

Swiss Mercantile Society

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.



A. NUSSBAUMER
President
Swiss Benevolent
Society.

(Fonds de Secours).

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society (Fonds de Secours pour les Suisses Pauvres) took place on Tuesday, February 22nd, at Paganì's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.

In the unavoidable absence of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Ch. de Jenner, Counsellor of Legation, presided over the Meeting.

I should like to mention here that the meeting was well prepared, and the various speakers confined themselves strictly to their subject, without—as it so often happens at other meetings in the Colony—wandering at random into matters which have nothing, or little, to do with the matter under discussion.

Another feature at this gathering which struck one favourably, was the pleasant way in which the Chairman conducted the meeting, allowing himself to make from time to time a humorous remark.

The Secretary, Mr. Theo. Ritter, read out the minutes of the last meeting, which were accepted. Mr. M. Rothlisberger, Hon. Treasurer, then went through the accounts item by item; as these accounts will be made later on available to the friends of the Society, we need not go into details at this juncture, and it will be sufficient to say, that in spite of a reduced income during the financial year of about £200, mainly due through the devaluation of the Swiss franc, it was possible to reduce the expenses considerably, so that the accounts show a satisfactory result. The total current expenditure for 1937 amounts to £4,345.

The accounts, which were so ably presented and explained by Mr. Rothlisberger, were passed unanimously by the meeting after thanks having been expressed by the Chairman.

Mr. P. H. Conrad then reported about the working and the finances of the Swiss Home, paying Miss H. Simmen, the Matron, a great compliment for the very efficient management of the Home, which compliment was endorsed by the whole meeting. Mr. Conrad mentioned that the residents, who number 14, are very happy, and that the financial position is also very satisfactory. This report was also accepted, with thanks to Mr. Conrad.

The report of the Finance Commission was read out by Mr. F. M. Gamper and the Auditor's report by the Chairman; both were accepted.

The Secretary of the Society, Mr. Theo. Ritter, rendered a full report of the doings of the Society, mentioning a number of incidents with which he had to deal and which necessitated Court procedures.

This report was accepted with thanks, the Chairman mentioning that he has been especially commissioned by the Swiss Minister to express his appreciation for the work so conscientiously done by Mr. Ritter.

M. de Jenner then acquainted the meeting with the fact that Mr. R. Dupraz, President of the Society for the last 15 years, had expressed the wish to be relieved of his office. As all efforts had failed to induce Mr. Dupraz to carry on the work which he had so ably administered for so many years, M. de Jenner asked the meeting to accept his resignation, but not without voicing his own and the members' high appreciation for the great services rendered; the meeting heartily endorsed the words of the Chairman. M. de Jenner also mentioned that the entire Executive *ipso facto* resigned, but that all former members were willing to have their names put down for re-election.

In succession to Mr. Dupraz, Mr. A. Nussbaumer, Manager of the London Office of the Swiss Bank Corporation, was unanimously elected President of the Society. The Chairman expressed his satisfaction that the Society was successful in having the vacant position so ably filled.

Mr. Nussbaumer, who was much applauded on rising, voiced his thanks in a few words for the

honour which was bestowed on him, once again thanking his predecessor for all he had done for the Society.

The meeting then, as a mark of esteem, elected Mr. Dupraz as Deputy Chairman.

The various elections yielded the following results:—

Vice-Presidents: Messrs. A. C. Baume, O. Gambazzi, F. M. Gamper.

Stewards: Messrs. R. de Cintra, A. Rueff.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. M. Rothlisberger.

Assist. Treasurer: Mr. E. S. Favre.

Assist. Hon. Secretary: Mr. P. Hilfiker.

Finance Commission: Messrs. A. Nussbaumer, F. M. Gamper, M. Rothlisberger.

Committee of Home for Aged Swiss: Mr. P. H. Conrad, Chairman; Mr. H. Senn, Vice-Chairman; Mr. F. M. Gamper, Hon. Treasurer; Miss G. Muller, Hon. Secretary; Misses Conrad, Gamper, and Saager, Messrs. Berti, Nussbaumer, Dr. Rast, Ritter and A. Schmid.

Auditors: Messrs. E. A. Pernet and M. Weber. Commission for drawing up Annual Report: Messrs. Dupraz, Nussbaumer, Oertli, Ritter and Rothlisberger.

Messrs. G. Godet and I. Trachsel were elected members of the Committee.

It was proposed and accepted to elect 8 new pensioners, and it is interesting to know that the number of pensioners amounts now to 89, which is a record figure, whilst between 650-700 people received financial assistance during the year.

The Chairman then thanked in eloquent language the voluntary workers of the Sub-Committee: Mrs. A. C. Muller, Misses Feissli and G. Muller, Messrs. Rev. Emery, G. Godet, I. Trachsel, E. Châtelain and the new Assistant Matron at the Home, Sister Gertrude Scheuermeyer. The meeting cordially endorsed the compliments of the Chairman.

This concluded the Agenda, and Mr. Dupraz thanked M. de Jenner for having so ably conducted the Meeting.

