

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1936)  
**Heft:** 752  
  
**Artikel:** "Swiss Home" the home for aged Swiss  
**Autor:** St.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-691618>

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# "Swiss Home" The Home for Aged Swiss.



COMMON ROOM.

In the report which appeared in the Swiss Observer on the Official Opening of the Home for Aged Swiss — performed by Monsieur le Ministre Paravicini on 22nd February last — mention was made that it was hoped to publish some photographs of the Home in due course in these columns. And as you all know, the Swiss Observer has never disappointed its readers!

These photographs, taken by a friend of the Swiss Benevolent Society, will, I feel sure, give you a much better picture of what has been achieved than any description which I might venture to put forward.

In the late summer of last year the Swiss Benevolent Society purchased a house in close proximity to Fitzroy Square. On several occasions I have heard criticisms of the situation chosen for the Home for Aged Swiss and may I therefore be permitted to tell you that for some time past the Society had carefully studied the question as to whether a property in the country should be acquired or a town house. In this connection similar homes run by other foreign colonies in London were visited and the experiences gained by them show that pensioners are anxious to be near their former homes, at not too great a distance from their friends. And this after all is only very natural. Transplantation at an advanced age is always fraught with difficulties and the aim of the Swiss Benevolent Society, as you know, is to look after the welfare of their old people without cutting them off entirely from their former interests. As almost all the Society's pensioners have in the past lived in the very centre of London, it was considered that No. 31, Southampton Street, W.1, would meet these requirements.

The structural alterations and decorations were carried out under the supervision of Mrs. Saager and Mr. Ritter, and the Swiss Benevolent Society, indeed the Swiss Colony in England, may well be proud of the transformation achieved by the many hours and days devoted to this heavy task.

The expenditure incurred in these alterations, installation of central heating, electric and gas fittings, cooking stoves, etc., made a heavy inroad on the Georges Dimier Fund; this however was inevitable, as those who saw the house prior to its reconstruction will readily admit. Although every endeavour was made to obtain all materials and goods at the lowest possible prices, quality was not sacrificed to cheapness, as the House Committee felt convinced that this policy would be the soundest in the long run. Wherever possible the services of Swiss firms were engaged who in view of the charitable nature of the Home all showed greatest accommodation. In other instances valuable introductions were furnished by members of the Swiss Colony, for which the Committee are deeply indebted. From this you will see that everybody was most helpful.

But after all this expenditure there was still but an empty shell. Thanks, however, to the many gifts received this emptiness vanished from the house and it was gradually transformed into a Home.

A very staunch supporter of the Swiss Benevolent Society, who for many years has had

the welfare of our poor at heart, very generously furnished the Common Room on the ground floor. The cheery atmosphere of this room is well illustrated by the above view of one of its corners. Easy chairs, in brown leather, invite the pensioners and their visitors to spend leisure hours in comfort. A glance at the book-case — filled with books presented by numerous donors — shows that all tastes have been catered for. Games (Dominoes, Draughts, Cards, etc.) provide another form of entertainment, and thanks to a special collection — towards which the City Swiss Club contributed — a wireless set is now installed. Our pensioners are eagerly awaiting the day when they can tune in. Will it be the Swiss, French, Italian or German news; will the "Kantönigeist" possibly cause some friction? or will these old people, who have lived for several decades in this country, be content with listening to the National or Regional programmes? In another corner stands a gramophone cabinet for the use of those who prefer turning a handle rather than a knob!

Pictures of wonderful views from Switzerland (some of them enlargements of photographs taken by an expert mountaineer of the Swiss Colony in London) create a "heimliche Stimmung" — a feeling that here we have a Home from Home.

On each of the next two floors there are three single rooms and one double room.

I am sure words can scarcely express the House Committee's gratitude and appreciation to the Swiss family who have presented the beautiful double room on the first floor. The photograph indeed speaks for itself. The room is being occupied by an invalid couple, and it is a great

joy to the Swiss Benevolent Society that through the generosity of the donors they are able to offer such comfortable surroundings to a couple who are, so to say, "room"-ridden and who in the past lived in a dreary basement room with a stone floor.

The double room on the second floor has been furnished by the Unione Ticinese, who sent a special appeal to their members for this purpose. The response was so great that a substantial balance remained available for the purchase of linen and other necessities for the Home. Subscribers to this special collection will, no doubt, be interested to see the photograph of a corner of the "Ticino" Room, which appears on the next page.

One of the three rooms on the top floor has also been completely furnished by a member of the Swiss Colony in London and his wife, while most of the other rooms have been furnished by gifts of individual pieces of furniture.

The Committee have every reason to be grateful for the splendid co-operation and support received from all sides, thanks to which the Home has been furnished at a comparatively small cost to the Georges Dimier Fund.

The colour scheme throughout the house is beige and green. All the walls are painted and all floors and the staircase have been covered with lino. Every room is fitted with a small sink and running water and wherever possible cupboards and shelves have been built in with a view to saving space as well as the expense of buying wardrobes, etc. There is also a gas ring in each room, and pending the expiration of the lease of the tenant in the basement, the pensioners are doing their own cooking. As soon as the basement is vacated, however, a dining-room and kitchen will be provided.

