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want to vote for things for which we don't pay and also, it would be awful to have party politics introduced in our Colony".

Mrs. Meier concluded: "*Hand in hand with rights go duties, and first and foremost lies that of furthering the image of Switzerland abroad by personal deed and behaviour. Individually it is up to each one of us. Collectively, we, the London Group of the NSH try to do our share with your help*".

It was Dr. Weitnauer's duty to say a few words after this lofty exhortation. On a much lighter note, he rejoiced at having just relished something so close to his favourite dessert: blueberry crumble. He added that the NSH had unknowingly served him what Swiss business intelligence had indexed as his favourite vegetable: Green Peas. Dr. Weitnauer explained that in his negotiating days, a large watch firm, which kept files on all the personalities it dealt with, had one on himself stating: "*Aime les petits pois*". Our Ambassador ended his address by making a brief reference to the problems facing Switzerland and the vital role which the Nouvelle Société Helvétique had and would play in solving them.

Dr. Bolliger, who had come from Manchester to be with us, replied for the guests. He referred to the work of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad and the progress achieved towards federal social security schemes for the

Swiss Abroad in need. But his main theme was the question of political rights to expatriate Swiss. Dr. Bolliger fervently enjoined us to take a stand *against* the idea of partaking in the homeland's political life. Despite the pressures of the Swiss community in France for political rights, this was both wrong and impractical. The speaker strongly felt the injustice inherent in the immensely varying distances which Swiss abroad had to travel to return home. Speaking both as a Swiss and as a Swiss abroad, Dr. Bolliger found it intolerable that Swiss from neighbouring France, Italy and Germany should vote on issues with which they were not financially and practically concerned.

Dr. Bolliger's address closed the official part of the evening. A few members stayed on for drinks, but most set about finding the exit of the Prince of Wales Hotel through a maze of carpeted corridors.

(PMB)

#### CITY SWISS CLUB AGM

The City Swiss Club 1972 AGM kept up its reputation of liveliness and controversy. Attended by about thirty members, it took place at the Stanhope Room of the Dorchester, a distinctly familiar venue, on 25th April. Members arrived at 6.30 for 7 p.m. and enjoyed drinks, before sitting down to a Swiss dinner.

Shortly after toasting to the Queen and to Switzerland, the President, Mr. Walter Bion, rose and opened the proceedings of the evening. Mr. L. F. Ackermann, the Secretary read the minutes of the February meeting, during which 28 members had turned up to listen to a Scotland Yard expert speak on counterfeit stamps, and those of the 1971 AGM. Mr. Bion then proceeded with summing up the year's activities. These were as follows: Card Evening (May 1971), Summer Ball (June), Card Evening (September), After Dinner speaker (October), Annual Ball (November), Christmas Dinner (December), Card Evening (January 1972), After Dinner speaker (February) and Family Evening (March).

Mr. Bion said that membership stood at 214 and that attendance had in the main been kept up. The Club had lost some members through death during the past year. These were: Mr. Ch. Inglin, Mr. F. Streit, Mr. O. Bruhlard, Mr. A. Corbat and Mr. O. Béguin. The one comment on the President's report was raised by Dr. C. Iselin, who was deputising for the Ambassador. He asked whether it would not be a good idea for the City Swiss Club to devote some of its monthly meetings to the visit of Swiss factories or businesses in Great Britain. Although a member pointed out that there was a time factor militating against such a suggestion, and that offices couldn't be expected to stay

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open so that City Swiss Club peers could see them at work, the President asked the Secretary to make note of this suggestion.

Mr. H. Keller, the Treasurer, very rapidly ran through the Accounts. They showed a total income of £879.78 (membership fees, interest and dividends and Summer Dance profit) and an excess over expenditure of £142.80. The Charity Fund, instituted two years ago, had received £562.60 in proceeds from the Tombola of the Annual Dinner and Ball. An original item of the Ordinary Income and Expenditure Account was the item headed "purchase of ashtrays" for which a sum of £56.34 had been set. The Treasurer explained that these were "City Swiss Club" Ashtrays, bearing its emblem and date of foundation, which were to be sold to willing members. Many were indeed bought after the official part of the evening and the sale was expected to make a handsome profit.