* * *

An excellent but simple dinner was then served, after which a number of humorous speeches were made and various jokes were cracked, even a song was given, in which the new President played an important part. This second part of the evening was equally successful as the first one. One had the feeling that this was a family gathering, where everybody went out of their way to make its members happy, a fine spirit and a creditable one.

In concluding this report, I wish the Swiss Benevolent Society every success during the coming financial year, hoping that they will get the support from the Colony which they so richly deserve.

ST.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Seventh Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society (Limited by Guarantee) was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, February 16th.

Mr. A. Steinmann, President of the Society, was in the Chair.

The Secretary, Mr. J. J. Schneider, read the notice convening the meeting and the report of the auditors.

The Chairman, on opening the proceedings, referred to the sudden and unexpected death of Mr. Charles A. Barbezat, a Trustee and Honorary Member of the Society. The meeting rose to pay a silent tribute to the deceased who was a staunch friend and supporter of the Society.

Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A., elucidated the accounts for the year ended December 31, 1937, which were duly adopted.

The Chairman then reviewed the activities of the London Section during the past year, the 49th since its foundation. He referred to the political nervousness and tension and its effects on trade and finance. He said the Society could look back on another year of animated activity and fruitful work, the membership had remained fairly steady and the Society could look confidently into the future. The Chairman expressed thanks to the Swiss Government, the Central Secretariat, the Swiss Legation and the numerous donors and patrons for their continued support which enabled the Society to carry out so successfully its manifold activities.

Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the activities of the College. He was able to record a notable increase in the number of students attending the College. The figures stated were as follows:—1937, 509 students; 1936, 420 students; 1935, 398 students. He ascribed this increase chiefly to the economic recovery of Switzerland. He then gave detailed information

and comparative figures of attendance, examinations, staff, curriculum, Holiday Course, visitors to the College, excursions and lectures, social functions and sports, etc.

Mr. H. H. Baumann, Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee, reported on the Evening Classes which, like the Day Classes, showed a marked increase in the attendance. 380 students attended the Evening Classes during 1937, which was the highest attendance in the last 5 years. He said it was gratifying that full advantage was taken of the excellent facilities offered by the Evening Classes.

Mr. J. J. Boos, Chairman of the House Committee, reported on the activities of his Committee. He referred to the improvements and alterations effected at Swiss House and the amenities proffered to the members and students. He regretted to announce the retirement for reasons of health of Mrs. T. Lunghi-Rezzonico, who for the last eleven years looked after the welfare of the lady students.

A resolution to receive and adopt the reports was carried unanimously amidst loud applause.

The auditor, Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A., was re-appointed.

A motion that the President be re-elected was duly seconded and passed with prolonged acclamation. With the exception of Mrs. Lunghi, all retiring Members of Committees and the Council offered themselves for re-election, and as no further nominations were received, the Chairman declared them duly elected, unopposed.

A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to the Council and Committees for their untiring efforts. The Meeting further recorded its thanks to Mrs. Lunghi for her valuable help during the last ten years and it was decided to convey to Mrs. Lunghi the best wishes of the Members and to present her with a suitable token of appreciation. This resolution was carried with hearty applause.

The Meeting took cognizance that Mr. Ph. Schmid-Ruedin had recently completed 20 years of service as Central Secretary and it was decided to congratulate Mr. Schmid-Ruedin, who is an Honorary Member of the London Section. This decision was cordially cheered by the Meeting.

It was proposed and seconded to elect Mr. W. de Bourg, who was recently appointed Consul General for Switzerland in Munich, an Honorary Member of the Society. Mr. de Bourg, who had been a Member of the Society for a number of years, always took a keen interest in the activities of the Society and rendered invaluable services in his former capacity of Counsellor of Legation. This resolution was adopted with prolonged acclamation.

The proceedings then terminated.

W.B.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1938.

Council.

Chairman: Mr. A. Steinmann.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. J. J. Boos.

9 Members: Messrs. Ch. Chapuis, G. E. De Brunner (Trustee), O. Grob, E. Hardmeier, G. Jenne, L. W. Krucker, W. Meier, J. J. Pfaendler, M. Schneider.

General Purposes Committee.

President: Mr. A. Steinmann.

Vice-President (Chairman Education Committee): Mr. W. Meier.

Vice-President (Chairman House Committee): Mr. J. J. Boos.

Hon. Secretary: Mr. M. Schneider.

Hon. Treasurer: Mr. O. Grob.

4 Members: Messrs. R. Chappuis, W. Fuchs, M. Heilingler, J. Trachsel.

Education Committee.

Chairman: Mr. W. Meier.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. H. H. Baumann.

Messrs. G. Haberstick, M. Rothlisberger, F. Streit, R. Weist.

House Committee.

Chairman: Mr. J. J. Boos.

Vice-Chairman: Mr. J. Trachsel.

Member: Mr. P. Mathys.

Auditor.

Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A.

Press Reporter.

Mr. W. Burren.

Delegate to the Advisory Board of the Employment Department.

Mr. Ch. Chapuis.

Delegates to the Swiss Sports Committee.

Messrs. F. von Bergen and R. Chapuis.

Delegate to the N.S.H.

Mr. F. Streit.