have come to the conclusion that the net profit of a Draw conducted through the postal service does not warrant the outlay and the enormous amount of time involved in running a Christmas Draw.

Our Chaplain, the Rev. Paul Bossard, in close co-operation with the Ministers of the Swiss Protestant Church has built up a new centre for the young Swiss at the John Southworth Community and Youth Centre at 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HA.

Up till now we have had an average attendance of 150 to 250 people every Sunday, many come to Sunday Mass, which is celebrated in the dance hall. The Protestants have their service in the Conference Room. Afterwards a simple supper is served in the Tea Room, a bar dispenses drinks, even Swiss beer can be obtained. A very modern and well equipped disco-

theque provides dance music. In the Conference Room there are discussions, talks and bible studies, so everybody can find something of interest.

As we shall miss the income derived in the past from our Christmas Draw (last year £240, the year before £333) we are more than ever dependent on the goodwill of our friends.

May I ask you kindly to consider helping our cause by sending a donation to me at 60 Seafeld Road, London N11 1AS. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Oscar Grob, Chairman.

Solidarity Fund

The Solidarity Fund of the Swiss Abroad has changed premises and has moved from the Schosshaldenstrasse to the Gutenbergstrasse in Berne. Their new address is at Gutenbergstrasse 6, 3011 Berne. Telephone: 031 25 04 94.

Swiss Credit Bank

The Swiss Credit Bank in London has a new manager. Mr. Henry Griffith Fry has been appointed manager of the Austin Friars new premises. Mr. George I. Williamson remains International Representative for the bank and London adviser to the General Management.

The President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in London

On Thursday, 16th November, the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique held their Open Meeting at the Swiss Embassy. Nearly 100 members and friends came to listen to Councillor of States Dr. Louis Guisan. In view of the importance of the speaker, the NSH had again invited other Swiss societies in London, and quite a number of presidents, officers and members accepted the invitation.

The President, Mrs. Mariann Meier, welcomed the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, and introduced the speaker. Dr. Guisan gave a most interesting address in excellent English on "the activities of a Swiss Member of Parliament". He delivered his talk in three parts, the work of Parliament as such, how to become an M.P. and what specific work and duties fall to a National Councillor and to a Councillor of States.

The talk was followed by questions which went on for 1½ hours. But the standard was very high indeed, and the whole evening was one of great interest and lively spirit.

The Nouvelle Société Helvétique was glad to have an opportunity of thanking the President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, and Dr.