

City Swiss Club

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CITY SWISS CLUB.**(Monthly Meeting)**

The Monthly Meeting of the City Swiss Club took place on Monday, January 13th, 1947, at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.

The President, Mr. A. Bon, in opening the Meeting, which was preceded by dinner, informed the members of the death of Mr. G. Wüthrich, Managing-Director of the Oerlikon Ltd., who had entered the Club in 1917; he paid an eloquent tribute to the deceased, who had rendered many services to the Club and to the Swiss Colony. A silent tribute was paid to the late member.

The Chairman then welcomed the principal guests of the evening, namely Dr. A. R. Lindt, recently appointed Press Attaché at the Swiss Legation in London, and Commander Stephen King-Hall.

Dr. Lindt, who is no stranger to the Swiss Colony, having on several previous occasions addressed Swiss Meetings in the London Colony, subsequently addressed the members on the subject: "The History of a Red Cross Mission in Germany."

With rapt attention the company listened to the interesting experiences of the speaker who, as representative of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, spent several months in Germany.

He gave a vivid description of the extensive damage done to such towns as Berlin, Freiburg i. Br.; Karlsruhe, Frankfurt a. M.; Cassel, the latter town according to the speaker was a mere "heap of stones."

With regard to Berlin, the lecturer said, that one can drive around for 40 miles encountering nothing but ruins. Bridges, not only in the German capital, but throughout the country, had been destroyed, not only through aerial attacks, but also by the retreating German army. A description of Berlin was given as completely burned out, although there are still 3½ million inhabitants, the town after 8 p.m. is completely deserted.

Dr. Lindt said, that Germany as a nation has ceased to exist, and is superceded by four zones. A complete demoralisation has set in, conditions in the towns go back from 1—2 thousand years, whilst the country side is, on the whole, better off. The standard of living in the towns was described as extremely low, human beings, who were used to 4,000 calories receive now about a thousand. Stealing and robbery is rampant, and considered "excusable" under existing circumstances. Family life has almost disappeared, and the lecturer said that one seldom meets a family com-

plete, owing to the fact, that the various members are either evacuated, dead, dispersed or missing.

A state of intense egoism is noticeable throughout the country, everybody studies only their own interests, whilst the community as such is completely ignored.

Transport and travelling conditions were mentioned as being chaotic, throughout the highways of Germany one finds caravan after caravan of Germans who were expelled either from Poland, East Prussia or Czechoslovakia, and who have no abode or homes to go to. They are sent from town to town, like a merry-go-round, without proper care and without a hope of finding a proper pied à terre. The mortality amongst these, especially where children are concerned, was described as very high.

In fact, Dr. Lindt mentioned that about 50 per cent. of the German population were living in places to which they did not belong previously. Epidemics, such as dysentery, etc., were of common occurrence, and the death rate amongst children amounted to as much as 68 per cent. These people, according to the lecturer, were completely isolated from the rest of the world.

The lecturer pointed out the great danger to which Europe is exposed by the spreading of various diseases, which know no frontiers, and cannot be stopped by any frontier guards nor barriers.

Dr. Lindt mentioned, that Switzerland can do but little, but that he was able to secure the permission for a limited aid to women and children, and through the good services of the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva, daily meals for thousands of women and children were provided for. The Allied powers, especially the British have made great efforts to alleviate the hardship, and he found their collaboration very helpful.

It was an extremely grim picture which Dr. Lindt painted, a picture of apathy and demoralisation, especially amongst the young people, and unless prompt help is forthcoming, the speaker said, "Europe will invite disaster."

The lecturer received a hearty ovation on concluding his very interesting exposé, and was heartily thanked by the President for the able way in which he had presented a serious and alarming state of affairs.

Commander Stephen King-Hall associated himself with the President in expressing his appreciation to Dr. Lindt for the efficient way he had treated his subject, expressing the hope that the victorious powers will find ways and means to once again put Germany on its feet, but not without proper guarantees, that the peace of the world will not be again disturbed.

Thus ended a very interesting Meeting.

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