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SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The AGM of the Swiss Club Manchester was held on 3rd March, 1977. The President opened the well attended proceedings after an excellent buffet, enjoyed by all.

Dr. A. V. Lang, the President, commenced his address with a short review of the Club activities during the past year, and expressed his satisfaction with the loyalty of the Manchester Swiss community, reflected by the healthy attendance at Club events.

Whilst dealing with the loss of members during the year, Dr. Lang expressed his deep regret, reflected throughout the Club, at the death of Dr. H. Bolliger whilst on a business trip to Switzerland. In expressing his condolences to Mrs. Bolliger, the President reflected on the time and effort Dr. Bolliger devoted to the Club and the Northern Swiss community. He also referred to the sad loss of Mr. Goldmann and Mr. Hauser, and expressed his deepest sympathy to Mr. Hauser.

In thanking his fellow officers for their help during his two years in office the President made special reference to the Consul-General, Mr. H. Jaques and his wife, for their active participation in Club events and the many friendships developed by them within the Club.

With each new President, commenced Dr. Lang, comes a new era, and he warmly welcomed his successor, Mr. F. Schaufelberger, for his two-year office. Mrs. M. Themans was re-elected as Honorary Treasurer, and Mr. H. P. Riesen Honorary Secretary. Other members of the new Committee are: Mrs. T. Bolliger, Mrs. G. Tanner, Mr. O. A. Senn, and Dr. A. V. Lang.

There is no doubt that the Swiss Club Manchester is in very good hands, though the first task of the new President was to increase the yearly membership fee by £1 for male and female (equality) members. One should point out that the Swiss Club Manchester has not increased its membership fee for seven years! With more money in the kitty (kitty bargaining) the new President cannot fail to provide an excellent programme for 1977/78. This he did when completing the programme of events listed below. Isn't it ironical that the name of the film to be shown during the first Club's event in his office is entitled: "How to steal a Diamond in four uneasy lessons."

AVL

DATES OF CLUB EVENTS

19th June, 1977	Treasure Hunt – Lang Trophy
29th July, 1977	National Day
19th/21st August, 1977	Assembly of the Swiss Abroad 1977
20th October, 1977	Games and Film Evening
11th November, 1977	Annual Dinner Dance
10th December, 1977	Children's Christmas Party
26th January, 1978	Raclette Party
2nd March, 1978	Annual General Meeting

THE COLONY'S BERNE REPRESENTATIVE

Spring meetings of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

Due to the untimely death of Dr. Hans-Rudi Bolliger, Mrs. Mariann Meier was the only delegate from Britain attending the meeting of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne on 12th March. Nearly 80 members and proxies were present from all parts of the world. The President, Dr. Louis Guisan, opened the meeting with regret – three members of the Commission had died, amongst them the representative of Great Britain North.

The first item on the agenda was the annual report which once again showed the great amount of work done by the Organisation and its Secretariat in Berne, especially since more compatriots from abroad need help on returning home. It also praised the fact that the Swiss abroad still made a great contribution towards a Swiss "presence" abroad. The report dealt with the activities of the Commission, the last Assembly at Morat, the visits to Swiss communities abroad, the various services from individual assistance to Youth Service camps and other tasks, the *Echo* and the *Review* (in GB the four special issues of the *Swiss Observer*).

Annual accounts and budget were then dealt with. Both income and expenditure were below the budget for 1976, but fortunately, the deficit, too, was considerably lower, and the general reserve fund would take care of it. The meeting had been fixed to coincide with the first federal plebiscite in which we Swiss from abroad were able to vote. The lack of information was criticized, and several experiences were related by members who had already cast their vote, or who were about to take part in the plebiscite. It was obvious that a lot was left to be done until the various cantonal and local difficulties could be eliminated. Apparently there was disappointment, for fewer than 500 Swiss from abroad had taken part.

It was at my request that the delay in old-age pension payments had been put

on the agenda. Originally, Dr. Bolliger was to put this forward since I am one of those affected. I made a strong complaint on behalf of the many old-age pensioners who have to wait for their pensions sometimes as long as 12 months and even longer. This is scandalous, and it should be possible to find ways and means to hurry up the payments to which contributors to the AHV had a right. In this country we are lucky in having our own Benevolent Society, but in others, needy compatriots had to be sent to welfare institutions of the country of residence – hardly a good visiting card for Switzerland! The Secretariat had tried hard to speed up the matter and they would go on doing their utmost to put an end to this sorry state.

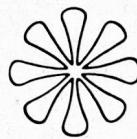
It was announced that there was now at least one sickness insurance in Switzerland which accepts new members up to the age of 70 and above, a very important innovation for Swiss returning home after retirement.

A committee to study the status of children of Swiss women married to foreigners had been set up, members were told. The Youth Service leader gave an account of the successful camps, and reports were given on visits to Swiss communities in Africa last year and to those in Spain and Portugal next autumn, the former by Mr. Ney, the latter by the President.

Plans about the forthcoming day for Swiss abroad at the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle and the Assembly in Lausanne in August. It was stated with regret that all tickets for the *Fête des Vignerons* at Vevey had been sold. The Assembly's theme (19th-21st August) would be on the contribution Swiss made towards technical development aid.

Members were given some details of the Society of Friends of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad which had been founded in 1971 and whose 193 members contributed over Sw. Fr. 10,000 in 1976 alone. The President of the Solidarity Fund reminded delegates that it was up

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