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SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUELS DES SUISSES A LONDRES.

Annual Dinner.

The Annual Dinner of the above Society took place on Wednesday, May 7th, 1952, at the "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club), 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

This Society, which was founded in 1703, is by far the oldest Swiss Society in Great Britain, in fact, next year it will celebrate the 250th anniversary of its foundation. The aims of the "Secours Mutuels" are, of course, explained in the words of its title.

Having gathered, through my forty years residence in this country, some experience about the various Swiss Societies and institutions, I can truly say, that no other Society offers its members so many benefits for a yearly subscription of only 32/6.

To substantiate this statement I will emunerate some of the advantages members enjoy. In case of illness they can make a claim for compensation, should death take them from our midst, the next of kin will receive a cheque for £20 to defray the funeral expenses, furthermore they are also entitled to a pension should they not be able to work anymore.

But this is not all, every member attending an ordinary Meeting, can consume a bottle of beer at the expense of the Society and the Annual Dinner is free of charge, including the traditional bottle of beer. As I wrote previously, this wants a lot of beating, as alive or dead you receive benefits; and yet the membership is only slightly above 90, which is amazing! We Swiss are indeed a queer lot, if we get nothing we grumble, and if we have a chance to get spoilt, we ignore it.

When attending the many Swiss functions, throughout the year, I often feel, that I am getting pretty old and the worse for wear, but when I am amongst my friends of the Secours Mutuels I feel almost a youngster.

In my immediate neighbourhood there were no less than seven members, who could look back on 50 and over fifty years of membership, and their ages, added up, reached well over 500 years, and all looked "as fresh as a Daisy", there were hardly any signs of old age noticeable and none of them had to be carried in on a stretcher; I was unable to remain to the end of this function, so do not know, whether any "were carried out."

The young and vivacious President, Mr. A. Gandon,

after proposing the usual toasts, extended greetings to the official guests, namely Pasteur C. Reverdin, Father A. Lanfranchi and Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer". He expressed his pleasure at seeing so many members present (about 50), and amongst them a good few of "riper age". After having named some of the veterans present, wishing them health and strength, the President appealed to the members to bring this Society to the knowledge of their friends with a view to getting additional members.

Mr. C. Campart, a former President, thanked Mr. Gandon and his colleagues in the Committee, for the splendid work they are rendering to the Society, and paid a warm tribute to the memory of the late Secretary, Mr. Willy Kilchenmann, who fulfilled his office with such conspicuous success.

The official part of the evening thus came to an end and was followed by a musical entertainment. Before closing this report, I would like to pay a compliment to the steward, Mr. A. Finger, for having supplied the company with such an enjoyable "choucroute garnie" dinner.

ST.

A GOLDEN JUBILEE.

Heartiest congratulations are extended to our friend and collaborator, Mr. Willy Deutsch, of 31, Shamrock Way, Southgate, N.14, who has celebrated, on May 5th, the completion of fifty years service with the firm of Messrs. Stoffel & Co., textile manufacturers of St. Gall.

On this auspicious occasion he was presented by his firm with an illuminated address.

After receiving his schooling at the primary, secondary and cantonal schools St. Gall, Mr. Deutsch entered in 1902, an apprenticeship with Messrs. Stoffel & Co., in that town, in which firm he later served as an employee.

In 1907, he was transferred to the firm's then London agents, Messrs. C. Walser & Co., Mr. C. Walser, a compatriot of ours, who had at the time one of the most important textile agency businesses in the City of London, representing all the leading silk firms of Switzerland and elsewhere. In the year 1910, the house of C. Walser & Co. ceased to exist, and the representation of the St. Gall firm was entrusted into the capable hands of our friend, and has been efficiently carried on by him, through two wars, up to this day, and we sincerely hope the he will still "going strong" for many years to come.

ST.

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