

Swiss Male Choir

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SWISS MALE CHOIR. Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Male Choir took place on Friday, November 7th, 1947, at their headquarters, 74, Charlotte Street, W., and was preceded by an excellent dinner, and the compliment paid, later on, by the President to the stewards of the Club, Mr. and Mrs. Wyss, was well deserved.

Shortly after the toasts to H.M. the King and Switzerland were proposed by the President of the Society, Mr. F. G. Sommer, and heartily responded to, the Swiss Minister, who is also the Honorary President, arrived. He was accorded a warm welcome by the entire company, and the President expressed to him his satisfaction at seeing him present for the first time in the midst of the singing fraternity. Apologising for the somewhat dismal outside of the premises, due to war time circumstances; he said that the members, however, kept the interior cheery and bright by songs, and to prove this the choir forthwith gathered around its conductor, Mr. P. Dick, to render two songs, the first of which was entitled "Wenig begehrt ich im Leben" which I considered a most appropriate selection, and certainly in accordance with the times we are passing through. We indeed ask for little nowadays and "get less;" but so as not to make the company feel too downhearted the members of the Choir gave secondly a rendering of that gay and happy song "Mein Herz ist fröhlich allezeit;" thus bringing about that happy atmosphere which the President had mentioned in his address to the Minister.

Both songs were heartily applauded by the passive members and guests amongst whom were, the Rev. Blum, of the "Schweizerkirche," Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer," Messrs. De Brunner, Werner, Mayr, Sigrist, Strubin, Ad. Schmid, Wyss, Andrea, Deutsch, Frey, Keyser, etc.

The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were read by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Jaccard, and accepted.

The President then asked the Hon. Treasurer to acquaint the members with the financial status of the Society. Mr. Ritzmann proved that the Society was solvent and had even a substantial cash balance in hand, this pleased everyone and the "Chancellor of the Exchequer" was congratulated on his administrative capabilities.

Mr. Sommer subsequently read out his Annual Report, in which he mentioned that the Choir numbers at present 40 active members, 58 passive members, and 6 life members. The average attendance at the weekly rehearsals has improved from 21 last year out of a total of 36 members to 26 out of 40 members or from 58½ to 65 per cent. The President voiced the hope, that this record would not only be maintained during the ensuing year, but even improved upon.

The Choir participated during the year under review on the following occasions: November Dance of the Rutli Ladies Club; Xmas Celebration of the Swiss Church, Fête Suisse, 1st of August Celebrations at Casino Theatre, Rutli Ladies Club, and Swiss Club. In addition, the Choir had arranged a dinner and "Gemütliche Abend."

The President ended his concise report with thanks to the untiring conductor, Mr. E. P. Dick, his colleagues on the Committee and the Stewards of the Club, Mr. and Mrs. Wyss.

Mr. Sommer then acquainted the Meeting of the passing away in Switzerland of the late Swiss Minister in London, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, paying tribute to him for the services he had rendered to our country and to the Swiss Colony in Great Britain during his long tenure of office. He asked the company to be up-standing and pay a silent tribute to our former Minister.

Monsieur Paul Ruegger too, paid a moving tribute to his former Chief and colleague, saying that he was a great patriot, and that it had been greatly fortunate for Switzerland to have had a man of such capabilities and energy representing our country during a number of very difficult years.

The Minister expressed his pleasure at having been able to attend this gathering, and voiced his gratitude to the Choir for their work in the Colony, where they had become one of the mainstays.

The next item on the agenda was the alterations of the existing rules; as this proved rather a tedious affair, the proceedings were interrupted half way through by the rendering of that lovely song "Waldesrauschen" finely sung and by "C'est ta chanson," after which the business regarding rules was continued.

On the termination of the business part, the President asked Mr. W. Deutsch to take the Chair *pro tem* during the elections for a new Committee for the next twelve months; the latter, on behalf of the members warmly thanked the outgoing Committee for the excellent services they had rendered to the Society, and acquainted the Meeting that all the members of the late Committee were willing to carry on, and amidst applause, they were re-elected *en bloc*, namely; F. G. Sommer, President; L. Jobin, Vice President; A. Jaccard, Secretary; E. Ritzmann, Treasurer; C. Sykora, Librarian. Auditors: Messrs. Luthert and Wagner; Music Commission: Messrs. Fischer, Sommer, Ritzmann, Finsler and Dick. Mr. E. P. Dick, was, with acclamation, confirmed as Conductor of the Choir.

Mr. F. G. Sommer, in taking again the Chair, thanked Mr. Deutsch for having conducted the Meeting during the elections, and the members for the confidence they had shown in him and his colleagues by re-electing them for a further period of office. Mr. L. Jobin, Vice-President of the Choir, paid a personal tribute to the President for the efficient way in which he had carried on the affairs of the Society in the past.

To keep up the happy mood of the gathering, a humorous "Schuitzelbank" was sung by two old members of the Choir, Messrs. G. Wyss and Sigerist, which was much enjoyed.

Two more songs were rendered by the Choir.

The "surprise item" of the evening was the appearance in the Hall of National Councillor Schmid-Ruedin, General Secretary of the S.K.V., who is at present on a visit to London, attending the 59th Anniversary Celebration of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

Mr. Sommer expressed his pleasure at the presence of such a distinguished guest, and Mr. Schmid-Ruedin, in a few words thanked the company for the kind reception they had accorded to him.

This Annual Meeting closed with two more songs, and before I close this report I wish to thank the Swiss Male Choir for having enabled me to spend a few hours in their pleasant and congenial company, wishing them the best of success for the future.

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