

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS DEMOCRACY — MERITS AND FAULTS.

Dr. Zschokke's Candid Survey.

An exceedingly interesting discourse on the prevailing conditions, economic and political, was given at Swiss House on April 3rd under the auspices of the New Helvetic Society by Dr. Zschokke, the president of the parent body of that society in Switzerland. Thanks to the assistance of the Swiss Mercantile Society a particularly numerous audience including many College students had assembled to listen to the man under whose able chairmanship the "Nene Helvetiche" has of recent years attained an increasing importance in public affairs of our home-country. The expectation that he would have many interesting things to say and many criticisms to advance was not disappointed.

The speaker began with a somber account of the serious economic crisis in Switzerland, illustrated with many telling figures whose import is unfortunately too well known already. He showed particularly how the habitual "milch-cow" of Switzerland's economy, the exporting industry, whose technical eminence has in the past proved such a fertile source of the national income, has at last also run pretty nearly dry in the fierce heat of international competition. The successful efforts of our Government to maintain and safeguard agricultural prices on a remunerative level for our peasantry has beaten the industries' attempts of adapting their costs to the requirements of the world markets. Now industrial exports as well need indirect subsidies in many instances.

In the political field the crisis has led to developments no less serious. Above all to be deplored is the incontestable fact that one part of the Constitution after another, especially the old guaranties of commercial freedom, have been disregarded, trodden upon and finally, to all intents and purposes, superseded by emergency legislation in direct contradiction to the constitutional law. This fact was certainly one of the main reasons why the "initiative de crise" found relatively so much support. A general revision of the Constitution will doubtless have to be undertaken before very long, if the popular respect for the Constitution, Parliament and Government is to be solidly restored. Another aspect of politics in Switzerland requires careful attention by those concerned with the future of our country: the insidious plague of the "Interessenpolitik" carried on not only by the numerous trade associations, which is only natural, but also by a large number of members of parliament who are directly or indirectly dependent on the manifold trading — party — and other special interests. It is much to be hoped that Dr. Zschokke's lecture may be made available in print to all those compatriots who are concerned about the troubles of Switzerland without being in a position to follow more closely the reasons of the apparent shortcomings. The need for such first-hand accounts regarding the conditions in Switzerland was stressed by several speakers in the subsequent discussion, which was introduced by Monsieur de Bourq, Councillor of Legation.

Dr. E.

CITY SWISS CLUB. Annual General Meeting 1936.

Once again with the advent of Spring our thoughts turn with Kyburgian enthusiasm to visions of warmth, of sun, of flowers and of the election of a new Committee for the City Swiss Club. It is, however, easier to elect a new Committee than to obtain those advantages which are supposed to belong to this time of the year. Thus it was that a shivering company of about fifty enthusiasts (Oh! band of stalwarts) met on April 7th at Pagani's Restaurant to deal with the important matter of a new Committee and other items which would be submitted for their consideration or arise in the course of their discussions.

Warmed by the excellence of Mr. Pagani's dinner and no doubt on the principle that if bodily exercise induces warmth, mental activity, will have a like effect the annual general meeting was more than usually exciting and I will endeavour to reproduce for the readers of the Swiss Observer a true picture of the evening's events, so that those who were prevented from being present through bodily infirmities, pressure of business or mere laziness may learn what they missed.

After the procès verbal of the last meeting had been read by the Secretary, the President, Mr. Billeter, announced that the Committee had received two resignations since our last meeting.

At this point, for some obscure reason a discussion arose about the method of paying subscriptions and the discussion was so long, and became so complicated that I began to think we should never have time to elect a new Committee.

However, in the course of time, we arrived at the Accounts, and in spite of attempts by all our financial experts to find some errors, or exhausted

by the above-mentioned discussion, there were practically no criticisms and the accounts were passed as correct unanimously.

Mr. Billeter then read his Report from which it appeared that on the whole the past year had been a successful one for the Club. The Cinderella had been a great success, 128 members and guests being present.

During the year, two members had died, twelve new members had been elected and twelve members had resigned.

The President then left the Chair and Mr. Gattiker was chosen to preside during the election of the new Committee.

Mr. Gattiker is a humorist and began by suggesting that Mr. Boehringer was the Senior Member present and should preside. For reasons which will appear in due course this was impossible and in spite of his protests, Mr. Gattiker was obliged to take the Chair.

He announced that it was advisable to introduce new blood into the Committee and then proceeded to read out the proposed list of new Members. Scrutineers having been appointed, the voting papers were collected and after they had been counted Mr. Gattiker announced that the following members had been elected.

Someone remarked unkindly that the result of the vote seemed to have been even more unanimous than that of a recent election elsewhere.

- President: P. F. Boehringer,
- Vice-President: R. Ryf,
- Treasurer: R. de Cintra,
- Vice-Treasurer: W. Deutsch,
- Secretary: G. Marchand,
- Vice-Secretary: R. Kaiser,
- Librarian: A. Stauffer,
- Verificateurs des Comptes: Mr. Jenne and Mr. Pfirter,

- Fideli-Commissaires: Mr. Baume, Mr. Barbezat and Mr. Zogg.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

Unfortunately, no change was made in the Press Reporter.

