

Dinner of the Swiss Economic Council in Honour of Dr. Umbricht

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.



Dr. VICTOR UMBRICHT.

At the end of last month there appeared a notice in the Swiss Press, that Dr. V. Umbricht, at present Commercial Counsellor at the Swiss Legation in London, had been granted an extended leave by the Political Department in Berne (Swiss Foreign Office) in order to take up an important post with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) in Washington.

This institution which is under the auspices of UNO consists of 54 member countries. Switzerland not being a member of the United Nations Organisation does not belong to the World Bank, and, therefore the appointment of a Swiss national to a senior executive post by the Board can be considered an honour not only to Dr. Umbricht but also to our country.

Whilst we greatly rejoice at this appointment, and tender our heartiest congratulations to him, we are saddened by the thought, that he is leaving London after seven years of fruitful and distinguished work at the Swiss Legation and in the Swiss Colony.

* * *

Dr. Umbricht was born in Untersiggenthal (Ct. Aargau) in 1915. He studied *juris prudencia* at the Universities of Berne, Paris and Lausanne, and took his doctor's degree in International Law at the University of Berne. He won an international scholarship for a dissertation on "International Law."

Having acquired the patent as an advocate, and made a member of the Bar, he acted from 1939-1941 as recorder to the Tribunal of Baden. He very soon gained a reputation as leader for the defence in cases dealing with defaulters brought before military courts, and his defence for the "Spanienfahrer" (Swiss nationals having taken part in the Spanish civil war) added to his reputation as a shrewd and painstaking lawyer.

In 1941, M. Umbricht entered the Diplomatic Service, and was immediately sent to Ankara where he, after a hazardous and dangerous journey through the Balkans, arrived in February 1942, and where he acted until March 1946 in the capacity of Commercial Attaché for the Middle East.

In 1946, he was transferred to the Swiss Legation

in London with the rank of 2nd Secretary of Legation, being promoted three years later (1949) to 1st Secretary, and in 1950 to Counsellor of Legation. Since April 1950, Dr. Umbricht has been in charge of financial and commercial affairs at the Legation.

During the last few years he has taken part in numerous economic negotiations between Great Britain and Switzerland and has also represented our country for many years on the International Wheat Council. Dr. Umbricht acted as leader of the Swiss Delegation to the International Wheat Council Meetings, which were held at Geneva, Lisbon and Washington.

For the last seven years in London, he has maintained a close contact with the Swiss Colony, and his many addresses on financial and economic subjects given at meetings of the Swiss Economic Council, Swiss Mercantile Society, N.S.H. and to Swiss institutions in the Provinces were greatly appreciated.

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May the writer be allowed to conclude with a few personal recollections. I met Dr. Umbricht for the first time soon after his arrival in London on the occasion of a social gathering of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, where we were fellow guests. His address to the members, as representative of the Swiss Minister, is still vividly in my memory as an eloquent tribute to the mountaineering fraternity of both countries.

From this time onward I had frequent opportunities, as Editor of this paper, to meet Victor Umbricht at many meetings, Press Conferences and social functions both in London and the Provinces, as well as privately.

Thus a friendship developed which I have greatly valued, and which will leave behind nothing but pleasant memories, and I venture to hope, that although the parting is now near, it will remain undimmed until the end of our days.

I also wish to put it on record, that for the last few years, Dr. Umbricht has been very helpful as to matters which have appeared in the columns of the "Swiss Observer" under the Heading of "Commercial News" for which I now tender him my heartiest thanks.

Finally I wish to pay a sincere tribute to Madame Umbricht, who by her charming manners has endeared herself to all who had the privilege of coming in contact with her. She has been a helpful and untiring companion to her husband in his distinguished career.

ST.

SUCCESSOR TO DR. UMBRICHT.

We learn that Dr. Albert Weitnauer (Basle) from the Commercial Division in Berne, has been sent on a temporary mission to replace Mr. Umbricht. Dr. Weitnauer held the post as Commercial Attaché at the Swiss Legation in Washington in 1948/49, and has represented our country on many occasions as an Observer at the GATT meetings.

DINNER OF THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL IN HONOUR OF DR. UMBRICHT.

A full report of the Dinner offered to Dr. Umbricht, on Thursday, September 17th, at the Dorchester Hotel, will appear in our next issue.