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LUNCHEON OFFERED BY THE SWISS COUNCIL. **To the Delegates of the "Office Vaudois du** **Tourisme" at the Dorchester Hotel on Thursday,** **October 28th, 1948.**

As briefly mentioned in our last issue, the Swiss Council entertained the Delegates of the above Organisation to a Luncheon which took place on Thursday, October 28th, 1948, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

This delegation was accompanied by several of our distinguished *Magistrats* who were the Guests of Honour of the Council, namely: Monsieur Gabriel Despland, Conseiller d'Etat et Conseiller aux Etats pour le Canton de Vaud, A. Maret, Conseiller d'Etat, Paul Graber, Conseiller national et Syndic de la ville de Lausanne, further guests were the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, Messieurs de Graffenried, Umbricht, Marcuard, from the Swiss Legation, Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mr. J. Zimmermann.

Mr. E. Steiner, who was in the Chair, extended a hearty welcome to the guests, and called upon the Hon. Secretary of the Council, M. Alfred Renou, in his capacity of a "Vaudois" to welcome the *Magistrats* of his canton.

M. Renou in expressing his gratitude to the Chairman for having been given an opportunity to address his *concitoyens*, introduced them to the members of the Council.

In turn, he told the guests the aims and the purposes of the Swiss Council, and who were its leaders, singling out Mr. E. Steiner, who he said was, as Chairman, of great value to the Council, owing to his wide and manifold experiences.

He explained, how it is that there is no Swiss Chamber of Commerce in London, expressing the hope that one of these days the matter might be remedied. He gave a short *resumé* of the history of the former "Commission Economique" which was created by Minister Henri Martin, then Commercial Attaché in London, and which was the forerunner of the Swiss Council. Comparing the two institutions, Mr. Renou, showed that the present Council by its new constitution enjoyed greater freedom and could claim, thanks to the work of its various committees, a more effective influence.

"One of the strong points of the Council," he continued, "is, that it is entirely composed of Swiss, which means that the interest of our industry and commerce are defended by the sons of Switzerland."

The speaker went on to explain, that in spite of slow progress, many important things had been achieved, and that the Council has proved its usefulness on numerous occasions.

Turning to the Members of the Delegation, M. Renou assured them that we were all concerned about Tourism, and that he hoped that many tourists would be able to go to Switzerland, but held out no great hopes that an increase on the £35 might be obtained. "No doubt, Hoteliers have their difficulties," he said, "but perhaps dishes with a little less on them (so much is wasted) would still well satisfy our English friends, and might allow them to stay longer."

Mr. Renou in concluding paid a great tribute to the efforts made by Great Britain, and also thanked our *Magistrats* for their hard work and integrity.

The speaker was loudly cheered on resuming his seat.

M. Despland expressed thanks to the Council for their hospitality, and voiced his pleasure at having been made aware of the existence of such an excellent institution. "The value of the Swiss abroad is immense," he said, "and it should be remembered more often at home." He mentioned the various economic problems which confront Switzerland, and concluded with a tribute to Great Britain and the traditional friendship which unites the two countries. M. Despland's excellent oration received sincere applause.

The Swiss Minister, who was the next speaker, expressed his pleasure at witnessing the arrival of such an important Delegation which had come over here to see for themselves what the position really was. He rejoiced in the fact that a fairly considerable sum had been obtained to allow young English people to go and study in Switzerland, and expressed the hope that the canton of Vaud and its many places of learning would derive some benefit.


Monsieur Guhl, President of the Delegation, thanked the Members of the Council for having given them an opportunity of meeting, and expressed the hope of welcoming them one day on the beautiful shore of Lac Léman.

Monsieur Paul Graber, Syndic of Lausanne, was the last speaker, he made an excellent speech full of wit and good humour. He related how much he had been impressed by this, his first visit to England. "My admiration for the British people," he said, "which was always great, has become even greater." (Applause.)

So ended once more an enjoyable and instructive function which will leave nothing but pleasant memories.

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