The next three items on the Agenda, the Auditor's Report, Subscriptions for 1972-73 and the election of the Committee were speedily handled. Subscriptions remain unchanged. The Committee was re-elected by acclamation. The only change noted was Mr. Brunner's succession to Mr. P. Gut as one of the two Auditors.

The question of Donations, which was the next item on the Agenda, took the best part of the evening. The point at issue was the same as at the two previous AGM's, namely, whether or not to allocate the totality of Tombola proceeds to the four Swiss charitable organisations of London: The Swiss Benevolent Society and the three Churches. The Committee had proposed a £50 increase in donations to each of the Churches, and a £25 increase to the Swiss Benevolent Society, bringing contributions to each of them at £100. This, as Mr. L. Chappuis immediately pointed out, would leave £262.60 of excess income on the Charity Fund. What was going to be done with this money? Why should it be hoarded? Mr. Chappuis, who in previous years had already proved himself the champion of unstinting

attribution of Tombola proceeds to Charity, demanded an answer.

The President recalled that one had to provide for the lean years and quoted Father Bosshard's statement of last year, when he said that the Churches were grateful for the present level of City Swiss Club donations and would rather ask for more when a serious reason arose. Mr. Brunner suggested that donations should be raised to £125, thereby exhausting most of the excess income. Mr. P. Gut thereupon intervened with the suggestion that the Tombola's decreased profits (from £691.71 in 1971) were due to the shabbiness of the prizes, the intolerable boredom of the speeches, the expense of Tombola tickets, the sickening croon of the entertainers, the antiquity of the band and the indifference of the Menu at the Annual Dinner and Ball.

Mr. Gut intimated that if the City Swiss Club hoped to raise more with its Tombolas, it had better improve the standard of its Annual Dinner and Ball. *"Every year I ask my wife, shall we go to the City Swiss Club Annual Dance this year? I finally go there, invite several guests and spend a tremendous amount of money. But I'm afraid that it's not money well spent"*.

We were then to witness a series of heartfelt Swiss exchanges. Mr. Eddie Tobler, Member of the Committee and chief organiser of the Dinner Dance, somewhat peeved at the reference to the skimpiness of the prizes, cried out that if members were not satisfied with the prizes they won at the Tombola, they could jolly well contribute towards acquiring them. It was always the same people who paid for the prizes. Mr. Tobler said that he was "insulted" every year by people complaining that they hadn't won a Tombola prize. Mr. Gut jumped up from his chair with a flushed face and shouted "Well then, take £50!", and promptly signed a cheque for the said amount, which was joyously carried by Mr. F. Fraefel to the Treasurer before a startled audience.

Mr. Chappuis reverted to the subject by suggesting that all the proceeds of the Tombola should be given to

charity since the reserves, currently at nearly £1,200, were sufficient to allay the President's worst fears about the Club lacking emergency funds. Mr. Chappuis therefore suggested that reserves should be frozen at £1,000 and every income bringing the fund above that level spent on Swiss charity.

There ensued lengthy palavers, proposals and counter-proposals. The Committee's original suggestion and those of Mr. Chappuis and Mr. Brunner were put to the vote, but there was disagreement on the outcome. The suggestion which gathered the most "in favour" show of hands, actually nearly produced the most "no" votes. One member questioned whether the City Swiss Club shouldn't have a closer look at the way its donations were being used, whereupon the members representing the Swiss Catholics, the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Consistoire of the Protestant Churches spontaneously rose, telling the attendance that they had nothing to hide and that their expenses were published in the Annual Accounts, copies of which were regularly sent to the City Swiss Club.

Eventually, after much talking, the AGM resolved to give £140 to each of the charities, which more than used up the 1971 Tombola proceeds and left over £1,000 reserves in the Charity Account.

Mr. Bion, who was awarded a vote of thanks for the "admirable way" in which he had handled this verbal turmoil, reminded members of two forthcoming events, the Card Evening on 23rd May and the Summer Ball on 16th June (tentative date) at the Thatched Barn, north of London.

The Stanhope Room was deserted at about 10 p.m.

## THE 50th ASSEMBLY OF SWISS ABROAD

*The programme of the 50th Assembly of Swiss Abroad has been published and is available from the Official Tourist Office, Bundesgasse 20, 3011 Berne. The events that have*

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