

**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:** - (1971)

**Heft:** 1609

**Rubrik:** Swiss Mercantile Society

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

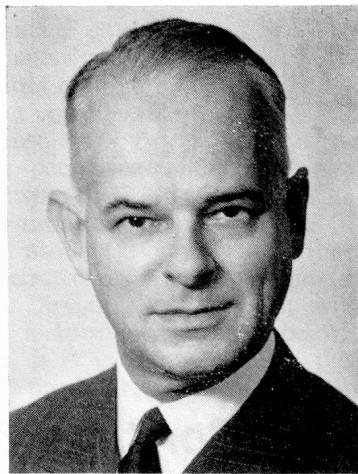
#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 15.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

# 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)

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 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

## 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

on an important hydro-electric plant in the Highlands.

He welcomed the presence of further officials of the Embassy. They were Mr. C. H. Brugmann, Mr. C. Abegglen, Mr. T. Dudli and their ladies. He regretted the absence of our Consul, Mr. Fritz Adams, unable to come because of the illness of Mrs. Adams.

Another esteemed friend of the Society whose absence had to be regretted was Dr. H. Egli, who had been called away from an enjoyable evening by the indisposition of Mrs. Egli.

Mr. Jaccard recalled the regular football contests between the SMS team and the Athletic Association of the "Times", and the failure of the SMS footballers of wresting the coveted Lints-Smith Cup from their opponents for the past few years. He nevertheless welcomed Mr. John Gard, of the "Times", and his wife.

The President continued by stating how pleased he was to see among us Mrs. Marianne Meier, widow of the late Honorary Member of the Central Society and the London Section, Walter Meier, herself a member of the SMS and President of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique. He welcomed the ministers of our two Protestant Swiss parishes and their wives and daughters. He added undeserved kind words to the present Editor of the "Swiss Observer".

Nearer to the SMS school he saluted Mr. Walter Burren, Secretary and former Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. Raymond Chappuis and Mr. Oscar Grob, past Presidents, Mr. C. Slade, Principal, and Mr. E. W. Makin, Vice-Principal, and their respective wives.

Mr. Jaccard evoked the good state of the SMS establishment at Fitzroy Square and the healthy spirit ruling at the school. He underlined his satisfaction at being assisted by such helpful Trustees and Council Members and expressed particular thanks to Mr. F. O. Hausermann, Chairman of the Education Committee.

Mr. Jaccard said that he had entertained faint hopes that the President of the SKV, Mr. Richard Maier-Neff, might be with us. That was not to be. But Mr. Maier-Neff had done the next best thing by lending us his daughter, Miss Brigitte Maier, who was working in London. Mr. Jaccard welcomed her and invited her to greet her parents on the London Society's behalf.

This warm message of welcome was concluded with an invitation to the members of the SMS to raise their glasses and drink to the health of the Guests and the Ladies.

A short pause followed, following which Monsieur Jürg Iselin rose to thank his hosts for having given him the opportunity of being with them this evening. He recalled that this was his second SMS Annual Dinner and Dance and that last year he had come to the same function in similar circumstances.

On that occasion too, he was deputising for the Ambassador, called away to the Bahama Islands. But this time it wasn't quite the same thing, as Monsieur René Keller had left us for good only two days beforehand. Monsieur Iselin paid tribute to the eminent qualities of his former chief and said that he well understood why Berne should want to get hold of him. But, he added, taking away a good man from London in no way excluded the equally eminent qualities of our new Ambassador, Dr. Albert Weitnauer, who was expected for the middle of February. Dr. Weitnauer had distinguished himself in conducting economic negotiations for his country under the management of Hans Schaffner. Dr. Iselin seasoned his address with no less than five quotations from Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw. He came to speak of the importance of the work of the SMS and its college in London. It not only helped the motherland by inculcating English to generations of Swiss youths, but it also rendered valuable services to the Embassy, which made use of SMS students for its daily jobs. Monsieur Iselin joked on the college's lovely façade and elegant location, all of which contrasted somewhat favourably with the interior. He ended by referring to the Forum of Switzerland, whose prospects did not appear at present to be very encouraging. He invited us to Toast to the Swiss Mercantile Society and was echoed by the thunderous call of the liveried Master of Ceremonies.

We were seated again when Monsieur Iselin made it known that Mr. Jaccard was soon going to retire from his post at the Swiss Bank Corporation—but fortunately not from his Presidency of the London SMS. He presented him with a large framed reproduction of a Jurassian scenery originally taken by Mr. L. S. R. Asch. This gift on behalf of the Society particularly pleased Mr. Jaccard, as it reminded him of a familiar setting, and he expressed his feelings of gratitude to all.

The last speaker, replying for the guests, was Mr. G. Gyssler. He thanked his hosts for having been honoured with an invitation and highly appraised the importance of the Swiss Mercantile Society's famous college in London. It had initiated 25,000 youths to the English language in its 50 years of existence. Mr. Gyssler then described in an entertaining way how he himself had come to learn English, finally forced by the circumstances. He recalled the English teacher of his school days and his first dealings with British clients as a Brown-Boveri engineer. He ended his address by exalting youth and by stressing the importance of an institution like the SMS for its invaluable service to the young.

Speech-time was over. Tables were cleared for the Dance and laid with light drinks.

The dancing soon got under way and lasted merrily until past midnight, when it was officially closed in the glor-

ious manner of SMS balls. We formed a vast circle and sang "Auld Lang Syne" to the intention of our President and Mrs. Jaccard, who both appeared in the centre of the circle. Finally the Orchid Suite reverberated with the harmony of the "Schweizer Psalm" and "God save the Queen".

(PMB)

## CAPTAIN T. RICHARDSON

We have the sad duty of announcing the passing away of Captain T. Richardson. He died on January 7th, 10 days before his 84th birthday. He was a great friend of Switzerland and a prominent member of the Anglo-Swiss Society. In fact, he took an eminent role in the revival of the Society in 1959, the year of the Swiss Fortnight in London and the year of a memorable Anglo-Swiss ball at the Dorchester in favour of Pestalozzi Village. Captain Richardson became the Treasurer and took this duty most seriously. The Anglo-Swiss Society is furthermore grateful to him for having enlarged it with many new British members.

Born in Yorkshire in 1887, Captain Richardson was to have a life-long

## Antiques

FINE PERIOD FURNITURE  
PORCELAIN — RUGS  
OBJETS D'ART  
ANTIQUE — MODERNE

## Le Centre

(L. JACOMELLI)  
20 KING STREET  
THE GREEN  
RICHMOND, SURREY  
01-948 1505

## SWISS SPECIALITIES

SAUSAGES  
CHEESE  
CHOCOLATES  
HERO CONSERVES  
BISCUITS  
ROCO CONSERVES

go to

## BARTHOLDI'S

4 Charlotte Street, London W1  
Telephone: MUS (636) 3762/3

ALSO FIRST CLASS MEAT