

Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Article**

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

Band (Jahr): **- (1953)**

Heft 1196

PDF erstellt am: **27.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686834>

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MEETING OF THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

Thursday, December 18th, 1952 at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

The Swiss Economic Council's old tradition of providing an opportunity for their members to meet the Swiss economic delegation whenever there are Anglo-Swiss negotiations in London again proved its worth on Thursday, 18th December, when such a meeting took place at the Dorchester Hotel.

The Chairman, Mr. Oswald, having first disposed of the normal business of the Council, had the pleasure of greeting Mr. Schaffner, leader of the Swiss delegation, Mr. Bühler, of the Division du Commerce in Berne, and Mr. Rothenbühler, Secretary of the Vorort. These were accompanied by Mr. Umbricht, Mr. R. Keller and Mr. Miesch, of the Swiss Legation.

Mr. Schaffner then addressed the company and gave a survey of the Anglo-Swiss economic negotiations. He explained the position of Switzerland as a result of the British import restrictions and the effect it had on various vulnerable Swiss exports. As the talks with the British delegation were still going on, Mr. Schaffner could not state what the final outcome would be. He indicated, however, that there was not very much that the Swiss representative could obtain to alleviate hardship in respect of Swiss goods falling under the British global quota system. These global quota restrictions have been sanctioned by the Organisation of European Economic Co-operation in Paris, of which Switzerland is a member. Mr. Schaffner's delegation had their hands tied, very much to their

regret by the way. There is indeed no doubt that many Swiss exports, especially in the fields of textiles, shoes, cheese, apples and pears, dyes, stationary articles, etc., are hard hit by the British measures, and the Swiss exporters have sometimes difficulties in keeping a foothold in the British market. The small hardship reserve of £100,000 for six months allotted for easing global quota difficulties will not go a long way. An increase of this amount seems, however, unlikely.

The picture for Swiss exports falling under bilateral quotas is somewhat different. There indeed the British authorities were willing to accede to some Swiss desires concerning quota increases. These improvements extend over quite a wide and representative range of so-called less essentials, including various agricultural and textile products, precision instruments, watches, chocolate, slates, embroideries, electrical equipment, sewing machines, chemical and pharmaceutical products, etc.

Mr. Schaffner indicated moreover that the agreement would run for six months only, i.e. from 1st January to 30th June, 1953. (The agreement having been signed after Mr. Schaffner's talk, full details of the lists in question are given in the Commercial News of the S.O.)

Mr. Oswald then called on various members of the Council to give their views on the trade position. Thus the delegation had the opportunity of hearing representatives of the horological, textile, shoe, precision instrument, pharmaceutical and cheese sections. These statements proved very illuminating and useful. Mr. Schaffner did not fail to acknowledge that when he stated that nobody knew the trade conditions better than the people actually engaged in it. The delegation had thus learnt where the shoe pinched our Swiss representatives in the United Kingdom, and where our products were too expensive or not very competitive for other reasons.

Mr. Oswald closed the meeting at 7 p.m., again expressing to the Delegation his and the Council's appreciation for having attended it. Mr. Seinet, President of the City Swiss Club, then took charge of the delegation and accompanied them to the Christmas dinner of the City Swiss Club, to which they had been invited as guests.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Annual Luncheon

and

Tea Dance

will take place at

THE DORCHESTER HOTEL,
PARK LANE, W.1

on

SATURDAY, 21st FEBRUARY, 1953.

*Details will be
announced later*

Nouvelle Société Helvétique

(LONDON GROUP)

ANNUAL DINNER & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

on Friday, 23rd January, 1953

at

The Vienna Café, Berkeley Arcade
opposite Baker Street Station, N.W.1.

6.45 p.m. Reception, 7 p.m. Dinner (charge 7/6) 8.15 coffee, 8.30 Annual General Meeting. (Town Dress)

ALL MEMBERS & FRIENDS ARE WELCOME

Those wishing to take part at the Dinner are requested to inform Mrs. Dubs at the Vienna Café by Tuesday, Jan. 20th. (Tel.: WELbeck 8388.)