

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1948)

Heft: 1094

Rubrik: Nouvelle société helvétique

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

As customary, the Society decided not to hold Monthly Meetings during July and August. The opportunity was, therefore, taken to invite the Swiss Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, to the 100th meeting of the Council, which was held at the Trocadero Restaurant, on Wednesday, July 14th, preceded by an excellent dinner. This was deemed an eminently suitable occasion to make an early contact with our new Minister, who was accompanied by two of his collaborators who have been most closely associated with the affairs of the Society, Dr. Escher, Chargé d'Affaires, and M. de Graffenried, Counsellor of Legation and Commercial Attaché. The meeting was attended by the members of the Council and two of the Trustees, Messrs. G. E. De Brunner and E. Steiner, as well as members of the various Committees. Unfortunately, several were unable to be present owing to their absence in Switzerland on holidays or on business.

The Chairman, Mr. W. Meier, President, opened the proceedings. He extended a cordial welcome to the Minister, whose presence was greatly appreciated, particularly in view of the heavy calls made upon his time. Owing to the special nature of the meeting, the formal part was adjourned and the Chairman proceeded to give a brief history of the Society since its inception in 1888, its early struggle and its rise to the important position it now occupies. This being the 100th meeting of the Council, the Chairman explained the reasons which prompted the Society to register the Society as a Company Limited by Guarantee in 1930, a step which was necessitated by the ever growing financial obligations and the consequent liability of members individually and collectively. Unfortunately, Mr. A. C. Stahelin, who, together with Mr. J. J. Boos, had been chiefly responsible for giving the Society a legal status, was unable to be present.

Mr. O. Roethlisberger, Chairman of the Education Committee, gave an outline of the Society's educational activities. He referred to the varied programme of the College, which this year celebrates its 25th anniversary. He spoke of the task of reconstruction with which the Committee was faced when the College re-opened its portals at the termination of hostilities. The work has since proceeded apace and the College has been largely restored to its former importance and eminence. Mr. Roethlisberger expressed the hope that the Minister would take an early opportunity of visiting the College so as to become more intimately acquainted with its working.

Mr. J. J. Boos, a former President and Honorary Member of the Society, reported on the activities of the Employment Department. He paid tribute to the great services rendered by the Manager, Mr. J. J. Pfaendler, who had recently completed forty years in the employ of the Department. He had been able to assist not only thousands of employees, many of whom were to-day in leading positions, but had also taken great care at all times to serve the interests of employers alike. Mr. Boos also referred to the signal services rendered for a large number of years by Mr. E. Steiner, in his capacity of Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Employment Department. He stressed the need for a greater influx of young compatriots to take up permanent positions and thus rejuvenate and bring new life blood into our Colony. He also urged for steps to be taken to enable Swiss residing here to join the Swiss

National insurance scheme and to ensure benefits under the British scheme to Swiss returning to their homeland after having contributed for a considerable number of years, preferably on a reciprocal basis.

Mr. L. W. Krucker, Chairman of the House Committee, was pleased to be able to announce that the Leases for Nos. 34 and 35, Fitzroy Square, had recently been signed by the Trustees and thus brought to a successful close the lengthy and arduous negotiations which Mr. De Brunner had carried on with the Landlord and the Solicitors. No. 34, which was surrendered in 1940 on expiry of the old Lease, will be taken over again by the Society in 1952, when it will be vacated by the present Tenant. Mr. De Brunner, Honorary Member and Trustee of the Society, thanked the Chairman of the House Committee for his kindly reference and said he had gladly given his services again for a cause which he has had at heart ever since he became a member of the S.M.S. fifty years ago. He wished the Society every success for the future.

The Swiss Minister then addressed the Council. In an eloquent speech, he gave expression to his delight at making the acquaintance of the S.M.S., of whom he had heard a great deal in the course of his diplomatic career. He said he would not fail to take an early opportunity of visiting Swiss House to see the College at work.

Both Dr. Escher and M. Graffenried also addressed the meeting, replying to various points raised by previous speakers and assuring the members of their whole-hearted co-operation. Needless to say, they explained the numerous difficulties confronting them but assured the members that they would do all in their power to make the best possible arrangements with the competent authorities. They also thanked the members for their assistance and collaboration in the many problems where a mutual interest was at stake.

The meeting ended on a humorous note when Mr. Delaloys, Manager of the Trocadero, joined the gathering, and the Valaisans were thus well represented by the principal guest and the host, exchanging fraternal greetings.

W.B.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE

A full report about the Journée des Suisses à l'Etranger, which took place at Interlaken on June 25th-27th, 1948, will appear in our next issue.

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