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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the

Nouvelle Société Helvétique.



A. F. SUTER
President
of the
Nouvelle
Société Helvétique.

Some thirty members were present at the Annual General Meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique (London Group) which took place at the "Foyer Suisse," 15, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1, on Friday, January 15th.

The proceedings opened by the report being read by the President, Mr. A. F. Suter, giving a full and concise *exposé* of the activities of the Society during 1936. (This report was published in full in the Swiss Observer No. 793 of January 23rd.)

The re-election of the Council then took place, the following members being unanimously elected:

W. Beckmann, C. Campart, Dr. H. W. Egli, Dr. Ch. Ferrière, G. Godet, R. H. Hoffmann-de Visme, G. J. Keller, F. Kibiger, M. Roethlisberger, P. R. Savoie, J. A. Seiffert, A. F. Suter, J. Weber, O. E. Wetzel.

(Mr. J. Hausermann who resigned from the Council was substituted by Mr. J. A. Seiffert.)

The following dates have been fixed for the monthly meetings and lectures of the Society:— 1937

February 26th, 8 o'clock, at Swiss House:— Mr. E. Wepf on "Alpine photography."

March 19th, 8 o'clock, at Swiss House:— Dr. Ferrière, "Insect Pests in Switzerland."

April 16th, 6.30 p.m., at the Foyer:— A. F. Suter, "The Swiss Abroad."

May 21st, 6.30 p.m., at the Foyer:— No lecture fixed yet.

June 18th, 6.30 p.m. at the Foyer:— No lecture fixed yet.

July 16th, 8 o'clock p.m., at Swiss House:— No lecture fixed yet.

October 15th, 6.30 p.m., at the Foyer:— No lecture fixed yet.

November 19th, 8 o'clock p.m., at Swiss House:— No lecture fixed yet.

January 21st, 1938, Annual General Meeting at the Foyer.

All the above dates fall on Fridays and each meeting at the Foyer is preceded by a simple but ample supper. It is very necessary that all members wishing to partake of the supper should telephone not later than the previous day at noon. (Mansion House 0348). We particularly draw attention to Mr. Wepf's announced show of Alpine photographic slides in February. He possesses an almost unique collection of magnificent alpine panoramas, the cream of which he has had specially transposed into diapositives for his lecture.

We regret to announce that it has been found impossible to procure sufficient interesting films for a February show. The Society reluctantly abandons the spring show of A TRAVERS LA SUISSE as they have not been able to substitute it by any other event likely to appeal to the Colony to the same extent.

— UNIONE TICINESE —

Domenica, 31 gennaio, si riunì la prima Assemblea Generale del 1937 dell'Unione Ticinese, alla Sede Sociale. Lo scarso intervento di soci beneficia questa volta di parecchie scuse: il maltempo, eagine dello straripamento di fiumi in tutto il paese; l'epidemia d'influenza la quale benché di forma benigna si è accaparrata un numeroso stuolo di vittime (talune anzi molto disposte a lasciarsi accaparrare) ed in fine quei soci, incolpabili da queste calamità, saranno caduti facili vittime alla propria modestia, dovendosi procedere alla nomina del nuovo consiglio direttivo.

Presiede il Signor Oscar Gambazzi che il passar degli anni sembra ringiovanire, presenti circa cinquanta soci fra cui alcuni veterani.

Approvato il verbale della precedente Assemblea Generale, il socio Giuseppe Delmù presenta il rapporto della Commissione di Revisione per l'esercizio del 1936, rapporto quanto mai conciso chiaro dal quale risalta la solidità dell'assetto finanziario nonostante ingenti spese di carattere straordinario siano causa del lieve disavanzo.

In una dettagliata relazione, cosparsa di qualche gemma retorica, il Segretario, socio Pietro De Maria passa in rassegna il lavoro svolto dalla Unione Ticinese nel corso del 1936 — l'anno dei tre re come già lo designa il popolo. Rileveremo soltanto la lusinghiera riuscita delle tre feste sociali. I soccorsi versati sono stati normali e le scomparse di soci per decesso sono state controbilanciate da altrettante ammissioni. Due collette in seno al sodalizio diedero risultati brillanti, una a favore dei compatrioti vittime della guerra civile in Spagna fruttò circa venti sterline e l'altra per l'arredamento di una camera "Ticino" presso lo "Swiss Home" ne raggiunse circa settanta.

