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SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

Farewell Dinner to Dr. V. Umbrecht, on Thursday, September 17th, 1953, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

It is ordained in this world of ours, that sooner or later, the best of friends must part company. Some, unfortunately, are leaving us for their journey to the Elysian fields from whence — alas — there is no returning, whilst others are going, either to take a well deserved rest from their long and ardent labours, or are going to enter a new sphere of activities in entirely new surroundings.

Whatever the reason may be, saying farewell to someone, who has, at one time or another, endeared himself to a certain *milieu* is always a sad affair.

Yet, I venture to say, that the Farewell Party arranged by the Swiss Economic Council, to Dr. V. Umbrecht, Commercial Counsellor, at the Swiss Legation, was far from being a mournful event.

This was, no doubt, due to the fact, that the parting may be only temporary, and that in the future a kind Providence may allow us to meet again, and to knit still closer the bands which have existed in the past.

The pangs of departure are somewhat lessened by the thought of the honour this new post confers on our friend not only to himself but to our country.

The evening began in an extremely happy and cordial atmosphere, to no small extent due to the arrangements made by the Management of the Dorchester Hotel, in particular by Mr. Ronus, who is also a member of the Swiss Economic Council. The table decoration was, as usual, superb, and what of the dinner?

I do not know, what remembrances Dr. Umbrecht will take away from this country, but I feel sure, that he will always remember the "good old roast-beef of England", which — alas — we have not seen for many a day, and which made a welcome appearance on that evening. It also reminded me of a dinner of the same fare, only a week previous in Zurich, when my charming hostess asked me, whether it was not "too bleeding". I won't say what my answer was.

* * *

Previous to coffee being served, Mr. H. Oswald, President of the Swiss Economic Council, extended a hearty welcome to the guest of honour, Dr. V. Umbrecht, to Dr. A. Weitnauer, his successor, and Dr. Miesch of the Swiss Legation, as well as to Mr. Griesser of Aadorf, who attended the dinner.

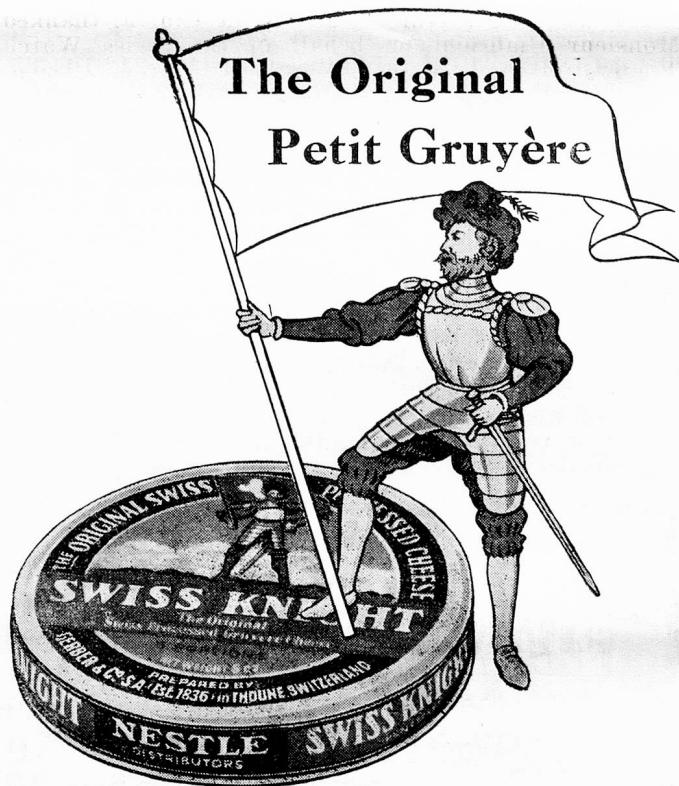
He paid a warm tribute to Monsieur Umbrecht for the work he had rendered whilst a member of the Legation staff, and in particular for the always useful and appreciated collaboration with the Economic Council. Mr. Oswald, amidst applause, said: "Our departing friend was able to put whatever case he handled in its true perspective". He further referred to Monsieur Umbrecht's collaboration with Minister Schaffner and Mr. Bühler, who he said: "have rendered conspicuous service, not only to our country, but also to Swiss business men in Great Britain."

