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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.
(London Group).
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & DINNER.

The Annual General Meeting of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, was held on Wednesday, March 17th, 1954, at the "Schweizerbund", 74, Charlotte Street, W.1. Dr. H. W. Egli was in the Chair, and there were about 70 members present.

To hold an Annual General Meeting combined with a Dinner is, as I mentioned on previous occasions, a splendid idea, not only does it expedite the business part of the Meeting in anticipation of the good things which are to come, but it also creates a more congenial atmosphere in which to listen to speeches afterwards. This was proved at this Meeting which finished sharply on time (7.15 p.m.), a very rare occurrence, because when Swiss begin to talk there is no knowing when they will finish. The second part of the evening was also a success, seldom have I witnessed such a congenial "Stimmung" at any of the many Meetings which I have had to attend.

The Agenda contained eight items, which were dealt with promptly and with hardly any discussion. Dr. Egli made an earnest plea for a truly cooperative effort in carrying out the recommendations of the organising committee for the establishment of a Swiss Youth Centre in London, in order not to miss the unique opportunity for realising a project combining a social centre with a hostel-home for Swiss girls instead of establishing a home in isolation.

The Council's Annual Report, (to be published in our next issue) had previously been sent to the members, and was unanimously accepted with thanks to the President.

Mr. R. Weist, Hon Treasurer of the Society presented the accounts giving full explanations as to the various items in the balance-sheet which shows a "saldo" of £40.7.6 on the "right side"; not only the Treasurer but the members were delighted, and Mr. Weist received *décharge* with thanks for his labours.

Mr. A. F. Suter, a former President, and Hon. Vice-President of the N.S.H. took the Chair during the elections of a new Council; as there were, with the exception of one, no new nominations, the Council

was re-elected as follows: Mrs. A. Bachofen, Mr. P. Bessire, Mrs. P. Bessire, Mr. A. Boller, Mrs. A. Boller, Dr. H. W. Egli, Miss A. Gretener, Mr. Th. Haller, Consul J. Huber, Mr. René Keller, Mr. A. Kunz, Mr. W. Renz, Mr. R. Schneider, Mr. R. Weist, Miss M. Wolfer, and Mr. Jack Bachofen (new). The auditors, Messrs. M. A. Rothlisberger and D. E. Bonnet were also re-elected.

Previous to the distribution of the voting slips, the Chairman *pro tem* thanked the outgoing members of the Council, and especially Dr. H. W. Egli, for their work, which they had so unselfishly, and may I add, successfully rendered.

On assuming the Chair again, Dr. H. W. Egli, on behalf of his colleagues, thanked the Meeting for the confidence so strikingly given to the Council.

* * *

Then followed a short reception by the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, and the President; after which the company sat down to dinner, which I am happy to say was an excellent one, and the stewards of the "Schweizerbund", Mr. & Mrs. K. Caluori, are to be congratulated on the *Menu*.

Whilst at some of the Annual Meetings of Swiss Societies music is provided, at this function speech-making was the only feature, and as they were all good and amusing and reasonably short, the want of any other diversion was not felt.

After the usual toast, the President welcomed the Swiss Minister, regretting the unavoidable absence



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of Madame de Torrenté, and thanking him very warmly for the constant interest he is showing in the work of the Society. He also expressed his pleasure at seeing the following guests present: Mr. & Mrs. F. Streit, Chairman of The President Assembly, Colonel and Mrs. St. Townend, Chairman of the Anglo-Swiss Society, Mr. & Mrs. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", Pasteur and Mme. C. Reverdin, Pfarrer H. Spörri, (Father A. Lanfranchi was unable to attend.) Mr. & Mrs. A. F. Suter, Mr. & Mrs. O. Ernst, Manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office, and Mr. Th. Haller, London representative of Swiss Broadcasting Corporation and of the National Zeitung Basel. For all of them, Dr. H. W. Egli had a word of appreciation for their useful collaboration.

The President, who seemed to be in a very congenial mood, then touched on various subjects of general interest to the Colony, such as making the stay in this country for young Swiss of both sexes more attractive, by creating a social Youth Centre, etc. (in the study of which he has rendered such useful service), so as to encourage them to extend their stay and thus help in the rejuvenation of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain which is alarmingly diminishing. He also took the opportunity of expressing his gratitude to Mr. & Mrs. W. Renz for their useful work in connection with the Colony's children's holiday in Switzerland, Mr. R. Weist for the efficient way in which he looks after the finances of the London Group, and Miss A. Gretener for her untiring work as Hon. Secretary.

The Minister then addressed the company in French voicing his appreciation for the invitation extended to him, passing in review some of the activities of the Society during the last year. He concluded his oration with the following words: "Je ne saurais terminer cet aperçu malheureusement trop succinct de l'activité de la Nouvelle Société Helvétique en 1953, sans faire part une fois de plus aux membres de votre Conseil et tout particulièrement à votre Président, mon excellent ami le Dr. Egli, ainsi qu'à Mlle. Gretener, votre secrétaire, de la gratitude des autorités fédérales pour le dévouement et le désintéressement dont ils font preuve. Je suis certain d'être votre interprète à tous en leur exprimant la profonde reconnaissance de la Colonie suisse de Londres pour leur généreuse et féconde activité".

The Minister's words were much applauded.


Mr. F. Streit, Chairman of the Swiss Presidents Assembly, on behalf of the guests, thanked the President for the invitation extended to them.

Colonel Townend, Chairman of the Anglo-Swiss Society, referred to the useful collaboration of the two Societies and the importance of a closer connection of the youths of our two countries.

Mr. A. F. Suter, who was presented with a beautiful volume, expressed the hope that Dr. H. W. Egli will be able for many more years to come to be at the helm of the N.S.H. to which he has rendered, and is rendering such conspicuous services. He also expressed to the Swiss Minister his great appreciation for the interest he so keenly shows in the work of the Society, and in conclusion related his experiences during a visit, he, and his wife made to the Pestalozzi village at Trogen, which also brought happy memories back to my wife and myself of our visit to the village some three years ago.

This really happy and congenial evening then came to a close, and in terminating this report I wish the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique all the success in the ensuing year, which they so richly deserve.

ST.



Lindt

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