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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Society held its Monthly Meeting at Swiss House on Wednesday, April 10th.

The Lecture Room was filled almost to capacity when the Chairman, Mr. J. J. Boos, opened the proceedings. He bade a hearty welcome to the guests of the evening, Monsieur E. de Graffenried, Commercial Attaché and 1st Secretary of Legation, and Mr. H. W. Jenny, Head of the Shipping Section of the Swiss War Transport Office in Berne. Mr. de Graffenried was, of course, no stranger at Swiss House, having previously addressed the members on subjects of great national importance. Mr. Jenny, on the other hand, was here only on a short visit and it was greatly appreciated by all present that he had accepted the President's invitation to be present at our meeting and to give members an account of the war-time activities of the Swiss "Mercantile Marine."

Before listening to our two national representatives, the meeting dealt with the Society's current business.

One new member, Mrs. Rösly Foot, was elected, and another new member, Mr. H. Marfurt, was officially welcomed by the President. Mr. Marfurt had only recently taken up his duties on the administrative staff of the College, making the necessary preparations for its re-opening at the end of April. Being a fully qualified teacher, his services will prove of great help in the running of the College.

It was decided that if at all possible, the Society should be represented at the Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V., to be held at Davos on May 25th and 26th. As the expense involved in sending a special delegate from London would be too great, it is hoped that one or two members who happen to be in Switzerland at that time will be able to represent London, as was customary in pre-war years. Any likely candidates should get into touch with the President as soon as possible.

The Chairman announced that the Unione Ticinese had kindly offered a silver Challenge Cup for a Table Tennis Competition amongst the various Swiss Societies. A friendly match between the Unione Ticinese and the S.M.S. is already being arranged and it is hoped that for the competition proper, other Societies will join in. Full particulars will be published in the SWISS OBSERVER in due course and in the meantime all those interested should communicate with the Hon. Secretary of the Unione Ticinese. The S.M.S. will offer the necessary facilities for the matches to be played at Swiss House.

The Chairman then called on M. de Graffenried to address the members. In a most interesting and instructive lecture, he dealt with the reconstruction of Switzerland's international trade. He said that the prospects of restarting trade along normal channels were taking a more practical shape and the chief purpose of his address was to give a picture of the general background to the various trade agreements recently concluded between Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as a number of other European countries. He first referred to the problems arising from the blockade, which he said, were largely solved at the Economic Conference in Berne in March 1945, which had formed the subject of a previous lecture given by him at Swiss House. A working agreement had then been reached with the Allies which secured for Switzerland supplies of the most essential foodstuffs and

raw materials for the remaining months of the war. He said that a number of bilateral agreements had been concluded in the course of the last six months, some with countries which had been ravished by the war. These were by necessity of a short term nature and in harmony with the changing and improving conditions. They formed a commercial basis for starting trade under gradual adaptation to future developments.

Substantial credit facilities had been granted in certain instances to assist in the reconstruction of the countries concerned. Some of their immediate needs were food and clothing. Switzerland on the other hand was able to supply finance and labour, but was in many instances short of raw materials. Some of these were being delivered by the countries concerned in varying quantities, whilst others offered port facilities, transport, etc. He said that the future depended largely on the economic recovery of Switzerland's neighbouring countries and hoped that a gradual widening of the bilateral agreements would come about.

M. de Graffenried then dealt at length with the numerous technical problems arising out of these agreements, and gave particulars of the arrangements made with the various countries, in particular Great Britain and the Empire, which was of especial interest to those present. He quoted numerous figures to show the trend of Switzerland's export markets and referred to the benefits accruing from the recently concluded Monetary Agreement between Switzerland and Great Britain.

Mr. de Graffenried's address was warmly applauded by all present and a number of interesting

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questions were put to him by the audience, which he answered with great skill and authority, having himself been one of the delegates at most of the conferences when these agreements were concluded.