A Presidente provvisorio durante il brevissimo interregno venne scelto per unanime acclamazione il socio più anziano presente, l'ottuagenario ex-Presidente, Alpino Bolla, mentre la Direzione per il nuovo esercizio risultò ben poco diversa da quella uscente, l'assemblea compiacendosi a confermare in carica la vecchia guardia:

Presidente: O. Gambazzi
Vice Presidente: G. Eusebio
Segretario: P. De Maria
Vice Segretario: C. Ferrari
Cassiere: C. Berti
Esattore: A. Moresi
Membri: E. Ferririo, D. Lunghi, E. Moresi, R. Orelli e C. Togni.

Vengono quindi votati i limiti dei sussidi da concedersi nel corso dell'anno a soci ammalati, nonché confermate con qualche aumento le elargizioni agli ospedalieri ed altre opere di beneficenza cui conterranei meno fortunati fanno ricorso.

Fra un subisso d'applausi il Presidente dà lettura alla lettera di ringraziamento giunta dal Presidente della Confederazione, Cn. Giuseppe Motta, in risposta al caloroso telegramma inviategli in nome della Colonia Ticinese di Londra in occasione della sua elezione, per la quinta volta alla carica di Primo Cittadino elvetico e della ricorrenza del suo giubileo di governo.

ensj.

WATER-COLOURS OF SWITZERLAND.

This charming collection is being shown at the galleries of the Pine Art Society, 148, New Bond Street. The artist, John Smith, known as Warwick Smith, passed through Switzerland on his way back from Italy in 1781. He saw Lugano, the Grisons, Glarus, Zurich, Lucerne, the Bernese Oberland, the Valais and the Lake of Geneva, and everywhere he painted pictures that delight by their clearness and freshness.

Many of them were acquired by his great admirer and patron, the Earl of Warwick, and at Warwick Castle they have remained these hundred years, rarely shown or even exposed to the light. Now they have emerged as fresh as when they left the artist's hands, attracting the interest of connoisseurs and endearing themselves to those who love Switzerland, not only the Switzerland of beautiful mountains, rivers and lakes, but also the Switzerland of sturdy old towns and lovable old wooden bridges.

J. H. M.

LA POLITIQUE.

Fâcheux atteroiements.

Il faut le dire sans réticence: si le peuple suisse n'est pas capable de mettre le communisme hors la loi, d'en interdire non seulement les manifestations publiques, mais l'existence même sur tout le territoire de la Confédération, et cela sous peine de sanctions sévères, eh bien c'est qu'il n'est plus digne de garder son indépendance, et qu'il mérite d'être asservi.

Nous sommes du reste profondément convaincu du contraire. Nous savons pertinemment que la très grande majorité des citoyens est hostile à la propagande moscovitaire, qu'elle repousse avec dégoût l'idéologie bolchévisante, qu'elle demeure attachée à nos traditions démocratiques — haïes et sournoisement combattues par les communistes, malgré l'hypocrisie de leurs récentes déclarations. Les sectateurs de cette doctrine empoisonnée forment une infime minorité, mais une minorité agissante, habile, audacieuse, et qui jouit de deux grands avantages: l'argent venu de l'U. R. S. S., grâce auquel elle peut éditer des journaux, imprimer des tracts, entretenir des agents, payer les frais de secrétariats, etc.; puis, la longanimité, devenue coupable, des autorités qui la tolèrent encore, sous le fallacieux prétexte du respect de la

liberté d'opinion. Comme si la gale, la peste, le choléra avaient droit à la liberté!

