

Swiss Mercantile Society

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, June 12th. Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair.

The Chairman informed the Meeting that the Society had recently been approached by the Swiss Legation with a view to making Swiss House a clearing station for Swiss residing in Great Britain. The experiences made by Swiss nationals in countries like Norway, Holland and Belgium, who were rendered homeless through air raids etc., had prompted the Swiss Legation to make arrangements for such eventualities. A Swiss Relief Centre Committee, under the auspices of the Swiss Benevolent Society, had already been formed and the Chairman acquainted the meeting with the terms under which Swiss House had been offered through the Swiss Minister to the Relief Committee. The S.M.S. will, nevertheless, retain Swiss House as its headquarters and continue to afford accommodation to the other Swiss Societies who have hitherto also had their headquarters there. As there will be full details of the scheme published in the columns of this paper, it does not come within the scope of this report to comment further on the subject. Suffice it to mention that the Meeting wholeheartedly endorsed the action of the Council in having offered Swiss House for this patriotic undertaking.

In view of the present situation it was decided to dispense with the established custom of cancelling the July and August meetings. As few members will be on holiday this year it was considered desirable to foregather during the summer months in order to give members an opportunity of meeting each other.

This concluded the proceedings and the meeting, which was well attended, was followed by a talk given by Mr. O. Grob, a member of the Council and former Vice-President, on his visit to the U.S.A. Mr. Grob was entrusted by the Management of the Swiss Bank Corporation to assist in the organisation of the newly opened agency in New York.

Although America is in the forefront of the news these days and we read numerous articles and see many films from which we can form our ideas of life and ways in Uncle Sam's country, we were, nevertheless, eager to hear first hand the impressions gathered by a member of the Society.

Mr. Grob vividly described his journey to the Metropolis of the New World and the overpowering impression which New York's sky line made on him. He related his numerous experiences, a heat wave of 105 degrees in the shade, travelling in overcrowded underground railways, a visit to the Swiss Pavillion at the New York's World Fair, etc. He found the Americans very hospitable and helpful. We heard of the organisation of modern banks, the Social Security System, life in a modern factory town and numerous other matters of outstanding interest. Finally Mr. Grob gave an account of his eventful homeward journey via Italy, Switzerland and France.

The lecturer, on the conclusion of his most interesting talk, was accorded a very hearty ovation.

W.B.

SWISS RELIEF CENTRE.

In conjunction with the Swiss Benevolent Society.

At the request of the Swiss Minister a committee has been formed for the purpose of organising a *Relief Centre* giving temporary assistance to those of our compatriots who might become victims of air raids.

Being well aware that any assistance from Switzerland is practically impossible in the grave crisis we are going through, the committee want every Swiss to feel that such a centre exists at which immediate relief can be offered to those in need.

The Swiss Mercantile Society have kindly agreed to put Swiss House at the disposal of the *Relief Centre* committee. Sleeping accommodation is available for men, women and children, and arrangements are made for catering.

The creation of such an organisation entails considerable expense, and we have to look to the full support of the Colony to enable us to carry on the good work. The Swiss of Great Britain will remember with pride that the Colony has always looked after those of our unfortunate compatriots who may, through no fault of their own, fall in distressed circumstances.

We are glad to put on record that the Swiss Minister has obtained a subsidy from the Swiss Government, but *further funds are urgently required* to pay for beds, other furniture, and for upkeep and catering, and all necessary expenses of the *Relief Centre*.

It is now up to all those of our compatriots who are in a position to do so to come forward and show their patriotism in a tangible form by *sending subscriptions at once*. These should be addressed to the Treasurer, Swiss Benevolent Society, Swiss House, 34, Fitzroy Square, W.1. and marked "*Relief Centre*."

Apart from donations of money the committee are in urgent need of the following items:

Pillow Cases, Blankets, Quilts, Rugs, Single Bed Sheets, Hand Towels, Bath Towels.

Will all those of our compatriots who can spare any of these items kindly give them for the common cause. They should at once be sent to *Swiss Relief Centre*, Swiss House, 34, Fitzroy Square, W.1, as above.

Will our compatriots also please communicate this appeal to any and every Swiss they meet so that everyone should have an opportunity of co-operating in this effort to help those who may be unfortunate victims.

In case of doubt as to the best method of assisting please get in touch with Swiss House or any member of the Committee, or with the Secretary of the Committee: H. Bingguely, 167, Clapham Road, London, S.W.9, Telephone: Reliance 4150.

SWISS RELIEF COMMITTEE.

President:

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur W. Thurnheer.
Legation Delegate:

Monsieur Charles de Jenner.

Chairman: Louis Chapuis; Vice-Chairman: A. F. Suter; Treasurer: Anton Bon; Secretary: H. Bingguely; House Committee: W. B. Sigerist, J. J. Boos, Ch. Chapuis; Welfare Committee: Pasteur