

Swiss Benevolent Society : Do you know

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SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY. DO YOU KNOW :

What it is ?

It is an organisation to relieve hardship and suffering of our poor compatriots.

What it does ?

For the Aged : It pays pensions to some 70 old men and women. In 1954, £3,500 were paid out in this way. In addition the "Home for Aged Swiss" fund takes care of a few old people. The Society also makes payments on behalf of the Swiss Old Age Pension Scheme.

For the Infirm : Hospital inmates are visited, and they receive parcels. There is a special fund to provide grants for holidays to needy Swiss in failing health.

For the Young : It gives a grant of £200 p.a. and office facilities to the Swiss Welfare Office for Girls. It has lately acquired a building in Hampstead to be used as a Swiss Hostel for Girls. (This, it is hoped, will be ready in the spring.) It helps poor children to enjoy a summer holiday in Switzerland under the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and Pro Juventute scheme.

For the Poor in general : It gives relief where needed. Several thousand pounds are spent on this every year. It runs a clothing service and distributes parcels at Christmas. Last year 141 parcels were sent, benefitting 216 people. It repatriates people to Switzerland when necessary.

Whom it assists ?

All those who need help, be it advice or support in cash or kind. Last year 848 interviews were granted, 98 visits paid and 2,709 applications for help of one kind or another considered.

Who does the work ?

The Society is managed by an Executive Committee whose Hon. President is the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, and its President, Mr. F. G. Sommer. This Committee (including the pastors of the Swiss Churches) meet every Monday evening to deal with cases. There is a full-time Secretariat. Three times a year the members of the Society meet. This assembly consists of the Executive Committee, members of sub-committees, several individual members and the Presidents of

the Swiss Societies and Churches. The S.B.S. has the valuable active help and support of the Legation for which it is very grateful. There are several men and women who do a lot of work individually, either on the committees or with the clothing service, Christmas parcels, visiting the poor or as members of the sewing groups of the Swiss Church.

Where the S.B.S. is ?

It has its offices at Swiss Home, 31, Conway Street, London, W.1. The Welfare Office for Swiss Girls is also housed there.

Where the money comes from ?

The largest amount (in 1954 it was £1,642) comes from subscriptions and donations. It has always been the hallmark of the S.B.S. that the

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Swiss Colony has largely maintained it by generous voluntary financial help. The Swiss Confederation and the Cantons pay a subsidy and help in some individual cases. There are several funds which were originally started by legacies, and almost every year one or more bequests are received.

How you can help ?

- 1.) You can send a donation of money to the Secretary or you can suggest to your firm to make a contribution.
- 2.) You can send clothing, household articles, linen, etc. (used, but clean and in good repair) to the Secretary or to one of the Swiss Churches. Such articles are especially welcome now that preparations for the distribution of Christmas parcels have started.
- 3.) You can visit old and sick people or put your car at the disposal of such visitors — the Secretary, Mr. J. Zimmermann, will gladly give you information. He will also tell you any other way by which you can make an active contribution.
- 4.) As a woman you can join one of the sewing groups (Schweizerkirche, every 1st Tuesday in the month at 2.30 and Eglise Suisse every 2nd Tuesday in the month at 2.30, both at the Swiss Church, 79, Endell Street, London, W.C.2). Garments are sewn and knitted there throughout the year and distributed by the S.B.S. at Christmas.
- 5.) If you are already a contributor you can without extra expense sign a 7 years' covenant under which the Society can claim an income tax refund. In 1954 this additional income

amounted to £502 on the 133 covenanted subscriptions.

6.) You can remember the S.B.S. in your will.

And now that you have read this would you not like to make an extra effort to support the Society? At their last meeting on 29th August the Hon. Treasurer showed in his half-yearly statement that expenses are rising and that pensions in particular are steadily going up. The cost of the much needed Home for girls is going to be considerably higher than originally budgeted. Please don't let the fact that the Society received a handsome legacy in 1953 deter you. Surely you, too, will help all you can to make certain that your less fortunate compatriots can look forward to a happy Christmas and a less worrying New Year.

Mariann.



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