

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: - (1956)

Heft: 1270

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The monthly meeting held at Swiss House on 14th March drew quite a good attendance, which was tribute to Mr. E. W. Makin, vice-principal of our College, our speaker for the evening.

Mr. W. Meier, welcomed Mr. Thevenaz of the Swiss Legation, and then congratulated Mr. J. J. Schneider, who was present, on his 75th birthday. He reported that he had sent good wishes to Mr. Rudolf Welter upon his election as national councillor, and to Mr. Arnold Meier-Ragg on his nomination as successor to Mr. Ph. Schmid-Ruedin.


On the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee the following donations were proposed and approved by the meeting: Swiss Benevolent Society £5.5.0., 1st August Committee £5.5.0., Swiss Sports £5.5.0., as well as the affiliation fee of £5.5.0. to the Swiss Club, which enables our members to have a meal there on the days of our meetings. Owing to the printers strike there will be delay in the dispatch of our annual report.

Messrs. Stahelin, Boos, Krucker and Meier, who will be in Basle early in May, were appointed as our delegates to the Annual Delegate Conference of the S.K.V.

Mr. Oertli thanked on behalf of the Benevolent Society for our donation which was much appreciated: It was stated that they had 64 pensioners, who were being paid 40/- per week single, and 65/- married, and that the setting up the hostel for Swiss girls would require about £40,000.

Mr. Makin then addressed us on the Argentine with which he and his family have been connected for over 75 years. With the aid of a large map and his intimated knowledge of the country he gave us the salient facts of the geography of this country of one million square miles reaching from the sub-tropics of the Gran Chaco in the north, for 2,300 miles through the central pampas, one time an inland sea, quite stoneless and completely flat, to bleak, barren and very cold Patagonia in the South. He dealt with the country's considerable natural wealth and the distribution and location of the principle industries, meat packing, flour milling and sugar refining. Then followed an outline of the country's history from the time of its discovery in 1519 by a Spaniard, and its subsequent development under the Spanish crown until its establishment as an independent republic in 1811. This was succeeded until 1900 by the Argentine's struggles with its neighbours in an effort to establish its hegemony among the countries of South America. Equally interesting were the details about the population which in 1850 was about one million, by 1930 had risen to six million, descended as to 44% from Italian, 33% from Spanish, 4% German and Austrian, and 8% Polish immigrants. The present population is estimated to be 12-13 million. The background of the most recent past under Peron was illuminating, and questions and answers which followed enabled us to form a far more complete picture of this interesting country than we had hitherto. Altogether a very instructive evening spent at Swiss House.

E.H.S.



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