

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.



H. SENN
President
of the
CITY SWISS
CLUB

Some sixty members and guests were present at the Annual General Meeting of the City Swiss Club, which took place at Paganì's on April 10th. This is a larger attendance than usual, and was probably induced by the circular sent out by the Committee asking for proposals for new members of the Committee. This revolutionary idea had, indeed, raised high our hopes that at last new blood was to be transfused into the veins of that august and venerable assembly which directs the destinies of our Club. No doubt this joyous prospect accounted for the lively spirit which permeated through those present during dinner and during the early part of the proceedings. Verily, Spring was in the air . . . but I must not anticipate.

The proceedings opened quietly with the election of one new member and the announcement of two resignations.

The President, Mr. Senn, proposed that Mr. Arthur Baume should be elected an Honorary Member as some slight mark of appreciation of the great and valued services rendered by him to the Swiss Colony during many years. Mr. Baume, who is a very old member of the Club, was, as everyone knows, for many years President of the French Hospital and a very active member of the Colony. This proposition was received with applause and carried unanimously.

THE HISTORICAL RELATIONS OF ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND.

(Translation from a Pamphlet which appeared in the N.Z.Z. in March, 1919, and published in Oechsli's "History of Switzerland." — Cambridge University Press.

(Continued from Previous Number.)

In 1798 Switzerland succumbed to the attack of France — a misfortune which England was unable to prevent. On the other hand, English gold and English advice played a great rôle in the Second Coalition war of 1799. By the aid of English gold, the Swiss émigrés, working from Swabia and the Vorarlberg, tried to rouse in their country a rising of the people against the French and their vassal, the "Helvetic Republic." An "Old Swiss Legion" penetrated, with the Austrians commanded by Hotze, into Switzerland. According to the representations of the Swiss émigrés, the Austrians had expected that the Swiss would rise like one man, and that from 15,000 to 18,000 volunteers at least would join them, especially as England had declared herself ready to undertake all the expenses. But the rush to the Swiss regiments in British pay was not greater than that to the "Helvetic" brigades in the service of France. In the middle of August, 1799, it was estimated that there were 3,400 Swiss on the side of the Austrians, while Masséna had with him some 5,000 "Helvetians." The opinions of the Swiss were just then so divided that it was not possible for them to take any active steps on one side or the other. They could just as little get up enthusiasm for the Allies, who desired, under the pretence of national independence, to restore the hated rule of the aristocrats in the towns, as for the French, who plundered the Swiss in the name of Liberty and Equality.

The British envoy, William Wickham, had re-entered Switzerland with the Austrians. The British Cabinet genuinely desired the independence of Switzerland, but, being only superficially acquainted with the local situation, it regarded as an essential condition the restoration of the old constitutions. Wickham therefore aimed zealously at the complete restoration of the old state of things and of the old governments. Ac-

In a few words, Mr. A. C. Baume thanked the meeting in the name of his uncle. The accounts were then presented, duly criticised, dissected, passed and full discharge was given to the Honorary Treasurer and Auditors. A vote of thanks was also passed to these officials.

Mr. Senn presented his annual report, which was a model of preciseness and conciseness.

Mr. Senn then stated that before leaving the Chair he wished to draw attention to the fact that the Committee had asked for suggestions for new members of the Council, but that with the exception of one letter, no names had been sent in. He expressed regret at such a meagre response, and then announced that he was not going to read the letter which he had received, and which apparently had been signed by several distinguished members. This decision, which came as an edict from the Committee, was based on the arguments:—

1. That suggestions had been requested for members and not for a complete, brand-new Committee.

2. That the letter was irregular, ultra vires and unacceptable, because the names proposed were not accompanied by or with birth certificates, visa, identity book, acceptations and other documents which would render such proposals valid.

The meeting began to get restive. Cries were heard demanding that the document should be read. Some maintained that, as the whole is made up of several parts, it was only a question of degree as to the numbers of names proposed. Others said that no mention was made in the circular of the necessity of supplying acceptances, etc.

Some cried this and some cried that, and amid the tumult the President alone remained smiling but adamant, just like the classic gentleman on the bridge, or the boy on the burning deck, or whoever it was.

At last, when peace had been restored, Mr. Senn, after once again announcing that neither wild horses nor the terrors of the Inquisition would drag from him these names, solemnly vacated the chair, which was taken by Mr. P. F. Boehringer, senior member present, so that he might proceed with the business of electing a new Committee.

