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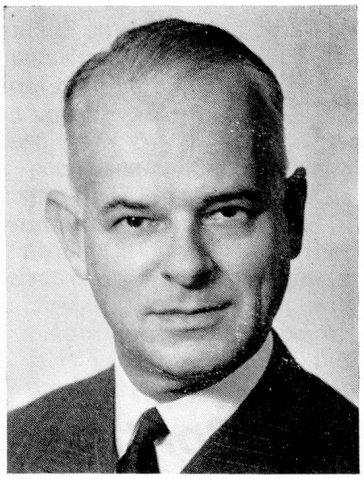
NEWS FROM THE COLONY



OUR NEW AMBASSADOR, MR. ALBERT WEITNAUER

As we have indicated in our last issue, Mr. Albert Weitnauer has been appointed by the Federal Council to take the succession of Monsieur René Keller, who has taken up his new functions as Head of the Division for International Organisations at the Political Department on February 1st.

Mr. Albert Weitnauer hails from Basle and was born in 1916. He studied in that city to obtain a Doctorate in law at its university in 1940. He entered the service of the Confederation the following year and worked in the Central Office of War Economy, until 1946, whereupon he worked in the Commercial Division of the Federal Department of Public Economy. He was promoted to the office of head of section in 1950, after a short posting at the Swiss Legation in Washington. During 1953 to 1954 he was in the London Legation as counsellor in charge of economic and commercial affairs. He assumed the same responsibilities in the Washington Legation from 1954 to 1958. Having been called back to Berne in October, 1958, he was appointed by the Federal Council as delegate to the Commercial Agreements and was given the title of Plenipotentiary Minister in 1960. In 1966 the Federal Council named him as their delegate to Special Missions with the title of Ambassador. During 12 years of activities as delegate, Mr. Weitnauer took care of Swiss relations with the United States, the Soviet Union and the countries of eastern Europe. He headed the Swiss delegation to GATT and negotiated in the "Dillon Round" from 1960 to 1962, and in the "Kennedy Round" from 1962 to 1967. The problems of Switzerland's trade with the European Community was one of the many problems he had to tackle. Mr. Weitnauer is the President of a study group called the *"Historische Standortsbestimmung"* created by the Federal Council to study the fundamental problems facing Switzerland in an age of European integration. He will retain the chairmanship of this group while in London. Mr. Weitnauer is well remembered by the Swiss of London for his stay in London in 1953-54, in the days of Monsieur de Torrenté. We would like to welcome him most warmly and wish him a long and enjoyable stay among us in London.

(PMB)

THE ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY BIDS FAREWELL TO MONSIEUR AND MADAME RENE KELLER

The Anglo-Swiss Society was reunited at a special Dinner organised on 20th January to bid farewell to our Ambassador for these last two years and Madame René Keller.

We were greeted by Lady Selkirk in the absence of our President, Lord Selkirk. She expressed how deeply she had been touched by the departure of these very dear personal friends.

Lord Samford, Minister of State for Environment, then made a short address. He wondered whether the ever shortening sojourns of Swiss Ambassadors in London was not due to their inability to survive in a worsening British environment.

Monsieur Keller reassured him that this was not the case. He recalled his first stay in London in 1952, and evoked the vision of his wife walking the streets of London with a smog mask. The atmosphere of London had much improved since then!

Monsieur Keller then declared himself to be fortunate to have enjoyed so many ties in England. The relations between Britain and Switzerland could not be described as a "special relationship". They were a "natural relationship" enhanced by all the ideals and characteristics shared in common by the British and the Swiss people. Monsieur Keller found a living example of this convergence of mutual interests in the personalities seated around him. In the field of sports there was Lord Wakefield; in the field of mountaineering there were Lord Hunt of Everest and Mr. Solari, President of the British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club. There was also the Right Reverend Lord Stopford, Bishop of London, an ecumenical personality and in this respect a champion of the unprecedented movement between our Swiss Churches in London. There was Lady Limerick, of the British Red Cross, who represented a worldwide movement so close historically and actually to the best Swiss traditions.

Monsieur Keller said that one of the setbacks of the diplomatic profession was that one had to abandon one day the circle of friends made during an assignment. Diplomats were condemned to an "everlasting new". This at least had the advantage of preventing one from "getting rusty". Diplomats could ill afford not to stay young.

Monsieur Keller ended his address by expressing his sadness at leaving Lord and Lady Selkirk, two very dear friends, and by recalling his farewell visit to Her Majesty. She had asked him whether he might not perhaps serve a third term in London. The Queen had told him that there had been a precedent with a Turkish ambassador. Monsieur Keller had in reply expressed his doubts that "fortune should be so good" as to allow him to come to London for a third time. It was with these kind words, addressed to the Queen and to the British and Swiss members of the Anglo-Swiss Society that Monsieur Keller concluded his address.

THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The Orchid Suite of the Dorchester Hotel hardly appeared large enough to accommodate the gay gathering of SMS members and friends who had flocked to this traditionally successful and enjoyable function. The postal strike had at any rate been beaten, and, as our President so appropriately pointed out, the SMS Secretary had done his job well.

Mr. Jaccard began his address — which fittingly punctuated a highly palatable dinner — by telling us of his horoscope: It had promised him "a letter of considerable importance". Whether this letter was to be despatched by a pigeon courier had eluded the fortune-teller's divination!

Our President continued by welcoming the many guests of the Society to the Evening and its many friends of long standing also present.

Foremost among the guests were Monsieur Jürg Iselin, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy during that particular fortnight, and Madame Iselin. Mr. Jaccard expressed the wish that Monsieur Iselin's stay among us would be a long one and assured him that his "easy manner and affability" would long be remembered in London.

He then welcomed another honourable guest, Mr. G. Gyssler and Mrs. Gyssler, Managing Director of British Brown-Boveri. Mr. Jaccard evoked in passing the pride he had felt upon seeing during a Scottish journey the household name "Brown Boveri" standing