

An unusual conversation

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AN UNUSUAL CONVERSATION

We get surprising phone calls at the Swiss Observer. Our Mr. Thomson, who takes care of the paper's interests as well as those of other companies housed in the same building, had a curious call recently and the conversation ran something like this:

(The telephone rings, Mr. Thomson answers and a serious, lady-like voice is heard at the other end of the line).

"My name is Mrs. Doris Munday. You may have already heard of me as I have made a television appearance on the BBC and written a series of articles in the National Press. I have a profession which may sound rather new to you, I am a professional rain maker".

(Mr. Thomson, very politely):

"Oh yes?"

"I have been in contact with many foreign governments and have been called upon on numerous occasions to bring down rain. I have just read in the Press that Switzerland was worried that the excess snow of this winter had not yet been dispersed. I could easily arrange to settle the matter in two or three days, but I would have to know beforehand in which direction the Swiss wanted the snow removed".

(Mr. Thomson, with utter seriousness):

"I must point out, Madam, that it is quite outside our terms of reference to interfere with the natural elements in Switzerland, quite apart from the fact that we do not know if the Swiss people actually want their snow removed. The only people who could authorise anything of this nature would be the Swiss Government, which I am afraid you can only reach through the Swiss Embassy".

(Mrs. Munday):

"You may be interested to know that I was called to Peru last year to make the rain fall because of a drought. Never had there been so much rain in Peru. But they never wrote to thank me, and my name was never acknowledged in their newspapers. They begged me for rain again this year, but I flatly refused".

(Mr. Thomson):

"This is most remarkable. If this is all right with you, we should be delighted to consider an interview and make a mention of your achievements in the Swiss Observer. But you must understand our position: we cannot by ourselves authorise you to remove all the snow in Switzerland. If this should be done against the will of the Swiss people and if it were known that we had given you the authorisation, the Swiss Observer might get into serious difficulties. You do understand that, don't you?"

(Mrs. Munday):

"Yes, of course, I appreciate your position".

(Mr. Thomson):

"I suggest that you ring the Embassy. Perhaps you may be able to ar-

range something with them. I'm awfully sorry at not having been able to help you but you must understand us".

(Mrs. Munday):

"Not at all, I'm very obliged to you. Thank you very much indeed. Good-bye".

(Mr. Thomson):

"Good-bye Madam, thank you very much".

(PMB)

THE LIFE OF THE SWISS CHURCHES

The French and German-speaking churches of London held their respective parish assemblies and their joint Church Assembly on Sunday afternoon, June 14th. Unfortunately, the attendance was rather poor, especially in the German-Swiss assembly, where the faithful who turned up were nearly all members of the Church Council already. The beautiful weather outside and the rather unappropriate time of the year went a long way in explaining this lack of presence.

The problems of the two churches were very similar in many respects. The reporter from the German-Swiss parish assembly to the joint assembly mentioned that attendance on Sunday was diminishing rather than increasing. But attendance at the German-Swiss Sunday school was fortunately in sharp progression and there was question of creating a third class of children. Sunday school at the French-speaking church was on the other hand at low ebb.

Pastor Nicod derived some interesting statistics from his parish files. There were, for example, 170 to 200 persons from the 712 recorded in the files who were over 70. The files indicated the presence of only 46 families with children (many of whom lived far away from the heart of London and the Swiss Church, thus explaining the smallness of the effectives at Sunday school). There were moreover 16 young Swiss couples. The conclusions which could be drawn from these figures were that the already strong separation of the two parishes into young and transiting Swiss on the one hand and doyens and elderly residents on the other will become yet sharper.

The future of the residential parish does not appear therefore particularly bright. The future of the church appears more promising in the field of work with the young, where both parishes have had an encouraging year.

The Swiss Churches in London are not immune to the fact that costs rise universally and had to take note of a total deficit of £1,910 in 1969. Much of this could be accounted for by the cost of renovating the hall and by the fact that no Swiss Church Sale took place in 1969. There will be one this coming October and it is hoped that its proceeds will help to strengthen

SWISS CHURCH

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS: à l'Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les dimanches à 11h15 et 19h00.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à 18h00.

REUNION DE QUARTIER: huit veillées en automne et au printemps: voir "Le Messenger"

CLUB DES JEUNES: tous les dimanches de 12h00 à 22h30, tous les jeudis de 15h00 à 22h30.

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2^e mardi du mois.

LUNCH: tous les dimanches à 13h00.

VISITES: sur demande.

PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 7 Park View Road, London N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

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SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, at 10 a.m. At St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION: every first Sunday of the month at evening service only. On major feasts at morning and evening services.

CONSULTATIONS: every Wednesday 4-6 p.m. at Eglise Suisse.

DISTRICT GROUPS (W.4 and S.E.21) and SERVICES OUTSIDE LONDON: see "Gemeindebote".

SERVICES IN ENGLISH: every fourth Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

"KONTAKT" (Youth Group): every Wednesday 4-10 p.m. at Eglise Suisse. Supper at 6.30 p.m. Programme at 8 p.m.

SWISS Y.M.C.A.: see Forthcoming Events.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE: every first Tuesday of the Month.

MOTHERS' REUNION: 1st Wednesday in the Month, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VISITS: by request.

MINISTER: Pfr. M. Dietler, 1. Womersley Road, N.8. Telephone 01-340 6018.

SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION: at St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street (off No. 25 Victoria Street), S.W.1.

SATURDAYS: Ecumenical Service at 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAYS: Holy Mass at 9 and 11 a.m. (in English).

At 6.30 p.m. (mostly in German)

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: preferably on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in the afternoon or by appointment.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: Notre Dame de France, 5 Leicester Place, W.C.2. on Suns. at 9, 10, 11 a.m. 12.15, 6, 7 p.m.

SWISS CATHOLIC YOUTH CLUB — Meeting every Sunday after Evening Mass (8-11 p.m.) at Westminster Ball Room, 30 Strutton Ground, S.W.1.

CHAPLAIN: Paul Bossard, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. Tel.: 01-222 2895.