

Council for the study of Swiss problems

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COUNCIL FOR THE STUDY OF SWISS PROBLEMS.

Annual General Meeting.

Despite its cumbersome style this organisation is going from strength to strength. It has been a misnomer for a long time now, if not from the start, because far from limiting its task to the study of Swiss problems the Council has in more than one instance proceeded to action of the most practical kind. The Furniture for England Fund is an impressive case in point. The initiative came from the Council or more accurately speaking from its burly President, Mr. E. Steiner, and its indefatigable Honorary Secretary, Mr. Alfred Renou, who felt that something more should be done to express Switzerland's gratitude to England. And the scheme was carried through by the Council to a triumphant end, of which detailed accounts have already been published in the S.O.

But the study of Swiss problems, especially and foremost trade problems, and giving advice on them to our authorities was and remains the chief function of the Council, as emerged also from the President's report to the Annual General Meeting which took place on April 27th, at the Brown's Hotel. The Council as such and a number of individual members were in a position to give the Swiss trade delegation earlier in the year, most valuable information and advice on all questions connected with the important negotiations in hand. The Council in its present form proved, as Mr. Steiner claimed in his report, "far superior to what a Chamber of Commerce could offer in furthering Swiss interests in this country." The members are representative of all trades, their advice is available at all times, ungrudgingly, at no expense to the enquirer. And herein, surely, lies the essential *raison d'être* of the Council.

Mr. Renou supplemented the president's annual report with what Mr. Steiner described as a "moral report," some excerpts of which will be published in a subsequent issue of the S.O. The discussion turned largely on the question of the Swiss Centre, the creation of which was recognised as a difficult but important task for the Colony. The question of a change of name was referred back to the Committee for further study, it being generally agreed that a shorter appellation would be desirable.

The membership of the Council remains at forty. Having lost the previous two Vice-Presidents, Mr. Wüthrich by death, and M. Oboussier due to his departure for Switzerland, the A.G.M. elected Messrs. P. de Wolff and H. Oswald as new Vice-Presidents, while confirming Messrs. Steiner, Renou, and de Cintra, as President, Hon. Secretary, and Hon. Treasurer respectively.

At the dinner following the meeting the Council entertained M. Escher and M. P. A. Aubaret of the Legation. It constituted the farewell to the latter who has been urgently transferred to New Delhi to head the staff of the new Legation immediately under Minister Daeniker. This is a most honorable preference for M. Aubaret for which he seems so eminently fitted, thanks to the excellent training and experience gathered during his ten years stay in this country. M. Escher paid a special tribute to M. Aubaret's devoted and intelligent services, not omitting a word of warm appreciation also for Mme. Aubaret. This praise was warmly echoed by a number of other speakers: Mr. Steiner as Chairman, M. de Cintra as a friend of M.

Aubaret's father, Colonel Bon as the grand old man of the Colony and Dr. Egli as President of the N.S.H. on whose Council M. Aubaret has been serving so faithfully and so actively since the change of management. His departure constitutes a very special loss to the N.S.H. but it will be felt as acutely by a far wider circle of the Colony than that represented by the organisations with which he was connected.

Dr. E.

SOCIETE DE SECOURS MUTUELS DES SUISSES A LONDRES.

Few of our readers are aware that the above Society is the oldest Swiss Society in this country, having been founded in 1703. Whilst they are, amongst themselves very active, they do not attract attention by giving Banquets in the grand style at some of London's luxury hotels.

Once a year, however, they give a dinner party to the members at their headquarters, and this function took place on Wednesday, May 5th, at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1, under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. L. Gandon, who has been recently elected their President.

It was in all respect a very happy family party, enhanced by an excellent dinner, served by Mr. Wyss, steward of the Swiss Club.

Mr. Gandon extended to the participants and guests, amongst whom was the Editor of the Swiss Observer, a hearty welcome. He gave a short *resumé* of the history of the Club, and voiced the wish that every effort should be made to infuse new blood into the Society.

He paid a warm tribute to his predecessor, Mr. C. Campart, who had held the Presidency of the Society for 18 years. In appreciation of his long and faithful services, he informed Mr. Campart, that the Committee had decided to nominate him Honorary President. This announcement was greeted with acclamation, and Mr. Campart, visibly touched by the honour bestowed on him, thanked the President and the members, presenting at the same time the Society with a little statuette, a replica of the William Tell monument in Altdorf.

Mr. Gandon also thanked his colleagues of the Committee, Mr. W. Kilchenmann, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. A. Künzli, Hon. Treasurer, for their painstaking work.

This not being an "official" function, it is the wish of the President that none of the speeches given, during the evening, should be reported in this paper, to which ruling I willingly submit.

I hope, however, that I may record that this party, at which I met many good old friends, was a great success; and in thanking them for having given me the opportunity to pass a few happy hours in their midst, I extend to their new and energetic President best wishes for a successful term of office, and to the Society many more of these enjoyable annual dinners.

ST.

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