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A LUCKY LION.

Recently I interviewed a friend of mine who had just returned from Switzerland after having spent several weeks there.

Asking him about the economic conditions prevailing at present, he told me that "there seems to be plenty of money about"; this was somewhat contradictory to what I have experienced when asking for some support — however small — for this paper, in view of the fact that on many occasions in the past the "Swiss Observer" has made Appeals for various causes, such as avalanche disasters, inundations, etc. remitting not inconsiderable amounts to Switzerland. Invariably my requests were turned down with the explanation that business was slack and money scarce.

* * *

A few days ago I read in the Swiss papers, that members of the Government of the canton of Basle-Town travelled *in corpore* to Zurich, in the company of at least three other officials, to present to the Limmatt Town a six months old lion, which was born at the Basle Zoo. I understand that the presentation was made as a return present, the Zurich Government having presented to the town of Basle an armorial window, (Wappenscheibe) on the occasion of its 2,000th anniversary.

I sincerely hope that this lucky lion fully appreciated his illustrious travelling companions, it did not state whether it travelled in the same compartment, nor whether the seven members of the Basle-Town Government were attired in frock coats and top hats.

The official and solemn surrender of the animal took place at the Restaurant of the Zurich Zoo, where the President of the Basle Government delivered an appropriate address, to which the Mayor of the town of Zurich replied. Apart from the Basle contingent there were present a number of cantonal and municipal authorities. The principal "guest" the lion, however, did not speak, being overcome by the festive occasion.

The function ended with a supper at the Town Hall, and I sincerely hope that a few bones were left over for the little lion, who, no doubt, was received by his co-inmates at his new home with equal honours.

Lucky lion, and equally lucky country!, where seven "Regierungsräte", a Member of Parliament, a town clerk and a Zoo Director can travel — on the tax-payers expenses — first class to Zurich to deliver a six months old lion. Indeed my friend was right, "there seems to be plenty of money about".

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SWISS EMBASSY COMMUNIQUE.

To avoid a break in the economic relations between Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the Anglo-Swiss Trade Agreement of 4th February, 1957, has been provisionally extended for three months by an exchange of letters between the Swiss Embassy and the Board of Trade on 17th December, 1957.

New trade talks have opened in London on 20th January, 1958, between a Swiss and a British Delegation. The Swiss Delegation consists of :

Mr. H. Bühler, Director of Sub-Division, Division du Commerce (Chairman); Mr. R. Faessler, Economic Counsellor, Swiss Embassy; Mr. F. Rothenbühler, Secretary of the "Vorort"; Mr. J. J. Bolli, Vice-Director, Chambre suisse de l'Horlogerie.

It is hoped to achieve some improvement over the old Trade Agreement. One of the most important items on the agenda is the problem of watches.

MUSIC AWARDS.

We have been informed that the Harriet Cohen International Music Awards Committee has awarded the "Arnold Bax Memorial Medal" for 1958 to the Swiss conductor Jean Meylan of Geneva, and the "Harriet Cohen Bach Medal" for 1958 to the Swiss pianist Sebastian Benda of Salvador, Brazil.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

A full report concerning the Annual Dinner and Dance, which took place on Saturday, January 25th, at the Dorchester Hotel, will appear in our next issue.

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