In conclusion the President extended, on behalf of the members of the Council, heartiest congratulations to Dr. Umbrecht on his joining the World Bank administration, wishing him the best of success in his

new sphere of activity. As a token of appreciation and esteem he presented him with a silver salver suitably inscribed.

Monsieur Umbrecht then expressed his thanks for the very fine present, which he appreciated very much indeed, and for the courtesy and kindness shown to him by the Swiss Economic Council throughout the years. He explained that he had always considered it a privilege to work with the Council, whose members gave such invaluable help to the Legation. "Indeed no economic department of any Legation can successfully discharge its duties without having close contacts with those Swiss who are actually engaged in economic and commercial activities, and who who alone know the market conditions and financial situation from personal experience." There is no doubt, in his view, that Swiss economic interests abroad continue to be best served in the long run by our compatriots, and he took a firm stand against a widely-held opinion that Swiss in foreign lands are basically at a disadvantage in representing Swiss firms. The Swiss abroad have two loyalties to observe, one towards their country of residence and the other towards the home land. The lessons of history and tradition clearly show that these two loyalties can very well be reconciled; even more, they can complement each other in a matter that is most beneficial to both countries.

Monsieur Umbrecht then reviewed his own experiences in the seven and a half years spent in



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London, and drew from them not only some interesting conclusions regarding the sporting and gallant character of the British Administration, but also some parallels between the British and the Swiss way of life. It appears to him that the general notions of liberty and freedom, which are held in such high esteem in Switzerland, have in the British Isles certainly the same, if not an even more liberal meaning. He illustrated his statement with various examples from which the conception of freedom in Great Britain emerged very convincingly.

Finally, he extended to all the members of the Swiss Economic Council and their families his best wishes for prosperity and good health.

When the applause, which greeted Monsieur Umbrecht's address had subsided, Mr. W. Meier, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, thanked him for the various lectures he had given to his Society during his *séjour* in London. Mr. A Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer" expressed his appreciation to Dr. Umbrecht for his valued collaboration with regard to the commercial part of the paper, expressing the hope, that should be the "Swiss Observer" deem it necessary to apply to the World Bank for credit, that this application would find in him a benevolent supporter. Mr. Louis Chapuis spoke very feelingly about Monsieur Umbrecht's friendliness and cheerfulness, saying: "We shall never forget you as a friend". He also paid a compliment to Madame Umbrecht, and extended, on behalf of the members of the City Swiss Club, best wishes. Mr. Ch. Fer, spoke of the willingness with which Dr. Umbrecht met every enquiry, saying: "We always had a fair deal, for which we are grateful." Mr. R. de Cintra, thanked Monsieur Umbrecht on behalf of the Swiss Watch Traders for the ever ready help he had given to them.

* * *

By the time this report appears in print, our friends will have arrived in Washington. They have taken with them all our best wishes, and our expressions of gratitude for all they have done. We have parted from them the best of friends, and we shall always welcome them as friends whenever we meet again.

ST.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.



F. STREIT.

Chairman of Assembly of Presidents
of Swiss Societies in Great Britain.

At the Meeting of the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain, which took place on Thursday, October 1st, 1953, at the Swiss Legation, Mr. F. Streit, President of the London Swiss Philatelic Society, was elected Chairman.

Mr. Streit was born in 1898. He arrived in this country in 1921, when he joined the staff of Barclays Bank Ltd., Chief Foreign Branch, E.C.3, in which Bank he holds an important appointment as Principal of Department.

He is co-founder of the London Swiss Philatelic Society, and President for the 11th year. From 1930-1939, Mr. Streit was a member of the Education committee of the Swiss Mercantile Society. He entered the Council of that Society during the war. Mr. Streit is also Hon. Treasurer of the 1st of August committee.



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