Record Winter sports season

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CITY SWISS CLUB.

The first monthly meeting of 1939 which took place at Pagani's last Tuesday was again very well attended, in fact all records were broken, which is a most encouraging sign for the growing activity of the City Swiss Club. For the first time for years some difficulty was experienced in getting all members seated due to the great number who turned up. Even Pagani's, irrespective of their optimism, never expected such a large gathering.

There was an atmosphere of gaity and joy at meeting for the first time this year. The chair was taken by our sympathetic President, Mr. Louis Chapuis, who had delayed his departure for America, to have the pleasure of welcoming all his friends.

The official part of the meeting was conducted in peace and harmony, and there were no admissions although one or two compatriots have expressed their intention of joining the happy family. I hear they were still "Winter sporting." There were no "demissions" which is a good sign.

Some correspondence was read in connection with propaganda for the forthcoming National Exhibition at Zurich, and it is hoped that when the time comes all members will do their share to ensure the success of that important National event. The committee will no doubt suggest something which will prove attractive to all.

One important item to which the President referred was the Cinderella which takes place on March 11th; it will be the last opportunity of the Winter Season for members to meet with their families.

Some distinguished visitors were present and the Legation was worthily represented by Mr. Girardet and Mr. de Rahm. The President welcomed them all in due form and Mr. Girardet assured the assembly that "they would come again."

The official part of the evening was soon over and members eagerly awaited the first 1939 surprise. Madame Champion was then received with tumultous applause and entertained the Club on "French Wit in the Theatre." She had only just arrived from Paris and was in a position to recount in the wittiest manner how the latest episodes, and both the serious and amusing incidents of French life, are used by the theatres of the City of Light to link up every day life, particularly politics, with the entertainment of the public.

She also made a point of acknowledging the great ties which linked our two democratic countries, and the spirit of confidence and affection which has always existed. It was refreshing to hear from so eminent a speaker as Madame Champion, that the impression she had gathered during her stay in the French capital during the last few weeks, was one of confidence in the future, not only in the ability of her country to recover from all the shocks it has sustained of late but also to once more lead the world in he ability of working, while smiling, laughing and dancing.

All those who had the privilege of listening to Madame Champion's most interesting talk were delighted with their evening, and as she sat down Madame Champion was acclaimed most heartily and thanked by the President on behalf of all members, for the interesting but, unfortunately, too short entertainment. Members look forward to seeing Madame Champion again at an early date when she is assured of a great welcome.

We hear from the Secretary that he was quite pleased with the increase in attendance but he tells us that he is convinced still many more members will turn up in February, as he is preparing a typical Swiss evening, which should appeal to all members and their friends, and the Committee look forward to another record meeting.

It is also hoped that members will assist the Committee by advising their intention of being present so as to facilitate the seating arrangements.

Shall we have a "house full" with standing room only at the next meeting

RECORD WINTER SPORTS SEASON.

Switzerland is experiencing a bumper season from the point of view of winter tourists. Numbers are well up to the boom years of 1936-37 and 1937-38. In actual fact the total number of Britons taking winter sports holidays this season has probably diminished.

The winter sports public has been found to be a fairly accurate barometer of international affairs. Wars and rumours of wars tends to keep the ski-er and the skater at home.

International uncertainty, however, if it has deprived Switzerland on the roundabouts of some of her "regulars," has made up to her on the swings. Practically the whole of the British contingent which would have gone to Germany or the former Austria has been swung over to Switzerland. Perhaps they felt that their good English money might not be devoted entirely to the manufacture of butter.

One can observe another trend — the tendency to go out later in the season. This, from the ski-ers' point of view, is eminently sensible. The British, a hardy race of traditionalists, fly in the face of all meteorological reason and insist on believing that "winter" consists of December and early January. This prejudice dies hard.

The result has been that in the past the bulk of British ski-ers have taken their winter sports holiday at, comparatively, the least attractive period in the Alps — from Christmas to mid-January. Of course, in many cases the incidence of school holidays makes this inevitable, but for the man or woman who enjoys free-will rather than predestination in the matter of holidays there is everything to be said for going out late.

The writer, as it happened, has been predestined to take a brief holiday in January both this season and last, but in normal circumstances I would not think of coming out before the middle of February or even the beginning of March.

It is in February and March that the big snowfalls normally occur, and the sun — if you are a sun worshipper — shines most consistently and most gloriously. "Spring snow," too, snow granulated by the burning Alpine sun — is an element which would delight, and flatter by its easiness, the mid-winter ski-er.

Other considerations in favour of later Alpine holidays are the less crowded hotels and funiculars, and the greater personal attention from hoteliers, who, however, courteous and efficient, may be a bit rushed off their feet at holiday times.

If proof were needed of the fact that conditions are best later in the season, it is only necessary to look at the dates chosen for the big races. The World's Ski Championships (the F.I.S.) are usually held at the end of February or the beginning of March.

There will be big races, too, held all over Switzerland as late as Whitsun, and the present writer has memories of ski-ing down from the Kleine Scheidegg to the Grindelwald valley in two feet of powder snow as late as the end of May — but that, of course, is exceptional.

As people become aware of the joys of late ski-ing the hotels tend to stay open later and later in the season. For example, the Bear in Grindelwald, the oldest winter sports hotel in the Alps (it is celebrating its fiftieth birthday this year, which shows what a parvenu among sports ski-ing is,) remains open this year till the end of March. Two years ago it closed at the beginning of February.

But even if the big hotels are closed there remain a thousand little family hotels, like the one in which I write these lines. Clean, comfortable, friendly, and, what is more, part of the life of the ordinary Alpine village in a way that its bigger cosmopolitan counterpart can never be.

As I shiver in the biting winds of a British March I shall think this year with nostalgic longing of those wise and fortunate beings, ski-ing in the lightest of clothing under a burning sun, with never a cloud in the sky, except the white snow plume blowing off the top of the Eiger. I shall envy them their good sense in taking their ski-ing holiday at the best time of the year.

XYZ.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Friday, January 27th, at 8 o'clock, (Supper at 3/- to be served at 6.30 p.m. sharp) — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Annual General Meeting — at Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, Russell Square, W.C.

Wednesday, February 22nd — Unione Ticinese — Annual Banquet and Ball, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.

Saturday, March 11th, at 7 o'clock — City Swiss Club — Cinderella Dance — at the Mayfair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

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11h. Culte. M. M. Pradervand — Ecole du dimanche.

6h.30 Culte. M. M. Pradervand.

7h.30 Répétition du Chœur.

BAPTEME.

Le 8 janvier, Edouard-Paul-Maria Mandl, fils d'Edouard Mandl, de Tyniste (Tchécoslovaquie) et de Marguerite née Kehrli, de La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur, M. M. Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. (Téléphone Mountview 5003) Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE
(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).
St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, de 15. Januar.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.
7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst, Pfr. E. Bommeli.

Mittwoch Nachmittag: Schwyzerchränzli (Zwanglose Zusammenkunft der jungen Schweizerinnen im Foyer Suisse, wozu alle Schweizerinnen freundlich eingeladen sind).

Jeden Donnerstag abend 7 Uhr Versammlung Christlicher Verein junger Männer, 28-29, Bedford Place. W. Jedermann ist freundlich eingeladen.

Sprechstunden des Gemeindepfarrer's :
Jeden Dienstag von 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.
Jeden Mittwoch von 5-6 Uhr im Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.

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