

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: - (1949)
Heft: 1125

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, November 9th.

About 100 members and friends were present, easily the largest attendance since pre-war days. They were extended a cordial welcome by the President, Mr. W. Meier.

After the customary agenda had been expeditiously dealt with, the Chairman introduced the guest of the evening, Mr. Gottfried J. Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association and London Correspondent of the Swiss Telegraph Agency and the Basler Nachrichten. Amongst the numerous audience, which in itself was a tribute to the lecturer's reputation and popularity, one could detect many familiar faces, members who used to listen regularly to Mr. Keller's wartime talks at Swiss House under the auspices of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

As on former occasions, Mr. Keller had chosen "Views on the News" as the subject of his address, but contrary to previous practice, did not speak on Foreign Affairs, but made Home Affairs the theme of his lecture.

Whilst he appreciated that those present could themselves watch and read about the daily developments, it was just because they were living in the midst of it all that they were likely to lose perspective. Many things that were going on were likely to pass unnoticed, as they did not directly affect the lives of the average person, who, moreover, had no business of recording them daily, as was the case with a journalist.

The purpose of Mr. Keller's lecture was to bring out those points, as he would chronicle them to the Swiss Press, which he has so ably represented in London for many years. He made it abundantly clear from the outset that he was merely expressing his personal views and that if some of them were critical, this was in no way due to any spirit of unfriendliness.

Mr. Keller then dealt at length with the many subjects that occupy the daily press as well as the people's conversation, such as Nationalisation, Exchange controls and currency management, labour questions and political trends. He also referred to Anglo-Swiss relations and the difficulties arising from devaluation.

Looking to the country's future, he ventured the opinion that there was room for a *troisième force* and he finished on a note of confidence that the inborn common sense, the sound instinct and love of freedom of the British people would help them over the difficulties that were at present besetting them and would lead once more to a strong, united and prosperous Britain, which was an absolute European necessity.

Mr. Keller was given an enthusiastic ovation at the end of his address, which was followed by a general discussion in which many members took part and in the course of which he answered numerous questions.

Finally, the Chairman expressed thanks to the lecturer for his most interesting and instructive address.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, December 14th, at 7 p.m., and will be followed by a Film Show, when by courtesy of the Swiss National Tourist Office, some of the latest Swiss films will be shown.

W.B.

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