

Schweizerbund annual dinner

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SCHWEIZERBUND ANNUAL DINNER.

The 64th Annual Dinner and Ball of the Schweizerbund Club has again, in spite of the critical times through which we are passing, proved a great success and the Committee may well be congratulated on having given us, perhaps not without some hesitation, the opportunity of meeting and spending a few hours amongst friends in a real Swiss atmosphere.

After a cordial Reception and a liberal cocktail we were summoned by the stentorian voice of the Master of Ceremonies to Dinner at exactly Swiss Summer time. Having no means of checking this, we took it as correct and sat down to a well served meal in a full house. The well-known tunes played by the Band, which was relieved by a trio of young Accordion Players giving us our favourite Swiss airs, earned well deserved applause.

The two loyal Toasts "The King" and "Switzerland" were given by the Hon. Chairman, M. de Jenner, and responded to in the usual way.

The President of the Club, Mr. J. Ellenberger, then gave the toast of the Club as follows:—

"It is once more my privilege and pleasure to say a few words to you all.

Steadily the number of the Annual Dinners of the Schweizerbund grows, and to-night's is the 64th. It was anticipated to have with us the new Swiss Minister, Monsieur Thurnheer, but I regret to announce that urgent engagements prevent him from being present to-night. We are pleased, however, to welcome in his stead Monsieur de Jenner, who I feel sure will enjoy his visit to the Schweizerbund, and that we shall have the pleasure of his company also on future occasions.

I am happy to see such a splendid gathering here to-night and I extend a warm welcome also to the delegates of our affiliated Societies:— The Unione Ticinese, The Swiss Mercantile Society, The Secours Mutuels, The Swiss Accordion Club, the Symphonic Social Choir, The Rangers, and last, but not least, to the Landsturm of the Swiss Colony in London, our worthy Hon. Members.

I wish to keep my address to you as short as possible, as you all know I am a very bad speaker, and in conclusion I would like to say that since the outbreak of the war we have been labouring under great difficulties. We have lost many members, especially the Swiss Students who have all returned home, and I appeal to those remaining to continue their loyal support of our Club. Remember: The more we are together, the merrier we'll be. This seems to be also the motto of The Rangers, our newest affiliated Society, and their support has to some extent counterbalanced the loss of Swiss members. I also understand that they are very happy here, and I hope they will continue to be so.

The tasks of our Stewards, Mr. and Mrs. Rossier, have been made harder by the present unfortunate events. Both are tireless in their efforts to please all of us, and they have my and my committee's appreciation. Also our Secretary, Mr. Imhof, has put his shoulder to the wheel for many years. He too deserves our praise, and I hope that his next balance sheet will not cause him undue worry.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all a very merry and happy evening."

His toast to "The Schweizerbund" was very warmly received and followed by a speech by the Hon. Chairman, M. de Jenner, who said his cradle had not been far away from the President's. He admired the initiative of the Committee to arrange this function in these hard times. "We are citizens of a small country spared up to now, but although a little country, we are ready with our army of 600,000 men to defend our homes. The Federal Council has advised people that if they are told not to fight, it is a lie. Hard words, but encouraging. I cannot think of any Swiss who is not proud of it." As a member of the Swiss Army during the last war, he shared his straw bed with his fellow soldiers in the mountains. "The Swiss have a good reputation in England," he said, "and must keep it."

Hearty applause was given to his words, and Mr. Christen then welcomed "The Visitors," mentioning Monsieur de Jenner, from the Swiss Legation; Mr. and Mrs. Ferrari, Unione Ticinese; Mr. Boos, Swiss Mercantile; Mr. and Mrs. Kunzli, Secours Mutuels; Mr. and Mrs. Häusermann, Swiss Accordion Club; Mr. Swan, Mr. Dorn, Symphonic Social Choir; Mr. Ryan, Mr. Cox, The Rangers; Mr. E. A. Scheidegger, Swiss Observer.

Replying for the Visitors, Mr. Ryan said how they all appreciated the homely atmosphere of the Swiss Club and how pleased they were to attend these gatherings.

Mr. F. Delaloye, in greeting the Ladies, made a humorous speech interrupted with many cheers. Some telegrams which he read announced a busy and enjoyable duty for him to kiss all the ladies.

Replying for the ladies, Mrs. Scherer said how pleased she always was to visit the Club.

The Hall was then cleared for Dancing to the lively music of the Accordion Club, which even made some of the "Landsturm" join in.

When the writer had to think of his last train, the hall was still well filled, and he made his way home convinced that everybody had thoroughly enjoyed this war-time function.

E. A. S.

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