According to him and his friend Steiger, it was necessary that, in every village which passed from the hands of the French into those of the Austrians, the "legitimate" polity, as it existed before the outbreak of the Revolution, should be set up again. Archduke Charles, who was guided in political matters by Hotze (a native of the rural portion of the Canton of Zurich) was not inclined to be in such haste. By the irony of fate it was the complaints of Wickham about the demeanour of the Austrian generals which, it would seem, gave the impulse to the new war scheme which brought about the shifting of the fortunes of war to the side of the French. The British Cabinet began to be suspicious of the intentions of the Austrians as regards Switzerland, and therefore proposed that an exclusively Russian army, under the command of Suvoroff, should be collected in that country. So England was the real author of the idea of Suvoroff's celebrated campaign, and of the second battle of Zurich, which was so decisive for the result of the whole campaign, and even of the Second Coalition war, because of the withdrawal of the Russians from the coalition.

By the Peace of Lunéville (1801) France formally restored Swiss independence so far as regards Austria. But in the eyes of the Corsican, who dreamt of world dominion, that amounted to nothing more than words. In the course of the peace negotiations with England he did not permit any mention of Helvetia, any more than of Batavia and of the Italian Republics, so that in the Peace of Amiens (1802) Switzerland was not spoken of. On the other hand, England was of all the Powers the only one to protest against the fresh intervention of France into Swiss affairs by the announcement of the mediation (September 30th, 1802) of the First Consul. The British Ministry reminded the First Consul that the Swiss Cantons, like every independent State, possessed the right (which besides was expressly guaranteed to them by the Treaty of Lunéville) to order their internal affairs as they pleased; England, therefore, could not believe that France would insist on hindering an independent nation from freely exercising its rights. This intervention on the part of England woke up all the pride of Bonaparte, and led to a remarkable exchange of notes, the language of which laid bare, as if by way of prophecy, the immeasurable ambition of the Corsican, and was the cause of the renewed breach of the world-peace which had scarcely been concluded.

(To be continued).

And now matters came to a head. In a silence which was solemn in its intensity, Mr. Boehringer proposed that the old Committee should be re-elected *en bloc*. Overcome by the energy and novelty of this proposal, *NOT A DISCORDANT VOICE WAS HEARD*, and the motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously. The mountain had, indeed, brought forth a mouse. Having thus put old wine into new bottles, or should it be into the same bottles, the meeting gave a sigh of relief and settled down to enjoy the rest of the evening. It is only right, however, to say that one change was made. Mr. Ryf replaces Mr. Lichtensteiger, who is unable to continue with his arduous duties.

Mr. Henry Senn then took possession of the Presidential chair, and after a vote of thanks had been passed to Mr. Boehringer, the remaining appointments were quickly made, Mr. Jenne and Mr. Campart vérificateurs des comptes, MM. Baume, Zogg and Sommer fidé-commissaires. Press reporter, no change. It was decided to hold one summer meeting in July, and the annual banquet on November 23rd, at the Grosvenor.

Their ardour still unquenched, in spite of the heat and the lateness of the hour, Comrade O. started a discussion on the advisability of a contribution from the Club funds to the monthly meetings, contribution which had been suppressed a few years ago. Comrade W., after having reproached Comrade O. with proposing to demolish that which he had previously advocated so strongly (it appears that Comrade O. had been one of the instigators of the suppression of the contribution), became indignant because the President decided that, as this was a financial question, notice thereof must appear on the agenda. Finally peace reigned, and we all decided to go home.

In conclusion, may I say that I am delighted that Mr. Senn is once more our President.

Anyone who can side-track interruptors without the faintest hint of irritability, and with such unflinching good humour, is a born President, and I only hope that he will continue to preside over us for many days.

The way in which he controlled the meeting was one of the most masterly exhibitions of tact I have ever seen during a long and varied experience as a reporter.

ck.

SWISS MUSIC BROADCAST.

It may interest readers to know that on Monday, May 7th, the well-known orchestral leader, M. Pierre Fol, of the Trocadero Restaurant, is broadcasting a programme of Swiss music from 6.30 to 7 p.m. The programme contains the following Swiss airs: Marche Bernoise; Ranz des Vaches de la Gruyère; Switzerland, National-Lieder Potpourri; Danse Frivole (violin solo, Pierre Fol); Alpine Memories (By the Lake of the Four Cantons); Canton de Vaud si beau; Roulez, Tambours.

Do not forget to tune in!

Drink delicious "Valtine" at every meal—for Health!

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