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COMMITTEE OF SWISS CATHOLICS IN LONDON

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of 18th May, 1979

In the Chapel of the Swiss Catholic Mission the members of the Committee came together for the Annual General Meeting. After a short prayer the Vice-Chairman, Mr. M. Schneebeli, spoke of the great loss to the committee with the tragic death of our Chairman, Frank DeMaria and read out the Obituary from the Swiss Observer (November, 1978). After the accounts had been examined and approved the Chaplain, Fr. Paul Bossard, gave a detailed report of his activities:

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OBITUARIES

YORKSHIRE SWISS CLUB LOSES PRESIDENT

It is with great regret that we have to inform you of the tragic loss of our President *Otto Christian Schreibke* who died completely unexpected on the 13th July on the way to work, he was 58.

He served the Yorkshire Swiss Club as President for the past three years and was re-elected at the A.G.M. in April for a further term of office.

His sudden death came as a great shock to his widow and four children and indeed to all of us who were associated with him and we extend our greatest sympathy to his family.

Otto Christian Schreibke was born in Lucerne on the 24th January 1921, he got married in 1949 and came to England in the autumn of the same year where he and his wife settled down.

In September 1963 Otto C. Schreibke joined the maintenance

staff of the Swiss Chemical firm SANDOZ in Horsforth nr. Leeds where he was trained as a fitter and worked there to the time of his death.

It is with great regret that we report the death, on 26th July, at the age of 82, of Mr. **Edouard Zwicky**, of 9 Chesterfield Lodge, Church Hill, Winchmore Hill, London N21.

Born in 1897 at Mollis, in Canton Glaris, Edouard Zwicky carried out a commercial apprenticeship and began his working life with a firm of coal merchants. In 1920, he decided to go to England expecting to find better opportunities. There, he worked for a number of banks, starting with the Credit Lyonnais. When he retired in 1962, he was with the statistical department of a City Bank called OBS.

Quite early during his life-long stay in Britain, Mr. Zwicky took an active interest in the life of the Colony. He became a member of the Consistoire of the Swiss Church during the days of Pastor Hoffmann-de Visme, and was a member of this body for thirty-five years. He met his wife, Juliette Rochat, at the Swiss Church where they were married on the National Day of Thanksgiving of 1922. Owing to his wife's Genevese origins, Edouard Zwicky was a member of the French-speaking parish where he is still remembered by many people for his kindness and cheerfulness. Mr. Zwicky was also involved with other Swiss institutions in London, among them the Swiss Mercantile Society.

He was a fine photographer, and was blessed with an alert mind until the stroke which paralysed his right side and dimmed his consciousness three months before the one that eventually carried him away.

During the last years of his life, he suffered from a glaucoma which prevented him from reading. But it was a tribute to his spirits that this deficiency never deprived him of his kindness and interest in other people.

To his widow, and to her son Jean-Jacques and family, we extend our most sincere condolences.

PMB

IN MEMORIAM

We heard with great regret of the sudden death of **Mr. L. S. R. Ash**, on 12th August (a full obituary will appear in our next issue) and of the death of **Mr. Max G. Ehksam**, 10th August, at the age of 82 and **Mrs. Phyllis Gisiger** on 19th June.

We would like to extend our most sincere condolences to the families of the deceased.

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MOVING — PACKING — STORING — SHIPPING

The following members were elected: Mr. E. J. Frey of the Swiss Bank Corporation as Chairman, Mrs. E. Käufeler as Vice-Chairman (for Mr. M. Schneebeli who has asked to be relieved of his responsibility), Miss Cora Affentranger as Hon. Secretary, Mr. Karl Deutsche as Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Bruno Frei as representative of the Swiss Youth Club and Mr. S. B. Stray, A.C.I.S. as Hon. Auditor.

The new Chairman then took the chair and thanked the Committee Members for their confidence and Mr. Schneebeli for his great service and work behind the scenes during many years and wished him all the best for his future.

After the meeting the members remained in the flat of the Chaplain for a wine and cheese party and a most entertaining evening.

*Paul Bossard
CHAPLAIN*

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

The death of Frank DeMaria has been a great loss to the Chaplain. He was not only his most valiant supporter in a time of great difficulties, he was his friend, too. The crisis which existed did not directly involve the Swiss Catholic Mission and its work, but the breakdown of the Youth Club activities during the week for the neighbourhood had its necessary repercussions, not least the question: "What is going to happen with the house?" Will there be another "move-out" like seven years ago? It was no use worrying and pushing the authorities concerned, they, too, did not know and were waiting for the result of an independent inquiry which kept dragging on and when it finally was ready, proved useless. So we are still in the same situation as last year. Therefore the proposal of the last Annual General Meeting, that the officers of the committee are authorised to make any financial agreement with the diocesan authorities which they deem fair and necessary in order to secure the work of the Swiss Catholic Mission at 48 Great Peter Street, is still in force.

