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CHRISTMAS APPEAL

In the last issue of the "S.O." was the annual report of the Swiss Benevolent Society. Earlier in the year, readers heard of the activities of the Churches. They will realise that such important work cannot be carried out without substantial support by the community.

Therefore, as in previous years, the SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, the two Parishes of the SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON, and the SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION IN LONDON, appeal for gifts in kind or in cash towards their Christmas Action to provide a little extra cheer for compatriots in need.

New articles of clothing, also used ones clean and in good repair ready for service, as well as household goods are always very much appreciated.

Gifts in kind should be sent, preferably not later than the middle of November, to the SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, whilst donations in cash, postal orders or cheques may be forwarded to any one of the under-mentioned addresses:—

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY, 31 Conway Street, London, W.1.

Rev. A. NICOD, 7 Park View Road, London, N.3.

Rev. M. DIETLER, 1 Womersley Road, London, N.8.

Rev. Joseph SCHERER, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, London, S.W.1.

DEPARTURES FROM LONDON

Ernst M. Bircher

At the end of September, the Swiss community in London lost one of its greatest friends and prominent personalities, when Dr. E. M. Bircher returned to Switzerland.

Ernst Bircher was born in Zurich on 22nd October 1895, a citizen of Kuettingen and Zurich. He followed in his father's footsteps and studied law at the Universities of Zurich and Berne. He gained his doctorate in 1919 and qualified as practising lawyer a few months later. For 10 years, he was established in London as Consultant on Swiss law and then left for Canada in 1930, where he spent 7 years with various companies. At the beginning of 1937, he returned to London and joined an English firm of lawyers.

At the outbreak of the war in 1939, Dr. Bircher joined the Special Division of the then Swiss Legation in Duke Street. In 1946, he became a permanent member of the diplomatic staff at Montagu Place, W.1, as Press Attaché and First Secretary. In January 1956, he was promoted Press Counsellor and Counsellor for Cultural Affairs, a position he held with great distinction, and his vast knowledge of this country and its people made him an invaluable liaison officer. He gave many lectures on Switzerland and helped greatly to strengthen the Swiss image. Anglo-Swiss relations have been of great importance to him. He also took a great interest in the affairs of the Swiss Colony and actively supported several societies.

On 1st October 1927, he married Miss Constance Nanton whom he had met at Pontresina. She was the daughter of Sir Augustus and Lady Nanton, Director of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and Chairman of the Hudson Bay Company in Canada. It was an extremely happy marriage, and it was a tragic day for Ernst Bircher and his four children when, on 14th July 1952, Constance Bircher died after a long illness. But Ernst bore his grief with the courage which was one of his hallmarks and

devoted himself even more to his work, if that was indeed possible. When he retired from his post, he remained in the service of the Confederation, entrusted with an extremely difficult and onerous task which he performed with his usual skill and thoroughness.

Some months ago he retired, and for reasons of health, decided to return to Switzerland. His many friends greatly rejoiced that he did not have to go back on his own — for on 16th June this year, he married Mrs. Eveline Caldecott, and now he will be able to enjoy his retirement in the sunny Ticino to the full.

Here in England, Swiss and British friends alike hope to see the Birchers back quite frequently. Ernst was always been a great traveller. Incidentally, he was also a keen sportsman and was a First Lieutenant of Field Artillery. He has many interests to which he can now devote his leisure. But he will never fail to give help and advice to any of his friends who need it. His great courtesy, tact and human understanding will remain at their disposal.

Good health and happiness for many more years to come to both of them!

Emil Suter

For several months, the many friends of Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Suter, formerly of Moor Park, knew that they intended to return to Switzerland. When their departure came about a few weeks ago, it was sad to see them go, for in their quiet and unassuming way they had made their mark, and they will be sadly missed.

Mr. Emil Suter was born at Horgen and came to England on 1st February 1926, after having spent 4 years in France and 2 years in Spain. He was made General Manager of Stuenzi Solks Ltd. London, whose Board of Directors he joined in 1955. He retired as Managing Director in spring this year, but he remains on the Board.

Mr. and Mrs. Suter have always been interested in all things Swiss and actively supported the activities of the Colony. Mrs. Suter was a regular member of the *Frauenverein* of the Swiss Church. Mr. Suter is still a member of the City Swiss Club, the Swiss Mercantile Society, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Rifle Association. On the formation of the Swiss Economic Council in 1943, he became a member, and for many years, he belonged to its Committee.

As Editor of the "Swiss Observer" I may be permitted to single out another sphere of Mr. Suter's activities, that of member of the "Swiss Observer" Advisory Council, to which he belonged since its formation in March 1951. It is largely thanks to an extensive "recruiting drive" he carried out and to his sustained efforts that a handsome number of new subscribers could be enrolled, and I am most grateful to Mr. Suter for his generosity, his unfailing courtesy and encouragement.

The Suters are now at Wettswil am Albis, and we join their family in wishing them many years of happy retirement, the best of health and continued wellbeing.

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