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CITY SWISS CLUB.

The last Monthly Meeting, previous to the Annual General Meeting, of the City Swiss Club, took place on Monday, March 11th, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. About 130 members and guests were present.

Mr. A. Bon, in opening the meeting, welcomed the principal guest of the evening, Sir Adam Maitland, J.P., ex-M.P. for Faversham, as well as the following guests who honoured the Club by their presence: Dr. P. Ruegger, Swiss Minister; Dr. A. Meili, National Councillor, President, Office Central Suisse du Tourisme; Dr. Cottier, Manager, Office Fédéral des Transports; Dr. Kradolfer, General Manager, Swiss Federal Railways; M. Bittel, Manager, Office Central Suisse du Tourisme; M. P. Lachenal, President of the "Pro Helvetia"; Colonel Ch. de Watteville, Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee; Mr. Charles Taylor, M.P.; Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, Editor of the "Economist."

On the conclusion of the customary dinner, Sir Adam Maitland addressed the company on "The British Parliament in War Time." The speaker gave a vivid and most interesting *exposé* of the work done by Parliament during the last war, starting with the fateful declaration by Mr. Neville Chamberlain in the House of Commons. He painted a vivid picture of the tension which existed in the House during those epoch-making days. He paid a warm tribute to the late Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, whom he termed a "man of peace" and a great and sincere patriot.

Sir Adam then related the circumstances which led to the creation of the Coalition Government under the leadership of Mr. Winston Churchill, whom he termed as one of the greatest Parliamentarians of all times. He read out various passages from some of his famous speeches delivered in the House of Commons, which, as he rightly said, will go down in history as shining examples of patriotic orations.

The speaker made a general survey of the immense task the British Parliament had to accomplish, the innumerable Acts they had to pass and the fantastic credits for war purposes which had to be voted. He also mentioned the various secret sessions which took place.

Although himself a Conservative, Sir Adam paid a high tribute to Mr. Ernest Bevin for the splendid work he had done during the war as Minister of Labour, saying that no other party could have found a more efficient man for one of the most difficult tasks in the War Cabinet. He wished him an equal success in his new sphere of activity.

Sir Adam terminated his splendid address by paying a moving tribute to the high public spirit of the British people during the whole period of the war. He received a hearty ovation by the entire company on resuming his seat.

The President then called on National Councillor Dr. A. Meili, President of the Office Central Suisse du Tourisme, saying that Dr. Meili will always be gratefully remembered for his outstanding work achieved as architect and principal organiser of the Swiss National Exhibition of 1939 in Zurich.

Dr. Meili was warmly applauded on rising to deliver his address, which he gave in English and "Schwyzerdütsch." He began by thanking the previous speaker for his fine *exposé* on the work of the

British Parliament during the war years, a work, he said, which was closely watched in Switzerland.

Speaking in "Schwyzerdütsch," he complimented the Swiss living in Great Britain for their endurance which they had shown during some of the most trying periods of the war. "We have," he said, "followed with admiration your courage in braving the dangers you had to face."

He voiced his unstinted admiration for the British people, an admiration which, he said, was shared by the entire Swiss nation. He assured Sir Adam that the love for the British people is an old love, and not only an "after war" love. Dr. Meili assured the gathering that 98% out of a hundred per cent. testified their sympathy for this country during the whole time of the last war, in spite of the tremendous propaganda which was let loose on the Swiss people by the Axis powers. He mentioned that one of the results of this incessant propaganda was the petition addressed in 1940 to the Federal Council by the "200 prominent Swiss," an action which he termed as a capital blunder, as the majority of the signatories were good and sincere patriots, and their action could be termed as an error of judgment.

The speaker then related that the morale of the Swiss people throughout the war years was excellent, considering that they were on more than one occasion under the direct threat of imminent invasion. Dr. Meili said that there was no hunger nor unemployment visible during the years of war. He paid a warm tribute to the Federal Government for their immense and difficult task accomplished with great credit, singling out the late Federal Councillor Obrecht, whose foresight saved the Swiss people from the pangs of hunger. He disclosed the fact that the Swiss Government, already three years previous to the outbreak of war undertook steps for the *ravitaillement* of the entire Swiss population. He emphasised that no political crisis exists in Switzerland; he mentioned that errors have occurred, but that on the whole the Swiss people were well governed. Dr. Meili also mentioned that in 1944 the Swiss Army, including all auxiliary services, reached the astounding number of 900,000, an impressive figure taking into consideration a population of 4½ million inhabitants.

The speaker terminated his address by voicing his, and the Swiss people's admiration for the late Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, whom he termed as one of the greatest Statesmen of the universe.

Loud applause greeted Dr. Meili for his fine and lucid address.

The next speaker was M. P. Lachenal, President of the "Pro Helvetia" movement, who spoke in a very eloquent manner in French. He, too, paid a great tribute to the British nation for their sacrifices made in the cause of Democracy.

His praise for the admirable services rendered by the Federal Council to the Swiss people was no less laudatory than the one expressed by the previous speaker. He acquainted the company with the endeavours undertaken at present to bring some of the cultural achievements of the Swiss people to the knowledge of Englishmen, and referred to the forthcoming Swiss Book Exhibition and the Exhibition of Swiss Architecture.

Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, Editor of the "Economist," who has recently returned from a visit to our country, related some of his experiences during his

stay; he praised the moral courage of the Swiss people in making momentous decisions at critical moments. "The only queues I saw in Switzerland," he said, "were those at the various ski lifts." He mentioned that all the trains were running to time as every Swiss is in possession of a stop-watch. He stated that he had not yet mastered the "Schwyzerdütsch," which language he termed as a humiliating experience to all Englishmen who think they know the German language.

This witty and impromptu speech was much enjoyed by the members present.

It was left to Monsieur Paul Ruegger, the Swiss Minister, to sum up, a task which he carried out in an exemplary manner. He terminated his effective address by thanking the various speakers for their interesting *exposés*, and the distinguished guests for their attendance, saying that their presence had been highly appreciated by the City Swiss Club.

The Committee of the Club is to be congratulated on having assembled for the occasion a number of eminent people who are in the public eye of both countries. *ST.*

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

The monthly meeting for March was held at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.2, on Tuesday, the 19th. The Swiss Minister addressed the audience and introduced the speaker, Col. Dr. Cottier, General Manager of the Office Federal des Transports, who held a most interesting and charming causerie on Transport problems in Switzerland during the war.

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ERNEST ANSERMET IN LONDON.

Swiss House was honoured on Sunday evening, 24th February, by the presence of Monsieur Ernest Ansermet, the famous Swiss conductor, who addressed a small and select gathering on the subject of "Music To-day." The lecture was given under the auspices of the International Arts Guild.

Mr. Eric Whyte, of the British Arts Council, took the chair.

The Swiss Minister was represented by Monsieur Barbey.

Monsieur Ansermet said there are plenty of markets but no well defined centre of music in the world to-day. He felt London might become the world's music centre but that for the moment it lacked direction.

Addressing a word to the critics, Monsieur Ansermet suggested they could play a far more important part in helping to give the lead than by reporting mainly the sharp B flats and the shortened semibreve! They should not only attend concerts and give helpful criticism but also prepare the public mind in advance — this, in his opinion, would be of enormous help.

A very interesting discussion followed the lecture — during which Monsieur Ansermet explained how he had introduced the works of the composers after the last war to the people of Geneva. For a long time they were unwilling and very critical but he persisted in giving them Stravinsky, Hindemith, Bartók, Ravel and Debussy. Now "les Genevois" are proud of their long acquaintance and knowledge of these works.

NINA PFAENDLER.

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