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THE SWISS OBSERVER 30 YEARS AGO:

THE LIFE OF THE COLONY BETWEEN MARCH AND AUGUST 1940

March 2nd. Less than three months after bidding farewell to Monsieur and Madame Paravicini at the Monaco, the Colony greeted the new Minister, Monsieur Thurnheer and Madame Thurnheer, in a tremendous display of patriotism at the Dorchester Hotel. Tickets for the afternoon reception were sold out at 2/6 as 900 Swiss turned up! Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Anton Bon, of the Dorchester, the £71 thus raised was handed over to the Swiss Benevolent Society, badly in need of funds in those war-torn days. The reception was organised by the Swiss Societies in the U.K. and its Chairman, Mr. Louis Chapuis, welcomed the Minister and Madame Thurnheer with a frenetically-applauded speech. Monsieur Thurnheer also received in his turn a loud ovation.

March 5th. The City Swiss Club held its monthly meeting, beginning as usual with a well-attended dinner at Pagani's. This time was a special occasion as Monsieur Thurnheer was a guest of honour. There was no lecture at the meeting but speeches by the President, Mr. Louis Chapuis, by Monsieur Thurnheer and by another guest, Professor Tustin. The Club unanimously decided to give £100 to the Relief Fund and Colonel Bon, President of the Fund, thanked members for this gesture.

March 16th. This time it was for the Nouvelle Société Helvétique to welcome Minister Thurnheer. His reply was to the President's welcoming address in Swiss-German. The Society's President was Mr. A. F. Suter and the occasion of the speech was the usual friendly supper before the meeting, which, like other N.S.H. meetings in those days took place at the Foyer Suisse in Bedford Place. The causerie for the evening was given by Mr. Henry C. Balsler. He spoke on "*Things in General*" and delivered his exposé in a "pleasant and conversational style".

March 19th. For the second time since her arrival, Madame Thurnheer paid a visit to the Swiss Home in Conway Street and enjoyed tea with its elderly tenants.

March 28th. The Helvetica Club organised its Old Friends Dinner and Dance. Eighty members and friends

gathered together for the occasion at the Club's premises in Gerrard Place. Mr. Alfred Schmid was chairing the preliminary meeting, supported on his left by Mr. A. Indermaur, President of the Helvetica Club. Mr. A. Wyss, who had conceived the idea of the Old Friends, spoke after Messrs. Schmid and Indermaur. Mrs. T. Kummer also addressed the gathering good-humouredly on behalf of the ladies. The evening was very gay and the war was, for a short while, far away.

April 9th. The City Swiss Club held its AGM at Pagani's. Seventy members turned up. After a "simple but perfect meal" the President welcomed Monsieur Girardet, Economic Counsellor at the Legation, Monsieur de Rham, Secretary at the Legation, Monsieur Hilfiker, "the Popular Chancellor", Mr. Dunant and Mr. Stauffer of the Special Division at the Legation, Mr. Bon, President of the Relief Fund, Mr. Boos, President of the S.M.S., Mr. Campart, President of the Secours Mutuels, Mr. Cérésole, Director of the Federal Railways Agency in London, and Pastor Pradevand of the French-speaking Swiss Church. The only change in the Committee's composition to result from the Meeting was the resignation of Mr. Bruggisser (Club Librarian) and his replacement was Mr. N. C. Natter. Otherwise, the responsibilities remained unchanged and were as follows: President, Mr. L. Chapuis; Vice-President, Mr. G. Marchand; Secretary, Mr. H. Bingguely; Treasurer, Mr. R. de Cintra; Vice-Secretary, Mr. A. Stauffer; Vice-Treasurer, Mr. W. Deutsch.

April 19th. Mr. Gottfried Keller was this evening's speaker at the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. The anonymous reporter to the Swiss Observer wrote the following: "We are very fortunate in having been able to persuade our Journalist member Mr. Keller to give us an aperçu of the progress of the war and of the political situation in Europe every second month, alternated by a similar resumé by Dr. Egli. Mr. Keller's instructive lecture was so well prepared; his technical grasp of the situation gave him such a mastery of the subject and this, in turn, was presented to the audience in such excellent cohesion and lucidity, that the evening turned out to be one of very particular merit and enjoyment".

April 24th. The Dolmetsch family, a Swiss family whose members were all

virtuosos in their particular instruments gave a well attended recital at No. 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury.

May 15th. The Swiss Mercantile Society held its May meeting, which was preceded by a dinner at Pagani's honoured by the presence of Minister Walter Thurnheer. For old time's sake, we reproduce herewith the names of those who were present at Pagani's on that evening: Monsieur W. Preiswerk, Head of the Special Division at the Legation, Monsieur A. Girardet, Counsellor of Legation, Monsieur R. Hunziker, Attaché, Monsieur Paul Hilfiker, Vice-Consul; Mr. J. J. Boos, President, Mr. W. Meier, Vice-President, Mr. A. Steinmann, Member of the Council, late President, Honorary Member, Mr. L. W. Krucker, Vice-President, Member of the Council, Mr. A. Stahelin, Member of the Council, late President, Honorary Member, Mr. P. F. Boehringer, late President, Honorary Member, Mr. A. Stauffer, late President, Honorary Member, Mr. Ch. Chapuis, Member of the Council, Honorary Member, Mr. Louis Chapuis, Veteran, Mr. W. Gamper, Honorary Member, Mr. J. J. Pfaendler, Member of the Council, Honorary Member, Mr. G. Jenne, Member of the Council, Mr. O. Grob, Member of the Council, Mr. P. Mathys, Member of the House Committee, Mr. R. Senn, Member of the General Purposes Committee, Mr. E. Hardmeier, Member of the Council, Mr. J. J. Schneider, Secretary, Mr. M. Heiling, Member of the General Purposes Committee, Mr. W. Burren, Press Reporter, Mr. W. Gattiker, Veteran, Mr. C. Mayr, Mr. O. Luterbacher, Member. Monsieur Thurnheer shook hands with each of the personalities. After an excellent dinner at Pagani's each member reached Swiss House by his own means. Monsieur Thurnheer was shown round the premises by Mr. J. J. Boos, the President.

P.S. Sad to relate, but only five of the above-mentioned are still in G.B. Most of the others have since died.

May 17th. Mr. Walter Menzee was the speaker at the monthly meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. He described the life of the inmates of the prison camp of Cayenne, French Guyana. Dr. Egli closed the evening with a short exposé on the current situation. He mentioned several reasons which, in his opinion, might induce the German High Command to violate Swiss neutrality, and the prospects, as he saw them, were very gloomy indeed. Members left for home in a despondent frame of mind.

May 21st. Still at Pagani's, the Unione Ticinese held its overflowing Annual Fiesta Familiare. Tickets were sold at 6/6 and the proceeds devoted to the Benevolent Fund of the Society.