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A NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENT.

There has been a great deal of discussion on the subject of the Swiss Hostel for Girls, and a lot has been said one way and another about the large sum of money which the Swiss Benevolent Society have invested in the acquisition of the building. When the accounts were presented to the Annual General Meeting of the S.B.S. on Monday, 11th March, at Swiss House, it soon became evident that this purchase has practically halved the Society's liquid assets and thus reduced their income considerably. All the more it is creditable that so much was achieved during the last year. The figures submitted by the Hon. Treasurer Mr. M. Röthlisberger showed so convincingly that the Society's help to the poor had in no way diminished. On the contrary the very year during which the S.B.S. had invested such a large amount in the Hostel was a very active period. Total payments reach the record sum of £8,875 which was over £600 more than in the previous twelve months. Nearly £2,000 were spent on casual relief, and the regular grants which were paid to 69 pensioners came to £3,837, another record figure. Pensions would probably be going up again in the present year owing to the increased cost of living. £20 more than in 1955 were spent on holiday grants to needy Swiss in failing health. The Welfare Office for Swiss Girls received not only the annual payment of £200 but additional money for special cases. And as in previous years the Society interested itself in the Children's Holidays in Switzerland arranged by Pro Juventute and organised in this Country by the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

Surely these facts and figures prove convincingly that so far our compatriots have not in any way had to go short. What *did* go down, however, is the number of subscribers. From over 400 in 1955 only 388 names remained last year. The same way the number of income tax covenants has again sunk, and thus a welcome source of revenue to the Society has been curtailed. This is particularly sad as the signing of such a covenant means no extra expense to the

subscriber. Another item which will be reduced is the subsidy by the Swiss Confederation. The cut is appreciable, the present figure Fr.6000.— being cut to Fr.4500.— The Treasurer regretted this reduction which seemed harsh at a time of great boom in Switzerland. Our population in the colony is aging rapidly and more and more would have to be paid in assistance. The accounts for 1956 showed a deficit of £53, only a small sum so far, but it is hoped that the solidarity of the colony will not weaken and that 1957 will show once again that the colony support the Swiss Benevolent Society to the utmost.

The President, Mr. F. G. Sommer, was re-elected and so were all the other officers. Mr. Sommer welcomed the Swiss Minister and Madame Daeniker, the latter having been invited as Chairman of the Council of Management of the Hostel. The President thanked both Monsieur and Madame Daeniker for their generosity in connection with the official opening of the Hostel.

Monsieur Daeniker expressed his appreciation of the splendid work done by the Society and pointed out again the value of voluntary service which brought so much more personal interest to the various problems. The Minister also referred to the Hostel and hoped that it would become a real center for Swiss Youth, not only for temporary residents but also for our own younger generation and thus be a living factor in the existence of the Colony.

Mariann.

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