

City Swiss Club

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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

Open Meeting of July 15th.

At the Open Meeting held at the Vienna Café on July 15th to discuss the forthcoming Journée des Suisses à l'étranger, the President of the N.S.H. informed the fairly numerous gathering of the sudden death of Dr. Ernest Spühler. Dr. Egli paid a warm tribute to his colleague so cruelly torn from his new field of activity in London, where he already began to establish himself with great success. Dr. Spühler was too short a time in London, barely eight months, to be known intimately by many of his colleagues of the press or his compatriots of the Swiss Colony. But those who got to know him esteemed him as a warm-hearted friend, a serious mind and a loyal compatriot. The N.S.H. London Group has had the benefit of Dr. Spühler's active membership almost from the first day of his arrival in London, of his participation in the Council and of his conscientious keeping of the minutes of all meetings and of press-reports.

Another member of the Council and responsible officer of the N.S.H. was lost to us through more happy circumstances: Mr. Stahelin's promotion as chief of the Swiss Trade Organisation in Zurich. The President expressed the feelings of the entire meeting in congratulating Mr. Stahelin for this highly flattering appointment, while regretting the loss of his services as treasurer and fellow member of the Council, and of his membership as well as that of Madame Stahelin, who had also taken a lively interest in the meetings of the N.S.H. Despite the loss of two of its officers the Council of the N.S.H. will try to carry on without holding supplementary elections before the end of the year.

On the Journée des Suisses à l'étranger a very full and interesting discussion took place, showing what questions are uppermost in the minds of our Colony for being raised at the Berne meeting. A full report on this discussion will be published in the next issue of the Swiss Observer. Suffice it to give here the summary results. A revision of the method of levying the Military Tax was advocated by several speakers who made positive proposals as to how this should be done, which may be helpful for submission to the authorities at home. In the second place the question of participation in the political life at home by the Swiss abroad was brought up by a number of speakers. Some advocated that we should be enabled to vote at the Legation, others that the Swiss from abroad should be allowed to take part in voting when visiting our country, while yet others thought that the Swiss abroad should be permitted to elect representatives to Parliament by suitably grouped colonies. This last proposal in the end received the support of the entire meeting. In the third place a more active policy towards providing the children of the Swiss colonies with suitable books about Switzerland, graded according to age, was advocated and generally approved. Also the necessity of supporting actively the newspapers of the Swiss colonies from the home country as well as by all elements of the colony.

The President announced that the Council of the N.S.H., not having received any proposals from other societies upon enquiry, has proposed Dr. Egli and Mr. Renou as representatives of the colony to go to the Journée des Suisses à l'étranger, apart from Mr. Suter,

who having taken part at so many Journées is naturally expected to do so again, if he finds it possible to be in Switzerland at that time. The meeting gladly approved this choice, while regarding Mr. Renou primarily as representing the Swiss Council. The latter as well as the Unione Ticinese have expressed their approval of this representation of the Colony.

After the discussion there followed an address by Dr. Arnold Jaggy, giving a brief outline of the development of the present-day Swiss democracy dating back from the period of the French revolution. His lucid and most stimulating talk was warmly applauded by a spell-bound gathering.

Helveticus.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Address by Dr. Hans Zbinden, President of the Swiss Society of Authors.

The Monthly Meeting of the City Swiss Club took place on Thursday, July 17th at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1. In the absence of the President, Mr. A. Bon, Hon. Vice-President, presided; there were eighty members present.

Mr. A. Bon extended a hearty welcome, on behalf of the members, to Dr. Zbinden, who addressed the company on "Dangers of Democracy."

Space unfortunately does not allow us to reproduce his interesting *exposé* which is of such vital interest at the present moment.

The speaker said that economic reconstruction of Europe was urgent, and that there can be no sound political revival and no moral reconstruction as long as the economic conditions have not been bettered, but that Democracy is not simply a question of good food, security, decent housing and order, "there must be something even stronger behind it," he said, "who guarantees us that once the food and housing and work conditions are improved the material strength is recovering. The Nazis had all these things and yet this did not convert them to democracy."

Dr. Zbinden said that almost every nation was constituted of three parts, namely 10 per cent of people who want to fight for social, cultural and moral welfare, 10 per cent who are recklessly striving for personal power and 80 per cent of the large masses who had no opinion and no clear aims, and that therefore the salvation of the world depended largely on the few.

The lecturer referred to the tremendous loss of the elite in Europe during the last thirty years due to economic and political chaos, an elite which will have to be replaced if the world at large is to find peace and prosperity.

The lecturer, who spoke for over an hour was listened to with the keenest of interest, and on terminating received a hearty ovation.

A lively discussion ensued in which various members and guests took part, amongst them, Professor Fierz, Dr. H. W. Egli and Mr. O'Brien, Secretary of the Conservative Party.

The President for the evening, Mr. Bon, wound up the discussion by thanking Dr. Zbinden for his lucid and interesting talk.

Close of the Meeting 10 o'clock.