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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, 12th February.

Amongst the large number of members present, to whom the Chairman, Mr. W. Meier, extended a cordial welcome, were several Trustees, Past Presidents and Honorary Members of the Central Society and the London Section. The Meeting was honoured by the presence of Dr. R. Faessler, Commercial Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy.

In elucidating the accounts for 1957, the Chairman referred to the ever-increasing contractual and other liabilities and stressed the need of building up our modest reserves to bring them into line with present-day commitments. After making certain provisions for such contingencies and taking into account the balance of Government subsidy receivable on the agreed basis, the final result for the past year could be considered satisfactory. The accounts as presented were then adopted and Mr. Robert P. Huxley, F.C.A., was reappointed as auditor for the current year.

Reviewing the activities of the Society during the past year, the Chairman stated that these had followed traditional lines, and he gave details of the arrangements made for the monthly meetings at Swiss House. These included a number of interesting addresses on topical subjects (usually followed by animated discussions), film shows, etc. The Society also provided an employment advisory service for its students and other Swiss who would formerly have consulted the Employment Department. At the end of the year, the Society numbered 20 Honorary, 223 Active, 14 Corresponding and 61 Contributing Members and Donors.

The report of the College was presented by the Chairman of the Education Committee, the following being the main points. Whilst in the early part of last year the attendance was still affected by the Suez and Hungarian crises, the number of students rose rapidly during the spring and summer months, largely due, no doubt, to the relaxation of international tension. During 1957, 390 students were admitted, compared with 371 in 1956. Of these, 257 sat for the diploma examination, of whom 225 (88%) were successful. The College at the end of the year had a full-time staff of 10 well qualified teachers. The evening classes also showed a notable increase, the number of students being 734 compared with 675 in the preceding year. A considerable number of students from both the day and the evening classes presented themselves for the examinations of Cambridge University for the Lower Certificate and the Certificate of Proficiency in English. These examinations are held every year in June and December and the results obtained by the College were again well above the average for the whole of the U.K.

Finally, the Chairman of the House Committee, Mr. O. Grob, reported on the repairs and renovations carried out at Swiss House, as well as on the amenities provided for the students and some of the Swiss Societies.

The reports as submitted were adopted with thanks to those who had compiled them.

Proceeding with the election of the Council and the Committees, the meeting appointed Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Honorary Member and Past President, as Chairman *pro tem*. He noted with regret that after

eleven years as President and Chairman of the Council, Mr. W. Meier had decided to relinquish his office. An outstanding chapter in the long history of the London Section had thus come to a close. Mr. Stahelin voiced the feelings of all present when he expressed the Society's appreciation of the sterling services Mr. Meier had rendered ever since 1930, first as a member and later as Chairman of the Education Committee, but above all during his long tenure of the Presidency. Several other members expressed similar sentiments and a telegram of thanks to Mr. Meier and good wishes for the future success of the Society and the College, which had been received from the Central Society (Secretariat) in Zurich, was read to the assembly.

As successor to Mr. Meier, the Council had nominated Mr. O. Grob, for many years an able member of the Society's executive. He was elected with acclamation to the Presidency and Chairmanship of the Council, and the remaining members of the Council and the Committees, as nominated were declared duly elected, unopposed, the final composition being as follows:—

Council: Chairman: Mr. O. Grob; Trustees: Messrs. J. J. Boos, H. Knoll, L. W. Krucker, F. G. Sommer, C. Voegeli; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, R. Chappuis, A. Faes, A. Jaccard, W. Meier, J. E. Schneider, R. Senn, F. Streit.

General Purposes Committee: President: Mr. O. Grob; Vice-Presidents: Messrs. R. Chappuis and A. Jaccard; Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. E. Schneider; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. R. Senn; Members: Messrs. H. Andrea, H. J. Keller, H. Mock.

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Education Committee: Chairman: Mr. A. Jaccard; Vice-Chairman: Mr. A. Faes; Members: Messrs. J. W. Bonjour, F. Burri, G. Hediger, O. Luterbacher.

House Committee: Chairman: Mr. R. Chappuis; Vice-Chairman: Mr. H. J. Keller; Members: Mrs. W. Meier and Mr. W. Fuchs.

The newly appointed President then took the chair and after having thanked the meeting for the confidence shown him, expressed the hope that members would give their full support by attending the meetings and generally taking an active interest in the Society's affairs.

In recognition of his services to the Society, Mr. W. Meier was elected an Honorary Member of the London Section, and a suitable presentation was to be made to him at a subsequent meeting. In a moving speech, Mrs. Meier expressed thanks on behalf of her husband and herself and recalled some of the outstanding events in their association with the S.M.S.

Honorary Membership was also bestowed on the following members:

Mr. H. Knoll, Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation and a Trustee of the Society, who had for some years been a member of the Education Committee.

Mr. W. Burren, for services rendered to the College and the Society during the last eight years as Chairman of the Education Committee and previously as Hon. Secretary and in other capacities.

In accordance with the Society's rules, Mr. Burren had resigned from his honorary offices when he took up his appointment as Secretary on 1st February, 1958.

At an Extraordinary General Meeting which followed, a special resolution enabling members of the Council having attained the age of 70 to remain in office and to be reappointed, was adopted.

Finally, an ordinary monthly meeting was held to deal with a number of Section matters. A resignation was to hand from Mrs. H. Jenne, a member of the House Committee, who is shortly returning to Switzerland. This was accepted with regret, and in recognition of her long and valuable services to the College and in particular the women students, Mrs. Jenne was elected a Corresponding Member.

The proceedings then terminated.

W.B.

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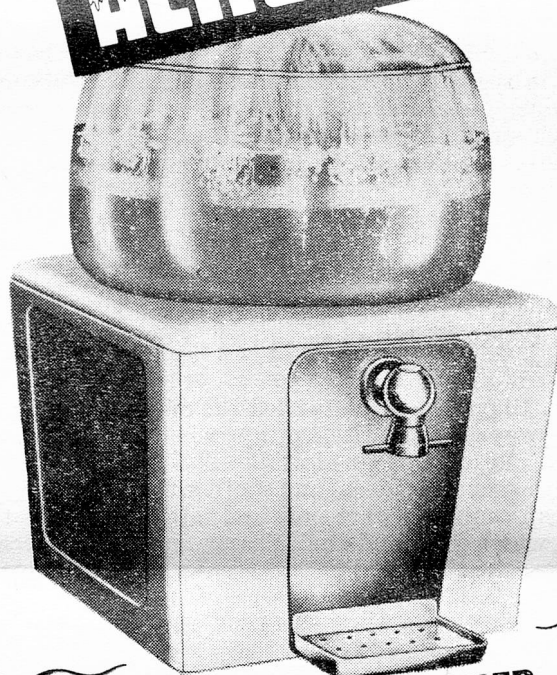
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