A Swiss Red Cross Nurse has been engaged to take charge of the Home in the capacity of Nurse-Housekeeper, and a special Ladies Committee has been formed to take over the management.

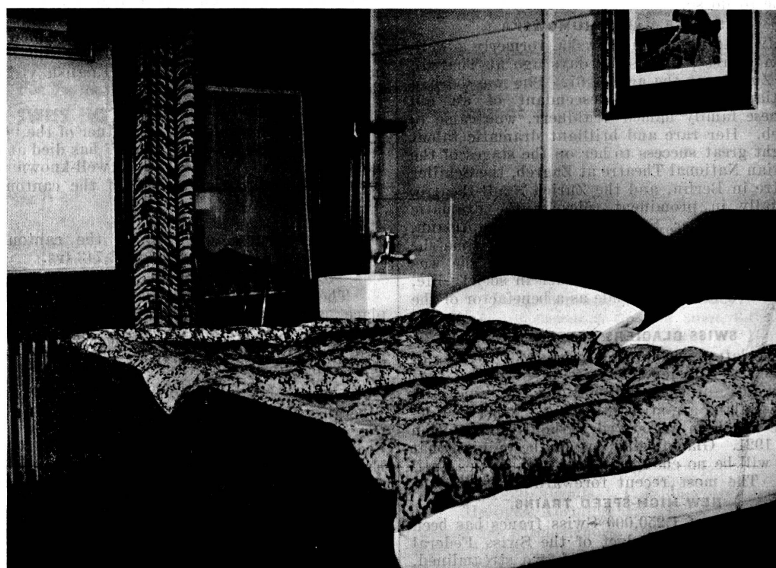
A prominent Swiss Doctor has very kindly consented to act as Medical Adviser.

So far eleven pensioners have moved to the "Swiss Home" and when I called there the other evening I found them all happily installed in their new quarters. Their life stories would fill a book full of adventures, thrills and proud moments of successful advancement followed by struggles against misfortune, coupled with devotion and gratitude for assistance given to them to alleviate their distress.

And now that the life-long ambition of the late President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Georges Dimier, has materialised, some of our poor aged compatriots will be able to spend their eventide in more cheerful surroundings than fate would have otherwise decreed for them.

At the last Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Benevolent Society Madame Dimier, the widow of the founder of the Home for Aged Swiss, was unanimously elected Honorary President of the House Committee.

The future success of the "Swiss Home" will naturally depend upon close collaboration



DOUBLE ROOM (First Floor).

between its occupants and Committees and — in no small measure — upon widespread interest and support from the Swiss Colony.

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## EASTER 1936.

By KYBURG.

*"Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing."*

*Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."*

*And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?*

*Jesus answered him, if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?*

St. John, XVIII, v. 20-23.

Peace and Good-will among mankind are desired by all peoples in Europe and all over the World. The people wish to live happily, their own lives perhaps following slightly different rituals all tending, however, towards the same goal "happiness."

Apart from very few mentally deranged men and women — the war-mongers, the embittered ones, the revengeful ones, the thwarted ones and those who would sell their kin to earn a profit — all want Peace to enable them to further their social conditions, ameliorate the future of their children, find sanctuary for their own old age.

And yet, Peace, i.e. living in harmony with each other, without coveting each other's chattel, without stealing from each other, but helping one's neighbour, supporting him in his difficulties, loving him as a brother and enjoying the abundance which good mother Earth provides for all, — Peace stands on a precarious pedestal and is being assailed from all sides.

Who is against Peace? All those who, blinded by their own intolerance, their own righteousness, their own inability of faith in others, because they have no faith in themselves, shout angrily, each time someone comes forward with some proposal for putting Peace on a sounder pedestal. "Are these proposals to put before the highest sacrificial sovereign? By which is meant 'The World.'"

Instead of believing the best of our neighbours, instead of believing that, whatever they may have done in the past, they may mean well this time, we all shout derisively that we know their antics of old, that we have no faith in their protestations of goodwill, that we are not being caught this time, etc.

We slap them in the face, we hold them up to ridicule. We are clever, we remember, we are righteous, we have no truck we the like of they, in fact, we are cowards and we know it.

I am not even referring to Adolf Hitler's latest peace-proposal only. If you will cast your mind back over the last 20 years or so, you will find that the above attitude has greeted Every proposal for Peace that has been made.

And yet, the World conscience is absolutely Pro Peace.

The trouble is that the various Nations are each blessed with a Government and that the latter thinks that the safety and interests of its own particular nation is its foremost task. Granted, in a way. But they forget, or nearly all of them forget, that that aim can be achieved Only if the safety and interests of the other Nations, all of them, are also considered and secured.

Lip-service has been paid to the ideal of a League of Nations. Half-hearted attempts have been made to translate some of the major aspirations of that League into reality. Such attempts have failed, because the peoples of the various nations have not understood the full implication of the League Covenant.

You cannot have a League of Nations between States enjoying full and separate sovereignty.

