

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

A WELL DESERVED TRIBUTE

Although it is not customary to publish anything about meetings of the Advisory Council of the "Swiss Observer", the one held just before Christmas deserves to be treated as an exception. Not on account of the Council's deliberations, which were, as usual, confidential, but on account of the little dinner party and ceremony which followed. A little belatedly, it is true, due to various circumstances, the Council had invited the "Swiss Observer's" former Editor, Mrs. Mariann Meier — and for good measure and in a Christmas spirit the present one — to a dinner at the Brown's Hotel. At its conclusion the Council's Chairman, Mr. Robert J. Keller, got up to thank Mrs. Meier in the briefest speech I have yet heard in the Swiss Colony for the great and tireless services she has rendered its official publication. On behalf of all the Council members the Chairman then presented Mrs. Meier with an elegant little silver salver, which had been engraved, as a souvenir and token of gratitude.

After a little while Mrs. Meier, visibly and audibly moved, went round the table to thank each Council member present personally for his contribution to this gift and then proceeded to recount some of her many experiences in the editorial chair. It would be presumptuous on my part to try and recapitulate her ample reminiscences about all the difficulties she has had to overcome to run the paper, about the shortcomings she got on top of masterfully, and the hurdles she jumped over with characteristic drive and energy. She has anyway done this herself in her farewell article and has told her story infinitely better than I could ever hope to re-tell it.

Nevertheless the purpose of this short account is to put on record the whole Advisory Council's gratitude to Mrs. Mariann Meier for faithful services well and truly rendered.

Gottfried Keller

MR. RENAUD THOMAS LEAVES LONDON

A reception at the Royal Garden Hotel, Kensington, attended by a great number of bigwigs from the machine industry, marked the imminent departure of Mr. Renaud Thomas, managing director of British Brown Boveri Ltd.

Mr. Thomas was born in 1924 in Geneva, but spent his teens in Lucerne. He studied at the "Poly" in Zurich and started his career at Brown Boveri, equipped with a diploma in machine engineering. He came to England in 1956 and was a sales engineer at British Brown Boveri before acceding to the top job in 1959. He married Miss Camilla Whittacker in 1960 and has three children.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas will be well remembered for their devoted contribution to the life of the Colony. After the sudden death of Mr. Alfred Renoud, Mr. Thomas took over the presidency of the Fête Suisse. The fact that he was to be the last president of this institution was certainly not due to any lack of initiative on his part. He also sat on the committee of the Swiss Welfare Office, but when the weight of his professional duties forced him to resign, his wife succeeded him at his post. She is still active as Honourary Treasurer of the Swiss Welfare Office. Mr. Thomas was also a member of the Cercle Genevois, of the Swiss Economic Council, and, last but not least, a member of the Council of the Institute of Swiss Trade Promotion.

He now goes to Baden to fill a newly created post in the very highest spheres of the Brown Boveri universe: he will be one of the three-men directorate of the newly founded "Brown Boveri International" division, whose task will be to direct and animate sales in every country of the world where no Brown Boveri factory exist at present. In this set-up, Mr. Thomas will be in charge of the consortium's business in the whole of the African and Asian continents.

Having lived for 13 years in the mists of London, the Thomas family now goes into exile in the verdant (but how small!) town of Baden.

Mr. Thomas will be succeeded by Mr. George Gyssler, from Basle, who has also received his engineering formation at the "Poly". Mr. Gyssler came to the British Brown Boveri Company in 1967 after having worked for about ten years in the home company at Baden. He is married and has two children.

We wish Mr. Thomas and Mr. Gyssler every success and prosperity in this new phase of their careers.

(PMB)

DEPARTURE FROM LONDON

A loss for the Swiss Colony

At the end of December, Dr. Paul Stauffer left London after four most fruitful years as Cultural Attaché to the Swiss Embassy in London. Dr. Stauffer is a citizen of Suhr (Aargau), but he was born and bred in Basle, and he lived there long enough to acquire not only the distinctive dialect, but also the typical sense of humour of the Basle people. He was educated at the *Realgymnasium* and Basle University where he read modern history, literature and philology. He also studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and finished his studies with a doctorate at the University of Basle. Until the beginning of 1960, Dr. Stauffer taught in Basle, mostly at his former school. He then joined the Federal Political Department of the Confederation. His assignments

included posts in Berlin, Berne and Moscow, before he came to London on 23rd November, 1965. He was put in charge of Cultural Affairs and Educational Matters at the Embassy, replacing Monsieur Jean Revilliod who had been transferred to Indonesia as Swiss Ambassador to that country, Cambodia and Laos.

That is as far as Dr. Stauffer's *curriculum vitae* goes. But it shows nothing of the amount of valuable work he did outside his immediate duties. He was Joint Hon. Secretary of the Anglo-Swiss Society and a member of the Council of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. And it is the latter organisation which owes perhaps more than any other Swiss society in London to his untiring support in their efforts to keep Swiss cultural matters to the fore. But also as Editor of the "Swiss Observer" I had reason to be grateful to Dr. Stauffer for his willing help at all times. Whenever Swiss artists appeared in London, resident or visiting, Dr. Stauffer gave them active support and practical help. His work has been of special importance for Switzerland in the field of publishing English translations of Swiss works, to mention but the latest effort, "Swiss Men of Letters", an anthology compiled by Alex Natan. In fact Dr. Stauffer's official farewell was combined with a Reception he gave at the Embassy on 16th December, to launch the publication of this important work. In his capacity as Cultural Attaché, he was, of course, the representative of the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation, the body concerned in spreading Swiss culture.

In his quiet and efficient way, he was always available for advice and assistance, although his modesty would not allow him to make much of it. But all who have worked with him, will miss him very much, and more especially those who had the privilege of enjoying his friendship. He is still a bachelor, and his hobby is modern history. He will have ample opportunity of indulging in this in his new post. He is going to Ankara as First Assistant to the Swiss Ambassador. We congratulate him on his promotion and wish him success and happiness in his new sphere of activity. He will no doubt apply his talents and personal characteristics to the best of his ability and with the same devotion which has endeared him to the many friends he leaves behind in London.

(MM)

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE

This year's Christmas Gathering of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique took place at the Swiss Hostel for Girls on 18th December, when some 40 members and friends got together for drinks and