Où, notre peuple eu a assez du communisme. Mais il est trahi par ses représentants. On s'en rend compte: seul un mouvement populaire, résolu et puissant, aura raison des hésitations stupides, des craintes chimériques de légistes à œillères, qui ne comprennent pas qu'il s'agit de sauver le pays contre une invasion plus redoutable que celle qui se ferait les armes à la main. On vote des crédits pour la défense nationale, afin de protéger les frontières contre un ennemi lut-tant à visage découvert, et c'est fort bien; mais on laisse le territoire helvétique se transformer en champ d'expérience pour les révolutionnaires à la solde de Moscou; et c'est un scandale national. Que l'on attende encore quelques mois, et la voyoucratie d'extrême-gauche sera maîtresse chez nous. Ce ne sont pas des conjectures d'"hallucinés" — M. E.-P. Graber appelle ainsi les patriotes —, mais des constatations de fait: les tristes événements de La Chaux-de-Fonds ne sont pas des rêveries, mais de tragiques réalités.

Or, que font les Chambres par l'organe de leurs commissions? Celle du Conseil des Etats ergote sur les textes et redoute d'être accusée de partialité si elle accepte que le communisme soit clairement désigné dans l'arrêté urgent proposé par le gouvernement! Eh oui, nous en sommes là! Le communisme menace nos libertés, prétend détruire par la violence notre ordre politique, se targue d'y parvenir en usant de la licence que lui accorde notre libéralisme; et l'on n'a pas le courage de le reconnaître et de défendre l'Etat. Au sens strict du terme, au sens latin, c'est de l'imbécillité, c'est-à-dire une coupable faiblesse de caractère.

Il va de soi que si d'autres groupements menaçaient sérieusement la sécurité de nos institutions, nous demanderions aussi des mesures contre eux. Mais ce "péril de droite," ce "péril fasciste," que le splunitif d'extrême-gauche invoque à grands cris, n'est qu'un épouvantail dressé pour les besoins de la cause. Les quelques entreprises tentées ici ou là pour introduire chez nous les idées de certains régimes dictatoriaux ont sombré dans l'indifférence ou le ridicule. Au lieu que, de mois en mois, le communisme devient plus arrogant.

Des commissions parlementaires, dont la pléuterie nous est connue, nous'espérons rien. Mais le Conseil fédéral a eu tort, lui aussi, de présenter un projet alambiqué, timide, confus, par lequel, cherchant, dirait-on, à "noyer le poisson," il vise aussi bien la libre critique (dans un article vague et gauche, modèle de galimatias double), que les ennemis jurés de la patrie.

Une fois de plus, c'est à l'opinion publique de réagir, d'exprimer sa volonté, de montrer aux autorités responsables la voie à suivre. Cette voie est simple et droite: un arrêté urgent proscrivant toute organisation communiste sur le territoire suisse. Un point, c'est tout.

Léon Savary.

(La Tribune de Genève.)

WHAT OTHER'S THINK OF US.

A Language Problem.

"— and I have three national languages." Thus spoke Major Bluntschli, Bernard Shaw's "Chocolate Soldier" in "Arms and the Man." I wonder how many readers of that admirable farce, which first showed the great Shaw for what he was, realised to what an extent that one remark of the "Chocolate Soldier" enshrines in Switzerland both a truth and a difficulty — a difficulty, by the way, admirably overcome.

At the present moment Belgium is trying to solve a problem that has arisen about the language for the army. The Walloons and the Flemings are not in agreement, and the Government do not seem quite clear about it. A similar difficulty arose a great many years ago in Austria-Hungary.

Switzerland, it may seem to many, must also have had the same sort of problem concerning the German, French, and Italian languages.

Theory and Practice.

But when we say that Switzerland is a trilingual country, including citizens who speak French, German, and Italian, how far do we realise what such a statement means in practice? We think instinctively — I know I did myself until I lived in the country — that every Swiss citizen is really trilingual: that you can always expect to find a Swiss completely versed in French, German, and Italian. This is very far from being the case. The real truth is that there are very few Swiss who have more than a working knowledge of two of the three national languages, and there are quite a number, especially in the country districts, who know nothing but the language of their particular district.

It should also be remembered that Switzerland is a federal country, a Confederation of twenty-two independent but mutually interdependent Cantons. The sole exception is the Republic and Canton of Geneva, which, under the Agreement of 1814, has, alone of the twenty-two Cantons, the right to secede, if it wishes, from the

Confederation. Of the total population of Switzerland about one-third is French-speaking, about one-fifth Italian-speaking, and the rest German-speaking.

