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It is not often that one has the opportunity of listening to a lecturer who has studied his subject so closely as Prof. Gruner. He was most critical of the drawbacks of direct democracy which were ever more visible in Switzerland with its growing population. And he looked at Switzerland within a united Europe and wondered whether the small country would be able to make the 25 cantonal voices heard inside the vast area of 250 million people. He reflected on Switzerland's foreign policy which was a more foreign *economic* policy. How would the "Militia Parliament", the Government of collective responsibility, the sovereign people who control legislation by Referendum and Initiative, survive in a changed Europe. Prof. Gruner referred to the economy and Switzerland's finance policy, to the country's great efforts with regard to old-age insurance and to the fairly recently created problems of education and research, as well as to the preoccupation with resources, energy and environment protection.

He deplored the *Entpolitisierung* in today's affluent society, the neglect of civic duties, and that man's personal and individual success should count for more than his social work. Switzerland's pioneering spirit had resulted in a *laissez faire* attitude in politics since the war. The personal success cult had a creative and rejuvenating influence in the private sector, but a retarding effect on public life. Prof. Gruner did not consider Communism a danger to Switzerland's political life, but rather the increasing lack of balance between private existence and public concerns.

Prof. Gruner's talk was received with great appreciation, and a most animated discussion brought the interesting evening to a close.

MM

JAKOB VOGEL 90

We have only just heard that Mr. Jakob Vogel, of "Ceres", Shobdon-Kingsland, Leominster, Herefordshire, was 90 on 2nd July. We regret this delay, but our congratulations are none the less sincere, and we wish Mr. Vogel the very best for the future.

Mr. Vogel is a citizen of Schaffhausen and was born at Neunform, Unter-Thurgau. After completing his apprenticeship as a saddler and upholsterer, he worked in different places, amongst them with a specialist in harnesses and collars in Zurich. Whilst he was at Mézières (Vaud), he met the future General Guisan. In 1906, he cycled to Goeschenen, put the bicycle on the train and walked over the Gotthard. Still on his cycle, he went to Milan for the International Exhibition, hence to several other Italian towns and along the Riviera to Cannes where he again worked as an upholsterer.

Later, at Meiringen, he was engaged in repairing the old Grimsel and Furka postal coaches—horse-drawn at that time. He also did a lot of mountaineering. Then he went to Germany and worked in different branches of his trade. In Frankfurt, he trimmed motorcars at the Adlerworks. In 1909, he came to London and worked as assistant foreman and cutter at Vanden Plas (trimming department). During that period, cars were built for H.M. George V and the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paravicini.

Jakob Vogel married a Swiss girl in 1914 and then returned to Switzerland to do service in the *Landwehr*. After the war he came back to London and opened his own business as Coach and Motor Trimmer.

He lost his wife in 1946. Eleven years later, he retired and moved to Herefordshire where he lives with one of his daughters. He does gardening and occasional repairs and goes to Switzerland for a holiday every year.

FRED STREIT

It is with heartfelt sympathy that we have learnt of the deah of *Mr. Fred Streit* at the age of 73, two months after the death of his wife Alice (see "Swiss Observer" of 11th June). His last two years had been plagued by illness, resulting in the loss of a leg.

A week before the death of Mrs. Streit, he developed certain symptoms which proved to be lung cancer. Treatment was prescribed and he was expected to be discharged from Westminster Hospital on Friday, 13th August. However, he suffered a coronary on 12th August and died on the morning he was expected to come home.

Mr. Fred Streit had been in this country since 1921, a staunch Bernese who showed his attachment to his native country by taking part in an active and useful way in many Swiss organisations in London. His professional career as a banker was highly successful. He joined the staff of Barclays Bank Ltd., Chief Foreign Branch, London, on arrival in Britain and was appointed Principal of the Central European Department in 1947. At the end of May 1958, he retired from the position he had held with great distinction.

In the Swiss community, he was well known as the Chairman and Treasurer of the First of August Committee, offices which he held successively for several years. He was co-founder of the London Swiss Philatelic Society and its President. In 1953 he was elected Chairman of the President's Assembly (now the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK) and was later the Honorary Patron of the Swiss Philatelists. For many years he sat on the Education Committee of the Swiss Mercantile Society and was elected member of the Council during the war. Reporting on his 70th birthday in these columns in March 1968, Mrs. Meier wrote: *"It was typical of Fred Streit that on 11th October of last year, the very day of the Streit's 40th Wedding Anniversary, he attended the Monthly Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society in order to take part in the little celebration arranged for him and three other members who had presented him with a stained glass paenl by the 'Schweizeririscher Kaufmämminscher Verein' for 50 years of membership."*

Until the onset of the circulatory troubles that were to make the end of his life so painful Mr. Streit was as active as ever. He was appreciated by all who knew him by his sense of humour and friendliness. Now he has left three children, Sylvia, Mary and Robert, and two grandchildren. To all of them we wish to express our heartfelt sympathy.

WELFARE OFFICE

for

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