The Chaplain did all he could to keep the premises in proper order, encouraging some activities during the week thus securing a continuous activity for the Swiss Youth Club on Sundays and sometimes during the week, as the celebration of the 1st August. During summer holidays he was able to put up young Swiss who had difficulty in finding accommodation for a night or two until something suitable had been found.

The Chapel got its finishing touches with the installation of a tabernacle, an attractive Sanctuary-light (donated by a resident Swiss in

London) and a signpost giving a direct approach from the road. Nothing else will be added, in order not to distract the visitors from the essential and jeopardise the atmosphere of prayer and meditation. All the remaining work will consist in making it a centre of spiritual life for the Swiss and their English-speaking friends and neighbours. Regular services during the week a 1 p.m. and on Sundays at 11.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. enjoy an ever increasing interest.

A new venture on Saturday evenings had been planned for some time and has finally come off and seems to attract a steady group of people of different nationalities. It is called a "Tune-in for Sunday" which includes exercises in Yoga, followed by meditation and holy Eucharist. Some questions had been asked why the Chaplain has turned to such an uncommon approach? He had studied and practised this eastern technique in preparation for his missionary work as long as 30 years ago. Seeing that it attracted more and more people, especially our youth, and became a real danger to the faith and to sanity, he decided to offer them the real thing in a christian spirit. He enjoyed the help of his protestant colleague, Rev. Urs Steiner (who arrived in the summer to replace Rev. Paul Jungi) especially in the research about the religious movements of the youth and its real dangers. Information and warnings however are not good enough, they could turn into a kind of propaganda. Since the Chaplain has the necessary training and experience, he has started a small school himself. A first attempt in the Eglise Suisse failed — it was premature — but the second attempt at the Swiss Catholic Mission seems promising.

The Ecumenical Work is still going on, but needs constant rethinking, especially as far as the youth is concerned. For them it is something new and I am always grateful to my protestant colleagues and members of the church who are aware of the difficulties, so that the ecumenical work remains "on the ground" and the discussion as well as the practical work is kept alive.

Youth club activities went on in the usual manner as before. The number of attendants has considerably dropped, due to the fact that fewer young Swiss are coming to London and are staying for a shorter time. There is also, especially among the youth of today, a growing prejudice against anything that smells of religious institution which has to be met with great patience and a very honest ecumenical co-operation. The committee of the youth club which meets every month is of great help and encour-

ages our young people to develop their own initiative.

Other pastoral work is conducted through interviews and information work. Of great benefit is the co-operation with the Welfare Office for young people, the co-operation with the Swiss Embassy and other organisations of the Swiss Colony in London. Home visits are made on demand only and hardly out of one's own initiative, in spite of the constant resolutions. There is only one excuse for it, and it has been repeated over and over again, already by my two predecessors: the week still has only seven days!

That the Chaplain has found more time to be involved in spiritual work has to do with the present crisis of the house in 48 Great Peter Street and the devoted work of Mr. Bruno Frei. The building programme has come to a standstill. The Bar, however, which provides steady income and has proved invaluable to keep the house from financial difficulties, is entirely under the supervision of Mr. B. Frei. He keeps a good relationship with the local neighbourhood and ensures their co-operation, supervises the income, does the orders of drinks and the stock-keeping. One would have expected the John Southworth Centre to break down with a considerable deficit, because the Swiss Catholic Mission and its youth club would never have been able to run the house and all the expenses included: cleaning, rates, insurance, rent, etc. It is mainly his work and his devoted co-operation with the neighbours that the year ended with a considerable bank balance from the profits of the bar. Thus he has saved the Swiss Catholic Mission and the Chaplain from grave difficulties and really deserves the gratitude of the committee, of the Chaplain and — perhaps too — of the diocesan authorities who are responsible for the premises.

So the Chaplain concludes his report with sincere thanks to all who have helped him to continue his work and to remain in London. This is the help of the committee, the encouragement from the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Bruno B. Heim, the favour of the Cardinal, Archbishop G. Basil Hume of Westminster and his assistants, the co-operation of the Consistoire and the ministers of the Swiss Protestant Churches, the help and friendly support of the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. E. Thalmann and Madame Thalmann and the members and staff of the Embassy, and the financial support of the Swiss Bishops and especially the "Fasstenopfer" as well as the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches.

P.B.