And yet Switzerland maintains a Federal army on the basis of conscription and a certain number of weeks' training per year for every adult male — what we should call a conscripted Territorial Army.

Territorial Basis.

How can you say "Achtung" to a crowd of recruits who only understand "shun"? This, roughly, is the problem which Switzerland has had to face for years past in connection with the training of her citizen army. One wonders how, through the centuries, the Swiss mercenaries, who were hired out to this and that Court of Europe, succeeded in understanding the commands of their superior officers. On the other hand, no historical student will deny the international drilling power of a nation which for over three centuries supplied the finest professional troops in Europe.

As might be expected, modern Switzerland has solved the language problem in her army on a purely territorial basis. Italian-Swiss recruits are incorporated in Italian-Swiss regiments and brigades. So, too, with the French and German-Swiss citizen soldiers, but there still remains the question, not altogether out of practical politics, of a general mobilisation of the Swiss army. This problem also has been adequately tackled. Officers in the Swiss army are required to know at least two of the three official languages of the country. With such a provision it is clearly possible to ensure that the brigading of regiments can always be arranged in such a way that the language difficulty can be overcome.

Mention should also be made of a general factor in the problem, namely, the high level of linguistic education among the Swiss. While no one would expect a Swiss citizen to know all his three national languages, the elementary schools in Switzerland teach at least one language of the particular Canton.

The Waiters.

It is also of interest that the requisite for any waiter in any reputable hotel in any part of Switzerland is that he should know at least one language other than the language of his birth. Maitres d'hotel, directors, and others are required to know at least French, German, and English — and preferably also Italian. I know of one Romansch Swiss, now a hotel proprietor in Geneva, who, when he was called to the Swiss army as a conscript many years ago, knew not only his native tongue — an Italian-French dialect surviving in the mountains on the borders of French and German Switzerland — but also German, French, English, Italian, and Spanish.

This example is, perhaps, an exception, but it can generally be argued that most Swiss citizens are at least to some extent bilingual. Consequently, there can be little difficulty in the assembling of a Swiss national army. Roughly speaking, eighty per cent. of the German-Swiss speak French, and more than fifty per cent. of the French-Swiss speak German. Of the Italian-Swiss, those who do not speak French, know German.

In any case, there is no practical language difficulty in the organisation of the Swiss national army. Also there is no national rivalry whatsoever between the languages which its soldiers speak. If I have obtained one impression more strongly than any other from my many years' residence in Switzerland, it is: "Woe betide the foreign statesman who seeks to divide the Swiss on the basis of the division of their languages."

Observer.

OVER SWITZERLAND'S HIGHWAYS

By JAMES LAMAR

Why not bring your car along and turn, during your next vacation, into a happy and care-free six or eight cylinder gypsy wandering over Switzerland's highways of romance?

In no other land can you find such variety in so small an area, for Switzerland is composed of many tiny worlds, all of them close together and easily reached. And your car will be the key to this treasure chest for vacationists.

You can wind your way close to the glittering snow regions of the high mountains, and a few hours later drive along one of the Tessin's limpid lakes, where the rich sub-tropical vegetation reminds you of the Mediterranean. It is only a two-hour trip from the green rolling hills of pastoral Appenzell to Zurich, Switzerland's largest city. On Lake Geneva the castle of Chillon is pensive in the shadow of the jagged peaks of the Dents du Midi, and a few miles down the lake is Geneva, buzzing with business men, diplomats and Utopians.

Besides the pocket-book appeal of the recently depreciated franc and the very low gasoline prices, all possible has been done to aid the motorist during his stay in Switzerland. At the frontier, where formalities have been reduced to

a minimum for all tourists, agents of the Automobile Club of Switzerland and the Touring Club of Switzerland are prepared to give, free of charge, any assistance related to touring and customs clearance.

The T.C.S. maintains a motorcycle patrol on all the main roads during the summer to aid those who have been unfortunate enough to have had accidents or breakdowns. Both organizations have collaborated in erecting a fine system of free S.O.S. telephones, and there is a free A.C.S. water supply service on the principal mountain roads. On those passes which are open during the winter, stations have been established to help fix snow chains. Each week bulletins on road conditions appear in the leading newspapers, and the A.C.S. broadcast weekly tourist bulletins from the Berne and Basle radio-stations.

