

Annual general meeting and dinner of the Swiss Economic Council

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER OF THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council took place on Friday, June 18th, 1954, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Mr. H. Oswald was in the Chair, and there were 20 members and guests present. The Chairman in opening the meeting referred to the passing away of his predecessor, Mr. E. Steiner, in June of last year, paying a tribute for his inspiring leadership. After referring to the various activities of the Council during 1953/54, in the Chairman's report, Mr. Oswald invited the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. de Cintra, to present his accounts, both these reports were accepted unanimously.

In accordance with the rules, four committee members were retiring, namely Messrs. A. Gautier, G. E. Suter, C. Voegeli and J. Zimmermann, as these were prepared to carry on for another term of office they were re-elected. Newly proposed as a member of the committee was Mr. R. Pfenninger, Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation, who was duly elected.

Mr. Oswald was confirmed in his office, and Mr. W. R. Gamper, who efficiently acted as Chairman *pro tem* during the elections, thanked him, the committee, and the Hon. Secretary for the services they had rendered. After a short discussion about various matters, the Chairman closed the meeting, which was followed by a dinner in the Silver and Gold room.

* * *

Mr. Oswald warmly greeted the guests who participated at the dinner, namely Monsieur Henry de Torrenté the Swiss Minister, Dr. A. Weitnauer, Commercial Counsellor, Monsieur R. Faessler, Counsellor of Legation, and Monsieur H. Miesch, Secretary of Legation. He expressed his and the members regrets at the departure of Dr. Weitnauer, thanking him for the interest he had shown in the work of the Council, and wishing him every success in his new sphere of activity. He expressed the hope, that his successor, Monsieur R. Faessler, whom he introduced, would collaborate in the same helpful manner as Dr. Weitnauer had.

The Swiss Minister, in thanking the Chairman for the invitation extended to him and his collaborators, said that he appreciated the harmonious contact which existed between the Swiss Economic Council and the Legation.

"We have found you most cooperative and helpful", he continued, "whenever we have come to you for help or information, but your activity not only helps us in our work, it is at the same time a valuable factor for progressive cohesion in the colony, and so does its share to heighten the regard with which the Swiss of Great Britain are looked upon by our authorities at home."

In conclusion, Monsieur de Torrenté referred to the departure of Dr. Weitnauer, who, he said "has shown himself an extremely efficient collaborator", and expressed the hope that his successor would prove himself as helpful and cooperative to the Economic Council as any of his predecessors. (*Applause*).

Dr. A. Weitnauer, before addressing the Council on "Switzerland and the future of the European Payments Union" (which is reproduced on another page), said, that the ten months which he had spent in London stand out in his memory as a unique experience, "there remains", he said "in the end a very general impression of grandeur, of real dignity, of solidity — in the best sense of the word — in which London, and indeed the whole United Kingdom excel."

The speaker referred to his work at the Legation, saying that he was a happy man and had been privileged to be a member of the team, which our Minister leads as an accomplished master in the art of diplomacy, and he wished to thank him for the generous help which he had given him.

In conclusion he thanked the Chairman for the very friendly welcome he was given by the Economic Council. "You Gentlemen", he said, "can claim to stand in the very front line of defence of our economic interests abroad." The words of our departing Counsellor were heartily cheered.

Then followed an excellent *exposé*, mentioned above, which on its conclusion was acknowledged with loud applause.

Before closing the proceedings, Mr. Oswald, on behalf of the company warmly thanked Dr. Weitnauer for his excellent and most interesting address, and also voiced the appreciation of the members to Mr. G. A. Ronus, Manager of the Dorchester Hotel, for the excellent dinner provided.

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