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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

Owing to V.E. day celebrations, the Monthly Meeting was postponed to Wednesday, May 16th. It was very gratifying that despite a lovely evening, there was an excellent attendance, over 60 members and friends being present, who found Swiss House still bedecked in the national colours.

Before opening the formal proceedings, the President, Mr. J. J. Boos, referred to the great relief felt by everyone that hostilities in Europe had come to an end and that for the first time in nearly six years the Society was able to meet in happier circumstances. He paid a tribute to those who had given their all for the cause of freedom and expressed the hope that before long a just and lasting peace would reign, whereupon the members rose for a moment's silent reflection. Mr. W. Deutsch, who might well be dubbed poet-laureate of the Swiss Colony, had composed a most appropriate poem for the occasion under the title "Friedensglocken."

One new member, Mr. Fred J. Meier, was admitted and there were no resignations. The President was able to report that some of the latest issues of the Kaufm. Zentralblatt had just been received and was thus in a position to give an account of the Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. at Rheinfelden on May 5th and 6th, for which occasion he had sent a telegram of good wishes on behalf of the London Section and expressing regrets at being unable to be represented. These papers also gave advance information of the proposed Swiss old age insurance scheme, the most essential features of which were outlined by the President. It is hoped that at a later stage, the proposals, which also affect Swiss living abroad who intend to spend their retirement in Switzerland, will be fully discussed at a Monthly Meeting.

The Chairman informed the members that the Council had taken preliminary steps to re-open the College at the earliest possible opportunity. The Society is in communication with the competent authorities both here and at home and it is hoped that with the good offices of the Swiss Minister our efforts will show concrete results.

Amongst the guests present was Monsieur Mordasini, recently appointed Vice-Consul and Chancellor of Legation in London, who received a very cordial welcome from the President and members. M. Mordasini later on addressed the meeting, expressing his pleasure at finding himself in the company of so many of his compatriots, with whom he expected sooner or later to establish personal contact. His words were greeted with hearty applause from all present.

The President then called on Monsieur E. de Graffenried, First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché, who had kindly consented to give members a first-hand account of the negotiations at the recent economic conference between Allied and Swiss representatives in Berne. As a member of the Swiss delegation, he was intimately acquainted with the intricate proceedings and from his most interesting exposé members were able to realise the tremendous importance attaching to the outcome of the deliberations. Although some of the decisions arrived at have been modified by the swift moving events of the last few weeks, they are nevertheless of vital importance to the future welfare of our country. M. de Graffenried was

able to show clearly how these decisions are gradually being put into effect and how it is intended to tide over the country from a most serious economic position to more normal conditions. He also surveyed future trade prospects for both imports and exports and expressed the hope that before long trade agreements should restore Switzerland to its high standing among exporting countries.

There was a lively discussion following the address, in which many members took part. The lecturer was able to answer a number of questions of general interest and to satisfy some searching enquiries on part of the audience.

In conclusion, Mr. W. Meier proposed a cordial vote of thanks to M. de Graffenried for a most interesting and instructive address, to which the President added a personal note of appreciation. This was endorsed by all present with prolonged acclamation.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 13th, and will be followed by a very interesting lecture, particulars of which will be made known in due course.

WB.

SCHWEIZERBUND (SWISS CLUB)

74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

The Benefit Dance and Tombola in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society, as announced in the last issue of the "Swiss Observer" was held at the above address on Saturday, May 12th.

In spite of the sweltering heat of a perfect summer's evening, and partial shortage of liquid refreshments—the Victory Celebrations having made big inroads on our stocks—this function was well patronized, and many old members and friends of the Club, whom we had not seen for some considerable time, turned up. The Entertainment Committee, presided over by our Vice-President, Mr. P. Stoeri did its best to arrange excellent entertainment, and everyone present enjoyed a jolly evening. The tit-bit of the entertainment was provided by Mr. v. Bergen, whose rendering of Swiss songs and yodels once more proved his popularity in the Swiss colony, and he richly deserved the applause accorded to him. The Committee also expressed here its sincere thanks to Mr. v. Bergen for voluntarily contributing to the success of the evening in aid of so laudable a cause.

To wind up the proceedings the draw for the numerous Tombola prizes took place which caused the usual excitement and fun, more so as all of them were presented for the occasion by members and friends, namely: Messrs. C. Struebin, F. Baumann, A. Wyss, F. Burkhalter, J. J. Wetter, A. Bossonet, J. Manzoni, P. Stoeri, A. Schnyder, M. O. Girard, W. Ryan, etc., etc., to all of whom we tender our best thanks.

Everybody, however, regretted the absence due to illness of our new and energetic President, Mr. H. Mueller, who had been looking forward to this first function since his election.

The Swiss Benevolent Society will receive in due course a cheque for £20, being the nett proceeds from the above.

P.I.