

Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club

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THE FOYER SUISSE.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1922/23.

All the best things in the world grow silently and slowly, so has the Foyer Suisse. It has taken the Consistoire of the Swiss Church three full years to prepare the statutes of the institution, and it took ten years in all to open the doors of the actual Foyer Suisse. A Company was formed under the Acts of Parliament of 1908, and 1913, and the Memorandum and Articles of Association were duly signed in November 1917 and submitted to the Board of Trade. All the chief London newspapers published the purposes and objects of the Company. No objections being received, the Company was duly incorporated at Somerset House on the 10th December, 1917.

The Foyer Suisse is an institution not run for profit (*Association sans but lucratif*). The funds in hand can only be applied for the purposes of maintaining and carrying on the work of the institution. This form of Company is very little known even in Great Britain, and the architect of the landlords, when calling on business a few days ago, could not understand that some of the members of the Council of Management really put in work without profit.

The registered objects of the Company are threefold: (1) Home and Hostel; (2) Centre of Union for the whole Swiss Colony; (3) Parish Hall for the Swiss Church, all the three being legally on equal terms. The Council of Management, elected by the members, is the directing authority, and it is their undeniable duty and privilege to administer the statutes in an impartial and judicious manner.

With these aims before them, the Council of Management has been house-hunting for four years. The whole West Central District has become very familiar ground to some of the members. There was not a building changing hands or up for sale the secretary did not know of; unfortunately, the premises were generally unsuitable or the price asked beyond reach. The present buildings were visited as long as three and a half years ago, when the price asked was £6,000, fully furnished. Last summer this figure had come down to £4,000, and after lengthy negotiations the lease of the two houses, without the furniture, was finally secured for the amount of £2,000, with 11 years to run.

The drains of the two houses had previously been thoroughly tested by a firm of sanitary engineers, the central heating apparatus by Messrs. Sulzer Bros., Ltd., while the architectural survey was made by Mr. Theoph. Schaerer. The Council wish to express their best thanks to our competitors for their services rendered free of charge.

The question of managementship has also had the Council's attention since last October. Advertisements were inserted in the Swiss hotel press, and some 50 applications were received. Mr. Wilfried Meyer, late tenant of Hotel Bellevue and Hotel Bahnhof Wengen, was duly appointed to the post last January and started upon his duties in March. We are pleased to say he has gained the full confidence of the whole Council, and he is the right man in the right place.

The houses were taken possession of on the 29th March, 1923, and in order to facilitate the management of the concern the Council has delegated powers to a small committee of business men, called the House Committee, consisting of Messrs. G. Hafner, C. Bertschinger and W. Meyer. This committee is to direct the economy of the Foyer Suisse, but is responsible to the Council of Management. The House Committee has also directed the entire redecorating and repairs of the two houses, and neither expense, time nor pains have been spared to adapt the place and make it as convenient and up-to-date as possible. All household goods were also estimated for and finally purchased direct from factory.

The immediate problem before the Foyer is the creation of a goodwill, and the opening banquet has been arranged for the sole purpose of giving all our friends, who have helped to lay the foundation of the institution ten years ago, direct contact and personal interest. It now rests with them to patronise the institution and make it known here and in Switzerland. The crux of the problem will be to find the right relationship between the commercial idea and the altruistic, because the success of the one will determine the success of the other. Experience alone can and must teach us the way of progress towards the ideal Swiss Foyer in London. However, the future will be what we make it, and our motto is: Service, and Service to all classes of our Colony. The Foyer Suisse will attract many people and thus bring together men and women of all grades of society, who would otherwise never meet. The public rooms, restaurant, smoking room and social

rooms are open to everybody, and the institution will thus exert an ever-ready and silent ministry among our countrymen, the full measure of which will only be realised by the coming generation. The houses will afford a welcome change from the monotonous round of daily duty, and not only change, but also comfort, cheer and hope. They will also in some degree tend to lessen the loneliness and isolation of many of our fellows in this great city.

Finally, our aim must always be to live on good terms with everybody. We are not in competition with any of the existing institutions, and we have only one desire, *i.e.*, to offer facilities to every group or Swiss society.

May we hope to find many allies in our effort for co-operation and union among the Swiss Colony.

C. BERTSCHINGER,
Hon. Sec.

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS of the SWISS ALPINE CLUB.

MEETING AND DINNER

ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 17TH, 1923, AT CABANE BRITANNIA AND SAAS FEE.

On above date an Expedition will be made by Members to the Cabane Britannia above Saas Fee to Commemorate the 11th Anniversary of the Opening of the Club Hut, starting from the Grand Hotel at 6 a.m. Members will bring their own Lunch. A Dinner will be held the same evening in the Grand Hotel. The price of the Dinner (which will be moderate) will be collected at the table. Members are invited to bring ladies or gentlemen as guests. Those wishing to attend should inform R. E. C. Houghton, acting secretary for the Dinner. Address up to August 1st, 18, Dean's Yard, London, S.W.1; after that date, Grand Hotel, Saas Fee.

SWISS SPORTS.

The Committee of the Swiss Sports regrets that in this year's report, published in last week's issue, it omitted to record its appreciation of the three handsome Challenge Cups presented by—

His Excellency C. R. Paravicini, Swiss Minister, Messrs. F. & A. Isler and

The Swiss Observer,

and begs to tender its apologies for this omission, together with its sincere thanks to the generous donors.

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THE COMMITTEE.

LE SWISS INSTITUTE

Célébra la FETE NATIONALE par un

CONCERT PATRIOTIQUE

le 1er Août, à 7.45 p.m., à

MEMORIAL HALL, Farringdon Street

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sous la présidence d'honneur de

M. CH. PARAVICINI, Ministre de Suisse.

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Dimanche, 22 Juillet, 11h.—M. J. Ramseyer.
6.30.—Pfr. U. Wildbolz.

MARIAGE.

Henry WINTSCH, de Zurich, et Miriam PARKER, de Londres—le 14 Juillet 1923.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Sunday, July 22nd.—SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUELS: Excursion to Folkestone, offered by the society to its members. Meeting at Charing Cross Station at 9.45 a.m. latest.

Wednesday, August 1st, at 7.45 p.m.—SWISS INSTITUTE: Patriotic Concert at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street (near Ludgate Circus). In the Chair: The Swiss Minister.

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