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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The May Meeting was held at Swiss House on Wednesday the 12th.

As Mr. W. Meier, who had attended the S.K.V. Delegates' Meeting in Lugano was still in Switzerland, the Chair was taken by Mr. W. Burren, Vice-President.

Mr. Burren read a card which Mr. Meier had sent from Zürich on the 6th where he had had further discussions with the officials of the Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein.

The Chairman reported that Mr. E. H. Schlatter, the Society's honorary press reporter, was still in hospital but was making steady progress. A short note to Mr. Schlatter was circulated amongst, and signed by, those present.

The Society had lost another member through the death of Mr. J. A. Von Felton, and those present rose to pay the usual last silent tribute.

At the Annual General Meeting in February, Mr. K. E. Strickler, Zentralpräsident of the Schweizerischer Kaufmännischer Verein, had been appointed an honorary Member of the London Section. Mr. Burren read a letter from Mr. Strickler thanking the Members for this election.

As agreed at the previous Monthly Meeting, Mr. Meier had issued a circular to the Members regarding the French Hospital's appeal for funds. The donations received from Members so far amounted to £8.5.0; this, of course, being in addition to the Society's official donation of £5.5.0d. approved at the previous meeting.

A very interesting talk was given by one of the Society's own Members, Mr. A. Gomiero, on the production in the South of France of essential oils for the perfumery and food industries. This talk was illustrated by a film, partly in colour, and various slides.

The film was taken in Barreme, small village of 200 to 300 inhabitants, about 100 kilometres from Cannes in the centre of the lavender industry of the South of France. Lavender oil was used for soap making and toilet waters and in small quantities for medicinal purposes.

Although the film was limited to the production of essential oil from lavender, Mr. Gomiero, who very ably explained the various scenes depicted during the running of the film, mentioned that as many as 40 to 50 different oils were produced from various vegetable sources.

The flowers were picked by hand and the oil extracted by distillation; the most modern process using petroleum ether. This new method had brought about a considerable reduction in costs. For example, the cost of one kilo of rose extract which had previously been over £400 had now been reduced to about £240.

Mr. Gomiero gave many facts regarding the value and quantity of the annual production of essential oils and also mentioned several interesting minor details. The picking of rose petals, for instance, which was done daily during the harvesting time, had to be completed before 9 a.m. This was because the scent was strongest in the early morning or the late evening and if the petals were only picked after the

heat of the sun had been on them, the yield of extract would be considerably reduced.

That Mr. Gomiero had long been connected with the production of essential oils was clearly shown by his expert knowledge of the subject and the facility with which he answered the questions put to him after the showing of the film and slides.

J.E.S.

SWISS CLUB BALLOCH. Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Club Balloch was held on Friday, 30th April, 1954, at 7.30 p.m., in the canteen of the British Silk Dyeing Company Ltd., Balloch.

The president, Mr. H. Berli, welcomed the 23 members present, and opened the meeting by giving a short survey of the happenings of the past year. The secretary then read the minutes of the last meeting and the treasurer presented his accounts, which showed the finances to be in a very sound state. Both these reports were accepted with acclamation and the two gentlemen responsible given a unanimous vote of thanks. The committee, there being no resignations, was then re-elected.

The programme for the coming year gave occasion for an exchange of views. It was decided to hold the following functions, the committee being charged to work out the final details:—

1. Dinner in Glasgow in celebration of 1st August,
2. Film show in winter.

After a vote of thanks, proposed by our consul Mr. E. Hofstetter, the president brought the business part of the evening to a close.

A high tea, tastefully served by the canteen staff, gave the opportunity to make new social contacts. Various attractions, such as the presentation of prizes for our last shooting competition and the raffling of a cake, which realised £3.5.0. for the Swiss Benevolent Society in Scotland, kept the members together until a very late hour.

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