There are services to convey your car through the famed St. Gotthard, Loetschberg and Simplon tunnels, through which the electric "flyers" bore their way under massive chains of snow mountains. There are even ferry services for automobiles on the lakes of Lucerne and Zurich, and two lines connect the Swiss and German shores of Lake Constance.

One of the greatest factors in making a motoring tour in Switzerland are the uniformly fine hotels. Even the smallest pension in a tiny mountain village is immaculately clean, and the food is always excellent and plentiful. You will be surprised at the size of the meals served, and even more astonished at the amount you eat. The Swiss laugh and say the increase in appetite is due to the Alpine air. And this is as good and as accurate an explanation as any.

* * *

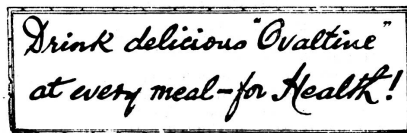
Switzerland's roads as a whole are excellent, especially the larger mountain passes and the highways along the lakes. There are always surprises waiting for you, and one of them may be the ludicrous predicament, if you are careless, of suddenly finding yourself lost on a country road where a herd of cows or sheep serenely blocks your way. Then the liberal traffic laws, which allow you to go as fast as you wish on the open road, won't be of much use.

Naturally one of the first things you will want to do in Switzerland is to tour a few of the mountain passes. There are twenty-three of these roads twisting and winding their way far above the valleys. Most of them open only in June, but a few can be traversed as early as the middle of April, the time varying according to altitude. From October till spring the passes are covered with snow. Nevertheless, the Ofen, Mosses, Maloja and Julier passes are now being kept open all year for the convenience of winter sports enthusiasts, and snow plows work late into November to keep the St. Gotthard route open for traffic.

Among the most famous passes are the St. Gotthard and the Grimsel, largely because they are both marvelous examples of modern road building. The St. Gotthard, which is the main north-south route through central Switzerland, curls downward in the Tremola gorge for a stretch of over seven miles, but the distance as the crow flies is not even a mile and a half.

The Grimsel, which connects the Bernese Oberland with the Rhone Valley, is especially noteworthy in the recently completed Seuferegge section, where the new Grimsel Hospice looks over the nine miles long Grimsel reservoir lake, which now helps in supplying a good share of the country's vast electric power. Approaching Gletsch, the road winds a tortuous way down to the stark valley, and from here the Furka pass starts to Hosphental, going close by the huge wrinkled Rhone glacier from whose grey-green ice trickles the stream that is the start of the mighty Rhone.

(To be Continued).



FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, February 17th, at 8 o'clock — Swiss Mercantile Society — Annual General Meeting — at Swiss House, 35/36, Fitzroy Square, W.

Friday, February 26th, at 6.45 p.m. — Swiss Club Liverpool — Dinner and Dance at the Bear's Paw Restaurant, Lord Street, Liverpool.

Friday, February 26th, at 8 o'clock — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting — followed by Lantern Slides — by E. Wepf, Esq., at "Swiss House," 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Saturday, March 13th, at 7 o'clock — City Swiss Club — Dinner and Dance — at the Mayfair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

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Dimanche 7 Février. 11h. — "Jésus à Nazareth,"

Luc 4 v. 14 ff. — M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme Ste Cène.

11h. — Ecole du Dimanche.

6h.30 — Culte de Communion et service spécial avec le Choeur des Mineurs Belges.

Mardi 9 Février — à 3h. au Foyer — Réunion de couture.

Dimanche 14 Février — Le pasteur Corsani: collecte en faveur des Vaudois du Piemont.

MARIAGE.

Helmut von Frisching — de Berne — et Ann Thomas de Blackwood, Mon., le 30 Janvier 1937.

M. R. Hoffmann-de Visme reçoit à l'église, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2. le mercredi de 11h. à 12h.30 et sur rendez-vous à son domicile, 102, Hornsey Lane, Highgate, N.6. S'adresser à lui (téléphone: ARChway 1798) pour tous renseignements concernant les instructions religieuses, les mariages et autres actes.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 7. Februar 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmationsstunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde: C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W.4 (Telephon: Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden: Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.