Mr. Boehringer then took the Chair, and made a short speech which was received with applause.

Mr. Boehringer, who is now President for the second time, is too well known in the Swiss Colony, for it to be necessary to make any remarks about him, and it only remains for me to add my humble congratulations.

The Club could not have chosen a more eminent Member as President and I am sure that we may all look forward to a most successful year under his direction.

Various letters were then read by the President and amongst other an appeal on behalf of the Zurich Rowing Club to enable the Club to return to England this year, when it is hoped that it will keep the laurels which were won so nobly last year.

As will have been seen from last week's Swiss Observer the appeal was not made in vain.

After an exhausting evening the meeting came to an end about eleven o'clock.

ck.

ANNUAL DINNER SYMPHONIC SOCIAL CHOIR.

On Thursday April 2nd, the Symphonic Choir held their Second Annual Dinner at the Schweizerbund, the President being Mr. T. F. Swan and the Lady President, Mrs. K. Horn. The number present was approximately one hundred and notable visitors were Messrs. Hediger and Wetter of the Schweizerbund, and Mr. Ebers of the Edelweiss Choir.

During the Dinner the Company was entertained by Mr. Zimmerman's Orchestra.

The position of Toast Master was admirably taken by Mr. G. Koch.

The Vice President, Mr. J. Dorn, gave the Toast of the Ladies and Visitors which was very well received by the Choir Members. In his remarks, he gave Mr. Ebers a message for his Choir, namely, to take back to the Members of the Edelweiss the best wishes of his Choir and to say that the members were looking forward very much to their next Joint Charity Concert with the Edelweiss which will be held at the Brent Bridge Hotel in September next, in aid of the Charing Cross and German Hospitals.

Mr. Ebers suitably responded to the Toast of the Ladies and Visitors and the President, Mr. T. F. Swan, then gave the Toast of the Choir. In his remarks he congratulated Mr. and Mrs. Rossier for the very splendid Dinner they had provided and expressed his thanks in this respect on behalf of the assembly.

He referred to the fact that although the Choir had only been in existence for 15 months, success had already been achieved. He was able to give very satisfactory figures showing the financial state of the Choir. He remarked that the success had been due to many things, chiefly to the fact that the members themselves had all done something to help the Choir in its progress. He mentioned the fact, however, that consider-

able financial help had been given by Mr. J. Dorn and Mr. L. Koch, in consequence of which the financial position of the Choir had been greatly assisted.

The Choir was in the fortunate position of having amongst its members, members of families very well known in the Swiss Colony and he mentioned the names of Mr. G. Bruschwiler, Mrs. Heinz, Mrs. Horn, and Messrs. Koch, Nepple, Schutz and Solosy. Some of these families had joined the Choir en bloc and the President expressed his appreciation of this expression of confidence in the Choir. He took the opportunity of thanking his personal friends, a large number of whom were present and also the Committee for what they had done in helping him in the direction of the Choir. He also thanked the Swiss Club and particularly mentioned the names of Mr. Hediger, the President, and Mr. Imhof, the Secretary. Both these gentlemen had been of great help to him on many occasions and so far as Mr. Imhof was concerned, he considered the Swiss Club could be congratulated on the fact that he was their Secretary. He announced that eleven members of the Swiss Club, including Mr. J. Whitehead and Mr. H. Shell, had joined the Choir as affiliated members and this had been of invaluable assistance.

He expressed the Choir's thanks to their Conductor Mr. Seymour and the Assistant Conductor, Mr. Mandel. The President's remarks were warmly received.

The Dinner was followed by a most enjoyable Dance during which amusing "Spot" dances, organized by Messrs. G. Koch, A. Siegel, and F. Stoneman, were held.

The Choir also sang three songs from their repertoire, namely, "Das ist der Tag des Herrn," "Im Mai" and "Rosestock, Holderbluth," and received the very hearty applause of the assembly.

The Swiss Club had been granted an extension of license and when the close of the Dance arrived at 2 a.m. April 3rd, everyone was very satisfied.

ZURICH ROWING CLUB (HENLEY) APPEAL.

In our issue of March 14th, we made an appeal to the Swiss Colony, to help our compatriots to defend their titles as winners of the Stewards Cup and the Diamond Sculls, which they won at Henley last year.

We are as anxious as our Swiss friends are, that they should defend their titles, which they won in such an amazing manner, and we make an earnest appeal to all Swiss in the British Isles, to help us to find a part of the expenses, taking the point of view, that their success reflects in no small part on the good name of Switzerland, and the individual Swiss living in this hospitable land.

By their last year's achievement the Zurich Rowing Club has proved to the International sporting community that Switzerland has become a dangerous and gallant rival in the domains of Sport, and they have thus added new lustre to the many accomplishments which have promulgated a good and honourable name for our country abroad.

We acknowledge with much pleasure and thanks the undermentioned donations, and we sincerely hope that many more of our compatriots will help us to achieve our end. Any donation, however small, will be gratefully received.

Donations, marked "Henley Fund, R.C. Zurich" can be sent either to the offices of the Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2, or to the Swiss Legation, 18, Montagu Place, Bryanston Square, W.1; they will be acknowledged weekly in the columns of our paper.

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