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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The monthly meeting held on the 11th of March was attended by a small but select company of regulars, who were interested in the affairs of the Society without any additional attraction.

The President, Mr. W. Meier, informed the meeting that the Annual report was nearly ready for dispatch. A copy of the accounts had been sent to Switzerland with the usual request for payment of £1,690 subsidy in which amount are included £400 spent last year on the purchase of new furniture.

Mr. Meier then drew the attention to the following important events in the London Swiss Colony: Fête Suisse, on Thursday 7th May, at Central Hall, Swiss Sports, on Saturday May 30th, at the Polytechnic Stadium at Chiswick; National Day Celebration, on Saturday, August 1st, at Central Hall.

The Meeting approved the following donations of £5.5.0. each to: Swiss Sports, 1st of August celebration and Swiss Benevolent Society.

The Annual Dinner and Tea Dance was a distinct social success, but we could have wished for a better attendance. The Presidents Assembly had again dealt with the clashing of functions in the colony and it was hoped that better arrangements would be made in future.

We were also asked to make a note of Friday, June 5th, on which day the Anglo-Swiss Society will hold a Coronation Ball at Londonderry House. Evening Dress, Price 27/6 each.

Swiss Youth Centre. The Presidents Assembly has again dealt with this matter affecting the welfare of some 3-5,000 Swiss girls in and around London, of whom only about 150 take advantage of the facilities offered by our churches. An Organisation Committee has been appointed in the U.K. which is pushing ahead with this proposal. An Appeal is to be launched in Switzerland toward the end of the current year.

The Secretariat des Suisses à l'Etranger in Berne, is reported to have made progress with the modification concerning the military tax. The tax on the fortunes of parents (Antwirtschaftliches Vermögen) may be abolished in the future.

Under the law which came in force on 1st of January, 1953, Swiss women marrying foreigners are

at liberty to retain their Swiss citizenship provided they express a wish to that effect, when the bans are out or at the time of the wedding. Swiss women already married to foreigners can claim restoration of Swiss citizenship provided they make an application to this effect to the Swiss Legation during 1953.

Attention was then drawn to the damage already done to new school furniture which we bought quite recently, and ways and means considered to stop the nuisance and wastage.

The rest of the evening was taken up with the problems arising out of our taking over the premises next door at the end of May, 1953.

EHS.

Dr. KULLMAN'S TALK.

The lecture of Dr. Gustave Kullmann which he held at an Open Meeting of the Nouvelle Société Hélyétique on March 17th, proved to be one of the most interesting ever given in our Colony. The fairly numerous audience sat spellbound by the lecturer's account from the field of his work: the international care for political and racial refugees. In the early part of his talk Dr. Kullmann showed that Switzerland is participating actively in a large number of international organisations and institutions, many of which have their headquarters in Geneva. The Swiss attitude towards all attempts at international co-operation may best be summarized as "a policy de la présence" wherever it is compatible with Swiss neutrality. The detailed summary of Dr. Kullmann's career given in the last issue of the "Swiss Observer" is in fact also a summary of the development of the international work for refugees, so closely Dr. Kullmann's lifework is identifiable with the care for refugees. The crowning success of his career might be established shortly if and when "Consolidated Convention" of 1951, containing all the important international agreements on this subject, will have been ratified by a sufficient number of states to come into force.

The audience asked the lecturer so many questions that the meeting ended, only unusually late.

H.E.

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