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SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society took place on 3rd March, 1952, at Swiss House. The President, Col. A. Bon, was in the Chair, and in his opening remarks he welcomed the Swiss Minister and the Social Counsellor, Mon. P. Clottu. He called 1951 a record year, both for assistance and expenses. This was proved by the accounts which the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Rothlisberger, presented. The year had finished with a deficit of over £700 and it was only by a generous anonymous donation that the financial position showed a fair picture. The biggest item on the income side was subscriptions and donations. Mr. Rothlisberger thanked the Minister for again securing a subsidy from the Swiss Confederation and the Cantons. Another considerable sum was the refund of Income Tax on covenanted subscriptions. On the expenditure side by far the biggest item was the amount spent on pensions, £2,564. Casual relief amounted to £1,827. Again the Society had paid a grant for children's holidays in Switzerland which were arranged as usual by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. Apart from housing the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Great Britain the Society again contributed £200 towards the upkeep and expenses of it. In explaining the item of "No. 31, Conway Street" the Hon. Treasurer mentioned that not only the Society's offices and the Welfare Office were there, but that two bedrooms were at the disposal of the latter, and that other Swiss resided there, including pensioners. Mr. Rothlisberger paid great tribute to the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Ziereisen, who did a considerable amount of work in the administration of the building. The Society are very grateful to him and indeed to Mrs. Ziereisen for much valuable time and effort which they have put into looking after the house and its inmates for many years. The Hon. Treasurer went on to explain the movements in the various other funds. The Carlin Fund from which the interest must go towards the pensions was increased by several legacies. The G. E. De Brunner's Christmas Cheer Fund had received a donation from the family of the founder who wanted to continue their father's tradition. The accounts, including those of the Home for Aged Swiss presented by Mr. J. Zimmermann, were adopted and the Secretary, Mr. Th. Ritter, then gave a picture of the varied types of cases the office had to deal with.

The Hon. Vice-President, Mr. R. Dupraz conducted the elections during which the President and all the other officers as well as the Committees were re-appointed for 1952. Mr. Meier, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, deplored the fact that there was no young blood to be added to the committees. All Swiss societies have difficulties in finding young men and women who are willing to work for the benefit of their country. In the Swiss Benevolent Society in particular the work is well worth while as it is for the good of our less fortunate compatriots. It is hoped that young people will come forward and offer their services. There are the old and the sick who are grateful for visits. Some of our compatriots have been in mental homes for years and though unable to go out they do appreciate visits. There are parcels to be made and distributed, specially around Christmas. There is a good deal of sorting out and mending to be done. There are young people who need companionship and help of a kind which cannot be given by the office.

Most members of the committees have worked faithfully for years one way or another and a small group meet every Monday evening to deal with cases, correspondence, etc. New additions to the committees would certainly be welcome.

To conclude the meeting the Chairman thanked the Committee members for their loyal co-operation and he expressed the Society's thanks to the Minister and Monsieur Clottu for their ever ready help. He also praised Miss Wolfer's work as Welfare Officer.

Monsieur de Torrenté thanked the President and the Committees. He said that the S.B.S. was more closely linked with the Legation than any other Swiss society. It was fulfilling a semi-official task in looking after the poor. The Welfare Office, too, could only exist because of the Society's generous assistance. The Minister expressed his conviction that the unselfish devotion of members and the important work which the Society were doing would always command the wholehearted support of the Legation and the Colony.

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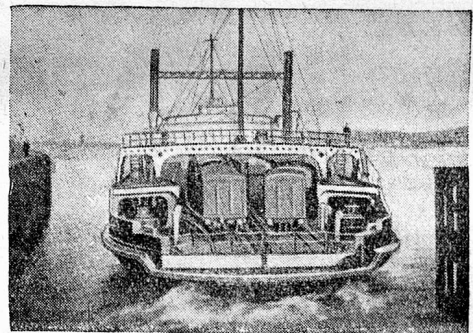
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