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COUNCIL FOR THE STUDY OF SWISS PROBLEMS

Luncheon given in Honour of a Delegation of Swiss Watch Manufacturers.

On Tuesday, June 17th, 1947, the Council for the Study of Swiss Problems, offered a Luncheon to members of a Delegation of Swiss Watch Manufacturers, who have been visiting this country on a tour of inspection, at Kettner's Restaurant, Romilly Street, W.1.

Mr. E. Steiner, President of the Council was in the Chair, and during the Luncheon extended a hearty welcome to the delegates who included the following Gentlemen :

Mr. Renggli, head of the Delegation, M. Vaucher, President of the Swiss Watch Manufacturers Federation, M. de Coulon, Directeur des Ebauches, S.A., M. Blanc, Directeur de la F.H.S., M. A. Juillard, M. L. Huguenin and M. Bolli.

The Chairman also welcomed the following guests :

Dr. A. Escher, Counsellor of Legation, representing the Swiss Minister, who was prevented from being present, Monsieur E. de Graffenried, Counsellor of Legation and Attaché Commerciale, Messieurs Weibel and Bähler from the Swiss Legation, Dr. Paul Stadlin, Secretary of the "Verband Schweiz. Metallwaren Fabrikanten," Dr. H. W. Egli, London correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and Mr. A. Stauffer of the *Swiss Observer*.

M. de Graffenried, on behalf of the Swiss Legation expressed his pleasure, that the Delegation, in spite of their full programme, had been able to spare the time to spend a few hours in the company of the Council members.

He voiced his appreciation to see amongst the members of the Council, M. de Cintra, President of the Watch section, and his colleagues, who have rendered many services to this special section of the Council.

The speaker said, that the successful work of a Commercial Attaché, depended in no small manner, on the collaboration of our compatriots on the spot, and it was for that reason, that the Council had become such a valuable institution.

Touching on the cordial and close relations which exist between the Legation and the Council, he expressed the hope that by their mutual efforts the commercial community both here and in Switzerland may derive the benefit thereof.

In terminating his address Monsieur de Graffenried said that both the Legation and the Council have followed the negotiations of the Delegation with the greatest of interest, expressing the wish that their visit has been successful to create an atmosphere of confidence which is an indispensable factor in international commercial relations.

M. de Cintra, who was the next speaker, also expressed his thanks to the members of the Delegation for the efforts they had made to bring the negotiations undertaken some time ago between the two countries to a successful conclusion.

He took the opportunity to voice his and the Council's admiration for the help given to their "Swiss Furniture for England Fund," which has now reached the total of 270,000.— francs.

M. de Cintra then gave a short and very interesting *exposé* of the lengthy and arduous deliberations which took place between the interested circles, saying that

everybody concerned have reason to congratulate themselves on the result achieved so far.

He was followed by M. Renggli, Head of the Delegation, a man who has rendered conspicuous services to the Swiss Watch Industry.

Thanking the Council for the kind invitation extended to them, he said that they were well received on their tour of inspection by their British colleagues and that they were given every opportunity to study the ways in which watches and clocks are manufactured in this country.

He related, that in his opinion, much progress has been made, especially where clocks are concerned, in this special branch he considered that British Manufacturers have reached and even surpassed their former German competitors; as to precision watches, he considered that manufactures in this country will still have a long way to go to reach the perfection which make Swiss watches famous all over the world.

M. Renggli continued by saying that when the question was raised at the time to lend Swiss machines for manufacturing watches to their British competitors, great doubts as to the wisdom of such an undertaking were voiced, both by their work people and the Management; but having now had an opportunity to study the result on the spot, he had come to the conclusion that, under the circumstances then prevailing, it was a wise move.

M. Juillard gave some interesting details concerning the technical improvements made on Swiss machines by British manufacturers, whilst M. Vaucher spoke on the relationship between Exporters and Importers.

The following members of the Delegation also spoke: Messieurs de Coulon, Blanc, Huguenin and Bolli, giving useful information about their experiences.

The Council for the Study of Swiss Problems has once again brilliantly justified the reason for its existence; as an outsider, I am perhaps not competent to judge how much help both sides have derived from this informal and cordial meeting, but I have not the slightest doubt, that it has been beneficial to one of Switzerland's major industries, and the Council for the Study of Swiss Problems is to be heartily congratulated on having brought the members of the Swiss Delegation in close contact with their Swiss colleagues in London.

The arrangements made for this Luncheon party were in the hands of the Hon. Secretary of the Council, M. A. Renou, who, as usual, accomplished his task with great efficiency.

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GENERAL HENRI GUISAN IN ENGLAND.

General Henri Guisan, Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army during the last war; and Madame Guisan arrived on Wednesday, June 18th, 1947, at Croydon Aerodrome from Switzerland. He flew the same day in a British machine to West Hartlepool, in order to be present at the launching and christening of a newly built Swiss vessel bearing his name.

A description of the launching ceremony and the subsequent official Banquet at the Grand Hotel, West Hartlepool, by the pen of the Editor will appear in our next number.