A "league" means a banding together. As in private life you cannot be a true friend unless you surrender something of your own personality to your friend, as you cannot be a partner unless you surrender something you had into the partnership, so it is not possible for Nations to band together without surrendering some of the exclusivity of their status as individual Nations.

The case of our dear Switzerland, as a small League of Nations, has been cited *ad nauseam*. Comparisons are always distasteful and often deceitful. But, unless the peoples of all nations realise that they cannot have Peace as long as they remain independent in the fullest sense of the word, that they cannot have a League of Nations, unless the League is Above the individual nations, Peace will be but an aspiration.

Instead, therefore, of slapping the face of anyone who proposes some measure which, in time, might lead to such a League in which the individual Nations play their part, but are conscious that their individual interests come After and not Before the interests of the League, it would be better if we tried the old way and followed the old exhortation, to fall in with our adversary which he is in the mood!

At Easter-Time it is always easier to Hope, than at other periods of the year. Nature awakens, Spring flowers greet us, the message of resurrection gladdens our hearts.

We who grow older, who have suffered, whose heart, at times, have been seared by grievous losses of beloved ones, or who, in younger years, have made mistakes for which we now atone, we realise that Life has to be lived to its appointed end. But we also realise, dimly and incompletely perhaps, that Resurrection, the feast we celebrate at Easter is a very real thing and that our life, however unimportant we may think it is, yet forms a small link in the endless chain of human endeavour and evolution and as such is as indestructible as is the yearly recurring wonder of Easter.

And when the Founder of our Religion says "Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard!" Let us turn our thoughts towards our innermost heart and listen to the voice therein which says

## YOU HAVE HEARD!

And so, I wish our Readers a very happy Easter and hope that they may yet live to see the day when Peace becomes a reality.

## ZURICH ROWING CLUB (HENLEY) APPEAL.

In our issue of March 14th, we made an appeal to the Swiss Colony, to help our compatriots to defend their titles as winners of the *Stewards Cup* and the *Diamond Sculls*, which they won at Henley last year.

We are as anxious as our Swiss friends are, that they should defend their titles, which they won in such an amazing manner, and we make an earnest appeal to all Swiss in the British Isles, to help us to find a part of the expenses, taking the point of view, that their success reflects in no small part on the good name of Switzerland, and the individual Swiss living in this hospitable land.

By their last year's achievement the Zurich Rowing Club has proved to the International sporting community that Switzerland has become a dangerous and gallant rival in the domains of Sport, and they have thus added new lustre to the many accomplishments which have promulgated a good and honourable name for our country abroad.

We acknowledge with much pleasure and thanks the undermentioned donations, and we sincerely hope that many more of our compatriots will help us to achieve our end. Any donation, however small, will be gratefully received.

Donations, marked "Henley Fund, R.C. Zurich" can be sent either to the offices of the Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2, or to the Swiss Legation, 18, Montagu Place, Bryanston Square, W.1; they will be acknowledged weekly in the columns of our paper.

## THANK YOU!

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Swiss Legation	...	...	4 10 0
P. F. Boehringer	...	...	1 1 0
A. Stauffer	...	...	10 6 0
E. Wepf	...	...	2 0 0
J. Jacomelli	...	...	5 0 0
Mrs. H. Ellison	...	...	3 3 0
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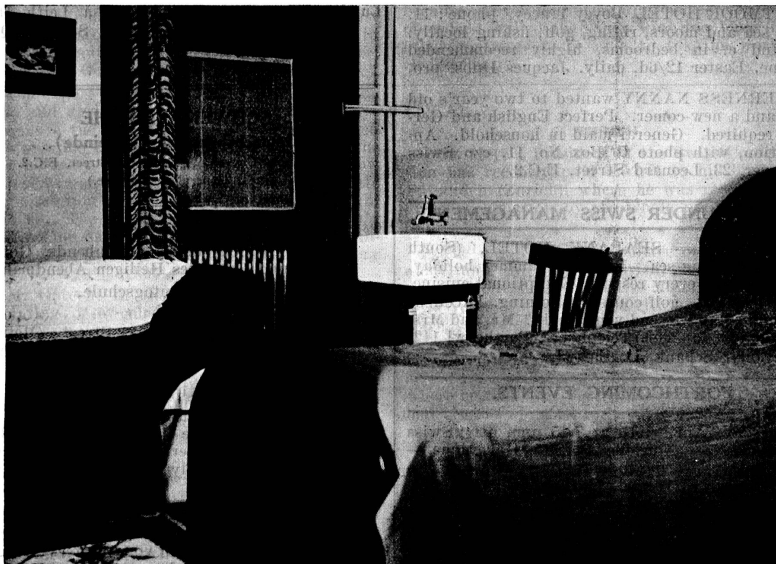
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## AT THE LEGATION.

An at home was held on Tuesday, April 7th, by the Swiss Minister at the Legation, to meet Mlle. Trudy Schoop and Mlle. Ella Maillart.

## PERSONAL.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. and Mme. Charles Chapuis, upon the great loss they have sustained through the death of Madame I. Tzaut-Serex, which recently occurred at Geneva. Madame Chapuis' mother had been an invalid for several years.



"TICINO" ROOM (On Second Floor).