Our ambassador says farewell

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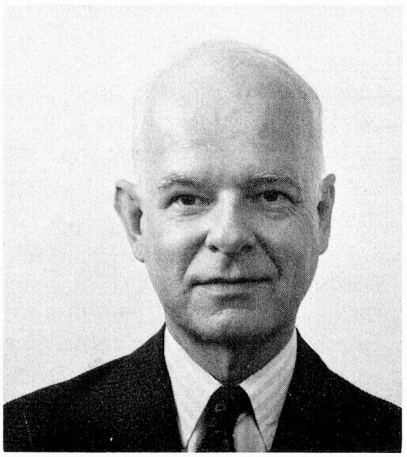
Our Ambassador says farewell

This year's Christmas message has, for me, a very special significance. As you probably know, I shall leave the United Kingdom at the beginning of next year and my mission as Swiss Ambassador to the Court of St. James's will come to an end.

I have spent, all in all, nearly five years in London which, from a personal point of view, have been extremely happy ones, full of most vivid impressions of people and things of the greatest interest. Isn't it immensely rewarding to live in this beautiful country of Britain, where old traditions blend so happily with the very latest in artistic, scientific and literary achievement? Obviously, this country has momentous problems to tackle, which we all know about, but there is an undercurrent of quiet confidence in the very character of the British people which makes us feel that in the end everything will work out all right. This, in any case, is the deep conviction I am taking with me on my departure.

If all I have said so far might be considered as portraying satisfaction with the present as well as optimism for the future, this the Swiss Ambassador could surely not do if his own countrymen, the Swiss colony in Great Britain, did not contribute – as they will certainly go on doing – so actively and so successfully to the excellent state of Anglo-Swiss relations. The great friendship that so very naturally exists between the two countries and the two peoples is one of the most gratifying elements in all Switzerland stands for and can count on in the world. I do trust that this happy state of affairs will be as unshakeable as the cliffs of Dover and the Swiss Alps which, though for different reasons, stand out as a symbol of steadfast glory.

Let me end by wishing you all, the young and the old, the healthy and particularly those who are ailing, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



His Excellency Dr. Albert Weitnauer, Swiss Ambassador to the Court of St. James's for almost five years, will, sadly, be leaving us early in the new year.

A CONSUL'S LOT IS NOT AN EASY ONE!–BUT IT'S HAPPY

M. Charles Glauser, Head of the Consular Section and Administration at the Swiss Embassy, gave a most interesting talk to an invited audience at the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in London on Thursday, 23rd October.

Entitled "The Work of a Consul", M. Glauser's talk gave those present a look behind the scenes of a complex organisation engaged in looking after many thousands of Swiss Nationals, both resident and migratory.

The Consul began his talk by pointing out that it is relatively easy to define the work of, say, a lawyer or an architect, but not quite so easy to define the rôle of a Consul.

After describing the various duties of his department, M. Glauser told his audience that a Consul must be ready to intervene in the most unexpected circumstances; he must be able to suggest, to help, to support – all in the interests of our compatriots and our country.

Some of the duties entrusted to a Consul surprised the audience. For example, how many would have guessed that a Swiss Consul may be called upon at any time to control the muster roll and check the log books of some 27 Swiss ships ploughing the seas as well as to hear any complaints voiced by their crews?

M. Glauser is not directly involved in such maritime tasks as these activities are confined mainly to Swiss authorities in ports such as Antwerp, Genoa and Hamburg, but he mentioned this duty to emphasise how a Consul must condition himself to expect the unexpected!

There are also the more harrowing tasks such as informing relatives in Switzerland of a death or being called out during the weekend when a young compatriot has been arrested for a criminal offence. One bright point here – M. Glauser was proud to report that offences involving violence have so far proved extremely rare among young Swiss.

In his summary M. Glauser pointed out that the long list of tasks he had listed was by no means comprehensive. The audience was, however, left in no doubt that he is an extremely busy man who has dedicated his working life to Switzerland and her people.

The Consul closed his speech by saying that he had purposely refrained from relating personal experiences. He had kept the topic on general lines in order to give a better overall picture of the demanding work he is called upon to do.

After answering several questions from the audience M. Glauser was formally thanked by NSH Secretary Mrs. Meier on behalf of all present.

The interesting evening was, however, not quite over. The audience was pleasantly surprised to hear that Mr. Borret, who for 31 years worked with OSEC in Berne, was in the audience. Mr. Borret was a founder-member of NSH in 1926 and presented an all-too-short but fascinating picture of London for the Swiss almost 50 years ago. He too was warmly thanked by Mrs. Meier on behalf of all present.

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