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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS ARCHITECTS VISIT BRITAIN

A reception was held at the Embassy on 9th May to welcome a team of Swiss architects on a study tour of Great Britain. All of them are members of the Federation of Independent Swiss Architects, and were in the middle of a ten day visit of the architectural sites of these islands. The same afternoon, they had visited the Pimlico Comprehensive School and a model of town planning at Thamesmead. The next day they were due to travel to Scotland, which has a few notable examples of model cities. Their reputation has long since reached Switzerland. Welwyn Garden City also figured in their programme.

Swiss architects have a considerable respect for the achievements of their British colleagues. One member of the study tour said they wouldn't be in London if this were not the case. In general, Swiss architects admire British town planning, a field which was pioneered in this country. The visiting team was impressed by what it saw at Thamesmead, but pointed out that similar schemes could not be realised in Switzerland in view of the completely different way new estates are financed there. In England, a new town will be paid for by a local authority, such as the GLC. In Switzerland, all people live in blocks of flats financed by private capital, even though there is a tendency (and plenty of pressure) towards state participation in cheap housing.

This respect is amply reciprocated by the British. A bearded gentleman at the reception who happened to be the President of the British Architects Association, expressed the greatest admiration for Swiss town planning realisations. He noted that the Swiss, having started later in this field, were in a position to draw on British experience. He had been greatly impressed by the new estates springing up on the outskirts of Berne. Many British architects present were also moved by the quality of finish of the new Embassy.

Our Ambassador, Dr. A. Weitnauer, interrupted the bustle of conversation and invited the attendance to a guided tour of the Embassy. The visit began with the Hall on the ground floor and a look at the model of the Embassy displayed there. A good fifty curious guests then moved on to the ultra-modern Chancery of the Consular wing of the Embassy-residence complex and then climbed five flights of stairs to admire the Ambassador's office and his truly gigantic old wooden desk, which is at least as large as a

billiard table. We moved to the roof of the building and saw the gleaming refectory enjoyed by Embassy staff.

Back on the ground floor, guests ended their tour by admiring the exquisitely furnished "Morning Room". It was unfortunately not possible to visit the Ambassador's apartment, known to be the most tastefully furnished part of the building. The Ambassador, whose personal responsibility in decorating the apartment will benefit generations of diplomats to come, said that it was too small to be visited by such a large gathering.

(PMB)

THE SCHWEIZERBUND

The Schweizerbund met for its AGM at the headquarters of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, in Moorgate, on Friday, 12th May. A handful of members were present for the proceedings, but many more turned up at the succeeding dinner.

With Mr. Virgil Berti in the Chair, the normal items of every AGM were carried out straightforwardly. Mr. F. Adams, who represented the Embassy, was invited to conduct the re-election of the Committee as President pro tem. Demonstrating outstanding qualities of efficiency, our Consul took exactly 38 seconds to perform this task. The Committee was re-elected en bloc by acclamation.

Dr. Berti raised the question of the club's future. He asked whether the time might not have come to reconsider the purpose of the Schweizerbund. We should ask each other, he added, whether we really needed to meet each other within the framework of a society registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Could we not meet in other Swiss functions?

I ought to point out that the President did not imply that the club should disappear. He merely wanted to probe the feelings of the meeting on the club's very existence, which, he said, had altered considerably since the disappearance of the Swiss Club in Charlotte Street. He also mentioned the rising cost of functions (remembering that the first club dinner outside the Swiss Club, 12 years ago, had cost only 12/6, as compared to over £2 for ordinary dinners today) and the non-realisation of the Swiss Forum. All these things had tended to weaken the strength of Swiss Colony life and, in particular, the activities of the Schweizerbund.

Mr. Adams and other members pointed out that, were it not for the framework of an organised society, the members of the Schweizerbund would

not come to meet at twice-yearly dinners. The Swiss Club was necessary to keep the functions and the sing-songs going, even if that meant supplying published accounts in accordance with the Friendly Societies Act.

Although the AGM touched on the possibility of co-operation with the other Swiss societies, it was generally felt that any sharing of activities went against the individuality and purpose of each organisation. The best way for securing increased attendance to various important functions (e.g. not have 25 people listening to a speaker who had come specially from Switzerland) was to inform members of other societies of one's own activities. It was generally felt that the "purpose" of the Schweizerbund was essentially social and that there was no reason at present to consider the dissolution of the club.

The AGM was followed by a reception with a good 30-35 people. Dinner was served in a vast hall with frescos and arches and topped by a cupola. It was excellent in quality and quantity. Mr. F. Delaloye offered the Toast to the Ladies. After a long dinner with excellent and cheap wine on offer, the President rose to say a few words of welcome, with particular reference to the members of the Embassy and the Consulate who were present. Consul Adams said a few words concluded by a good joke. The rest of the evening was devoted to conversation and singing.

Swiss Gastronomic Fortnight

Frederick's Restaurant, Camden Passage, London, N.1, opened their "Swiss Fortnight" on 10th May by inviting a small gathering from the Embassy, the Swiss National Tourist Office and the Press to an inaugural dinner.

The menu started, naturally enough, with *Bündnerplatte*. Other possibilities offered in the first course included *Berner Goldhaefeli mit Gnagi* and *Raclette Valaisanne*. The main course included *Bratwurst Rosti*, *Zueri-Geschnaetzlets* and *Fillet the Porc Chateau Chillon*. Those who chose fish could have Rainbow Trout fried in butter with lemon and parsley. To finish with, there were assorted ices, *Gugelhupf Glace* and *Creme Caramel*. There was also the choice of a Banana Split, although this doesn't appear to be a particularly Swiss dessert. Admittedly, a famous chain of restaurants, represented at the Swiss Centre, are probably the European leaders in the confection of Banana Splits. Frederick's also offered a marvellous assort-