Mr. Jenni, in a short address, gave an interesting account of the important part played by Swiss shipping in provisioning our country during the war years. He said that the old joke of the Swiss Navy had lost some of its pungency and that whatever the decision about the future of Swiss shipping, the Swiss flag had become firmly established on the high seas. Some of the vessels were owned by private firms, whereas others had been acquired by the Government through charter or by purchase. All vessels had done valuable service, either in overseas trade or in shuttle service from Lisbon to Mediterranean ports. The question now was whether the fleet would be kept in being for future eventualities or whether this venture would come to an end with the return to normal facilities. Whatever the decision, the Swiss navy had done most useful service during a dangerous period, not without regrettable losses in lives and ships.

In conclusion, Mr. A. C. Stahelin voiced the thanks of all present to both lecturers for having provided an extremely interesting evening, which was endorsed with prolonged acclamation.

The next Monthly Meeting of the Society will be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, May 8th, and will be followed by a lecture on Education by Miss Mary Butt, Secretary of the International Bureau of Education. Miss Butt is an Officer of the new United Nations' Educational Centre and will explain what can be done internationally for peace and true education. Miss Butt has acted in a similar capacity for the League of Nations at Geneva and this should prove a most interesting and instructive address.

W.B.

CITY SWISS CLUB. Annual General Meeting.

The 89th Annual General Meeting of the City Swiss Club took place on Tuesday, April 9th, at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.

Mr. A. Bon was in the Chair and 76 members were present.

The Swiss Minister was represented by Monsieur P. H. Aubaret, Secretary of Legation.

The President read out his report concerning the activities of the Club during the financial year 1945/46, mentioning that the attendance at the monthly and social meetings was very satisfactory.

He reported that the various lectures given by Dr. Lindt (The Swiss Army and The Home Front), Mr. G. Wuthrich (Celtic Numismatics in Switzerland), Professor Rappard (L'Histoire Suisse), Commander Agar, Attaché of the American Embassy (Abolition

of War), Sir Arthur Morgan (The British Empire and European Economic Federation), Commander Stephen King-Hall (Parliamentary Mission to Russia), Vernon Bartlett, M.P. (Future of Europe), Sir Adam Maitland (British Parliament in War-Time) were well attended and greatly appreciated by the members.

Amongst the social functions, the President referred to the Fare-well Dinner of M. le Ministre Girardet, late Counsellor at the Swiss Legation in London, and the Thé Dansant at the Dorchester Hotel, which were very successful.

The Club, the President said, had made again very generous donations towards various Swiss functions and charitable institutions.

According to his report, twenty-two new members were admitted during 1945/46, bringing the total of members to 320.

In terminating his Presidential *compte-rendu*, Mr. Bon thanked the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paul Ruegger, as well as his colleagues on the Committee for their helpful and efficient collaboration.

Mr. Oboussier, Assistant Treasurer, in the absence of Mr. de Cintra, caused through illness, produced the accounts which were found satisfactory and discharge was given to the Treasurer. The total of the Club House Fund has reached now the total of £4,375 4s. 4d.

Mr. W. Deutsch, a former member of the Committee, was proposed and elected President *pro tem*, during the election of a new Committee. He paid a warm tribute to the outgoing President and his former colleagues on the Committee for the various duties they had so ably performed during the time of their office.

The result of the elections for the new Committee was declared as follows:—

President: A. Bon.

Vice-President: R. de Cintra.

Treasurer: P. Oboussier.

Secretary: P. Moehr.

Assistant Treasurer: O. Boehringer.

Assistant Secretary: A. Stauffer.

Librarian: G. Marchand.

Members of the Club House Committee: F. Zogg (Treasurer), A. C. Baume, W. E. Gattiker.

Auditors: G. Jenne, F. G. Sommer.

In relinquishing his temporary office, Mr. W. Deutsch, speaking on behalf of the members, congratulated Mr. Bon on his re-election to the Presidency of the Club. The latter on resuming the Chair thanked Mr. Deutsch for the efficient way in which he had conducted the meeting during the elections, and gave expression of his gratitude for having charged him, and his colleagues, again with the guidance of the Club.

Before closing the meeting, Mr. Bon thanked the members for the keen interest they have taken in the affairs of the Club, and voiced the hope, that the next year of office will be as successful as the previous one.

ST.

SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON.

Every Sunday at 11 a.m.

SERVICE IN FRENCH at the Eglise Suisse, 79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

SERVICE IN GERMAN at "Oak Room," Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, W.C.2.

