

ASSEMBLY OF PRESIDENTS OF THE SWISS SOCIETIES
IN GREAT BRITAIN

M I N U T E S

of the 20th Meeting of the Assembly at the Swiss Legation
London, W.1 on Thursday, 5th March, 1953 at 7 p.m.

This Meeting was called at the request of the Chairman,
Mr. W. Meier, to consider the following Agenda.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous Meeting
3. The Appeal for Funds to help those in distress through the recent gales and floods.
4. The Coronation and the Swiss Colony
5. Any other business
6. Date of the next Meeting.

The following were present:

Swiss Legation: Monsieur E. Bernath, Chargé d'Affaires
Monsieur E.M. Bircher, 1st Secretary of
Legation.

Societies:

Swiss Mercantile Society	Mr. W. Meier
Unione Ticinese	Mr. P. De Maria
Swiss Economic Council	Mr. H. Oswald
Swiss Church	Mr. Ch. Gysin
Union Helvetia	Mr. A. Boog
Nouvelle Société Helvétique	Dr. H.W. Egli
Swiss Male Choir	Mr. F.G. Sommer
Eglise Suisse	Rev. C. Reverdin
Schweizerkirche	Rev. H. Spoerri
Welfare Office for Swiss Girls	Miss M. Wolfer
Swiss Catholics	Rev. A. Lanfranchi
London Swiss Philatelic Soc.	Mr. F. Streit
Swiss Observer	Mr. A. Stauffer
Yorkshire West Riding Club	Prof. J.B. Inebnit

The Chairman Mr. W. Meier in opening the Meeting, welcomed Monsieur E. Bernath, Chargé d'Affaires on his return after his illness and operation in Switzerland, and expressed the pleasure of the Meeting in seeing him completely recovered.

The Chairman also welcomed Mr. H. Gysin, for the first time at the Presidents' Assembly, and explained that he had invited him on his own initiative as he felt that both the President of the Consistoire of the Swiss Church and the President of the Swiss Catholics' Committee should be invited to attend the Presidents' Assembly in future.

Apologies for absence had been received from the following:

Swiss Club Bradford	Mr. C.F. Illi
Swiss Club Balloch	Mr. H. Berli
Swiss Club Dunfermline	Mr. B. Frick
Swiss Rifle Association	Mr. A. Schmid
Swiss Y.M.C.A.	Mr. W. Fisher

A letter had also been received from Mr. Ch.L. Chapuis the representative on the Assembly of the Fête Suisse, in which he informed the Chairman that he could no longer undertake to fulfil the duties as their representative, as he wished to relinquish his many activities in the Swiss



Colony. In this connection a letter had also been received from Mr. L. Jobin, the Vice-President of the Fête Suisse, to inform the Assembly that he would consult with Mr. Renou, the President of the Fête Suisse, as to who would be their representative in future.

Mr. F.G. Sommer expressed the opinion that Mr. Renou should attend both as President of the Confrérie Vaudoise and the Fête Suisse, whereupon the Chairman Mr. W. Meier explained that it was up to each President to appoint his Delegate, whenever it was not possible for him to attend the Assembly.

The Minutes of the 19th Meeting

were confirmed and signed. Arising out of the Minutes the Chairman informed the Meeting that the Secretariat des Suisse à l'Etranger had been approached and had replied that they could give no financial assistance for printing our leaflet, but that they could reproduce it in Roneo-type, and let us have a certain number of copies. Dr. Egli had obtained estimates from Switzerland, which turned out to be rather expensive. He had been quoted from 470 to 550 francs from various sources. This showed that the cost would be twice as high as an estimate from the Frederick Printing Co. in London which was for £ 24.12.6d for 15,000 copies in German, 4000 in French and 1000 in Italian. A discussion then ensued on how the expense of printing the leaflets was to be met. Mr. H. Gysin suggested that the amount should be divided amongst the various societies represented on the Presidents' Assembly. Others thought that some of the Societies and Institutions represented on the Assembly had no funds from which their contribution could be paid, and it should be left to each Society or Institution to contribute what they felt they could. Monsieur E. Bernath called attention to the need of further funds to distribute the leaflets. Dr. Inebnit was of the opinion that each Society, that had funds should contribute £ 2 but Dr. Egli thought that it should be left to each Society to contribute what they could afford. After further discussion it was decided that an appeal should be made to the various Societies and Institutions represented, to send a contribution of at least £ 2. This was to be done when the Minutes of the Meeting were sent out and the contributions should be sent to the Vice-President and Treasurer Mr. F. Streit, "Berna", 9 Orford Gardens, Twickenham, Middlesex. It was decided to accept the estimate of the Frederick Printing Co. and to proceed with the printing of the leaflet in the three languages.

