

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: - (1961)

Heft: 1387

Rubrik: News from the colony

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AT THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL

The 18th Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council was held on Thursday, 25th May 1961, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London, W.1, 23 members being present.

The Chairman, Mr. M. Wiesendanger, who was retiring from the Chair after nearly four and a half years of office but remaining on the Committee, presented his report of activities during the past year. They had been mainly concerned with a study of the question of the creation of a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in the United Kingdom. The report mentioned also the question of the rejuvenation of the Swiss Colony, which had been discussed by a Committee set up by the Presidents' Assembly; it recorded further the Farewell Dinner offered by the Council to Dr. Faessler on his appointment as Swiss Ambassador to Peru, as well as the interesting talk on EFTA given by Mr. Figgures, C.M.G., then Under-Secretary to the Treasury and shortly afterwards appointed first Secretary-General of EFTA with office at Geneva, at the dinner following our Annual General Meeting a year ago. Two members had resigned from the Council on their retirement and two new members were admitted during the year under review.

The accounts presented by Mr. R. de Cintra, Honorary Treasurer, were duly accepted.

The meeting accepted with regret the resignation from the Committee of Mr. Ch. Fer, one of the two Vice-Chairmen since 1956, and of Mr. Jules Zimmermann, Honorary Secretary since 1951 (previously Honorary Secretary from 1918 to 1943 of the former "Swiss Commission in London for the study of economic and commercial questions", and before that, from 1915 to 1918, of the "Comité d'étude pour la création d'une chambre de commerce suisse à Londres").

Mr. R. de Cintra and Mr. A. Renou, due to retire from the Committee under the Rules, were re-elected for a further term of office and, in addition, Messrs. J. P. Christen, A. Faes, A. Stittmatter and M. W. Zublin were elected as new members of the Committee.

The election of the Executive for 1961-62 resulted as follows:—

Chairman: Mr. J. P. Christen
Vice-Chairmen: Mr. O. Rohn and Mr. A. Renou
Honorary Treasurer: Mr. R. de Cintra.

The Honorary Secretary was to be chosen by the new Committee at its own meeting in accordance with the Rules.

The meeting then went into renewed discussion on the question of the creation of a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain and decided to leave the matter to the Committee for further detailed consideration and report.

* * *

At the dinner which followed the meeting and which was attended by the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, as guest of honour, members heard a most interesting and instructive talk by Monsieur Heimo, Commercial Counsellor at the Swiss Embassy, on the present all-important question of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Common Market (EEC). The Swiss Ambassador also spoke on this subject in its wider implications and gave very illuminating comments on the developing and as yet uncertain situation.

NEWS FROM

Both addresses were greatly appreciated, as was the excellent dinner served by the Dorchester Hotel. The new Chairman, Mr. Christen, expressed warmest thanks to both speakers on behalf of all present.

Some extracts from the Chairman's report

During our last Annual General Meeting, which was held at the Dorchester on 7th July 1960, we discussed possible new activities in which the Council could engage in the near future. One suggestion was that we should study again the question of the creation of a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in the United Kingdom, and most of this year's activities have been devoted to this question.

It was decided that a preliminary report on the establishment of a Swiss Chamber of Commerce in London should be prepared, and Mr. O. Rohn kindly agreed to do this. His report, dated 27th September 1960, was sent to every member of the Council. It gives very valuable information regarding the activities of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in France and also deals with the question of costs. At the conclusion of this report Mr. O. Rohn asked the Council Members to give consideration to the following two questions:—

- Do the Members of the Council believe that enough moral and financial support could be obtained to establish a Swiss Chamber of Commerce with a sufficient Membership?*
- Do the Members of the Council believe that the services and benefits to Anglo-Swiss trade by a Chamber of Commerce are such as to warrant these efforts, having regard to the present services that are obtained through the Economic Division of the Embassy in consultation with the sections of the Economic Council?*

Twenty replies were received. Most Members are not in favour of establishing a Chamber of Commerce because they do not think that there is a real necessity for such an institution and are afraid of the heavy costs involved.

* * *

At the last Committee Meeting these replies were fully considered, and as a result of this consideration it was decided that a copy of them should be sent to every Member of the Council and that the Council as a whole should decide whether further work in this respect should be undertaken or not. This work would involve the canvassing of possible Member firms both in Switzerland and here in England, and would require great activity on the part of every Member of the Council in order to reach a representative field. Before engaging in this scheme, the Committee feels that this question should be discussed in Council.

* * *

The question of the rejuvenation of the Swiss Colony is being discussed by a Committee set up by the Presidents' Assembly, under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. Ansermoz. At the meetings of this Committee, which your Chairman also attended, a draft report was prepared and will be presented at the next Presidents' Meeting, to be held in Manchester on 17th June 1961. After its approval, possibly with amendments, this report will be sent to the various Swiss Organisations in Great Britain for discussions and action.

THE COLONY



Mr. J. P. Christen, the new president of the Swiss Economic Council, is probably one of the most dynamic personalities of our colony, and we are very happy to see him appointed to this, a very difficult task.

Born in Switzerland in 1916, Mr. Christen was educated at Realschulen, Basle, and at Commercial School in Vevey. After a commercial apprenticeship with a Chemical Trading Company, he gained a Federal Accounting Diploma. In 1937 he joined Sandoz Limited, Basle.

Just after the war he was transferred to Sandoz Products Ltd., in Bradford, as Chief Accountant. In 1948 he was appointed Secretary. Then in 1957 he became Joint Managing Director in charge of finance, administration and Pharmaceutical Department of the Company.

We feel sure the Swiss Economic Council is, with Mr. Christen as its president, in very good hands.

SILVIA KIND

Silvia Kind, the Swiss Harpsichordist, will be giving a recital at the Wigmore Hall on Monday, 19th June, at 7.30 p.m. The programme will include works by J. S. Bach, J. Bull, B. Pasquini, A. Poglietti, A. Honegger, P. Mieg, F. Poulenc, Mozart and J. P. Rameau.

Ruth Huggenberg at Wigmore Hall

Talented artist and fellow countrywoman Ruth Huggenberg gave her annual Wigmore Hall pianoforte recital on Friday evening, 12th May.

After the opening of Beethoven's thirty-two variations in C minor, perhaps a shade too delicate, her performance was filled with clarity and sureness.

Schumann's Kreisleriana Opus 16, Ireland's Le Catioc from Sarnia and Brahms's Sonata in F minor Opus 5 made a very pleasant evening of listening.

I should have liked to have heard a programme chosen with more variety and contrast in style but this, by no means a fault, is purely a personal opinion.

The audience, which we heard was somewhat larger than the previous year, was most attentive and appreciative and, like myself, will certainly, I am sure, be looking forward to hearing Miss Huggenberg again next year.

P.H.

We deeply regret to report the passing away of the following:

Alexandre Duruz, from 1897 to 1935 Manager of the London Agency of the Swiss Federal Railways; J. Bechtel, of Trem y Don, Dinas Dindle, Carnarvon, a generous supporter of the Swiss Observer; and A. E. Robert Tissot, of 12 Grosvenor Gardens, Golders Green, N.W.11.

* * *

On 11th May 1961, Mr. Armand Roger Tissot died, aged 76, at his home, 72 Rawlinson Road, Southport.

Until a month before his death, he had led an active life as managing director of Messrs. Matti & Tissot Ltd., chocolate manufacturers and café proprietors, of Lord Street, Southport.

Mr. Tissot, who originally came from Neuchâtel, had lived in Southport for the last fifty years and had a keen interest in the life of the Swiss community in the area. He leaves a widow, a son, and a daughter.

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