Draft Scheme for Youth Centre.

Arising out of the Minutes of the 19th Meeting of the Assembly of Presidents, the Chairman pointed out that unfortunately the draft had not yet been sent to the Presidents, as it had not been finalised. Dr. Egli, who was in charge of this, explained that there has been no time yet, to launch the projected appeal for funds in Switzerland, and according to advice he had received it could not be launched before the autumn of 1953. Therefore there had been no need to hurry on with the draft. However, the draft was now ready and only awaited the final approval of the Chairman of the Assembly, before being duplicated and circulated amongst the Presidents.

Organising Committee.

It was suggested by Mr. W. Meier, Chairman, that Mr. E. Bernasconi should be co-opted on the Organising Committee for the Youth Centre. It was then proposed by Mr. P. De Maria and seconded by Mr. W. Meier that Mr. E. Bernasconi be elected to the Organising Committee, subject to his acceptance, and the Secretary was asked to write to Mr. Bernasconi and inform him of the Meeting's decision.

It was generally felt that the Organising Committee should now be convened and that Dr. Egli should consult Monsieur de Torrenté, the Swiss Minister, with a view to convening the First Meeting of the Organising Committee. In the meantime each President will receive a copy of the draft scheme.

With reference to the interpellation by Mr. Ph. Schmid-Ruedin to the Federal Council in Switzerland, Mr. W. Meier explained that it was due to an involuntary oversight that the work of the Swiss Churches in London had not been mentioned, and that Mr. Schmid-Ruedin would, no doubt, rectify this at the earliest opportunity. Mr. H. Gysin who had raised the matter in the Swiss Observer thanked the Chairman for the explanation, with which he was quite satisfied.

Floods Appeal.

Mr. Meier, the Chairman, explained how this matter was started by a letter he had received from His Excellency, the Swiss Minister and how he had discussed the question with some of the Presidents, after which he decided to launch an appeal for funds amongst the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, through the Swiss Observer. Mr. Bernath informed the Meeting that the fund, up to date, had reached nearly £ 400. The Chairman expressed the thanks of the Meeting to the Swiss Legation for agreeing to accept donations and thank the donors. He also thanked the Swiss Observer for publishing the appeal twice. The Meeting unanimously decided that the amount collected should be sent to the Lord Mayor's Fund and not to be diverted to meet individual cases.

The Coronation and the Swiss Colony:

The Chairman explained that he had included this subject in the Agenda because at the Coronation of George VI an illuminated address had been sent to His Majesty on behalf of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain. He was of the opinion that this time, we should not take the initiative, as it appeared that last time, we were the only Colony in Great Britain to take such a step.

The Rev. C. Reverdin explained that it used to be a regular tradition of the Swiss Church in the 18th and 19th Centuries to send Good Wishes to a new Monarch on his Coronation, on behalf of the Swiss Colony. Mr. H. Gysin explained that the matter was discussed on the occasion of the Coronation of H.M. George VI, but that they decided then, not to continue in this practice.

After a lengthy discussion on the matter, during which the Pros and Cons were put forward by many speakers, it was decided by an overwhelming majority that we should not take the initiative. It was noted that a minority of two held very strong views that we should present an illuminated address as at the previous Coronation. Should factors arise in the meantime, altering the circumstances, it was left to the various Presidents to get in touch with Mr. W. Meier,

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if it was generally felt that the above decision should be reversed.

Other business:

The President read a letter from the Swiss Legation in which they appealed to any Swiss who would be willing to take, as paying Guests, any Compatriotes who were coming to London for the Coronation. The Legation had been overwhelmed with such requests from Switzerland.

Dr. Egli explained the steps taken by the N.S.H. to organise a Concert for the Trio Michels from Switzerland and Mr. Meier thanked the N.S.H. for taking the initiative in this instance.

The Chairman also informed the Meeting that the Swiss Sports Meeting of Delegates had decided to hold the Sports this year on Sunday, 31st May. He was of the firm opinion that it was not proper to hold the Sports Meeting on a Sunday, and it was decided by a large Majority to ask the Chairman to approach the Swiss Sports Committee and convey to them the feeling of the Presidents' Assembly that the Meeting should not be held on a Sunday, but on a Saturday as held previously. (It has since become known that the Polytechnic Ground was not available on Sundays and the Sports will be held on Saturday, 30th May.

It was decided to hold the next Meeting on a Friday in June.

Close of Meeting: 9.55 p.m.