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le journal qui, d'emblée, a poussé avec le plus d'énergie à la démission immédiate du conseiller fédéral argovien est la "National Zeitung" de Bâle, radicale mais encore plus attachée au maintien du système actuel de la vie chère qu'à son parti. Il y a là quelque chose qui devrait donner l'éveil aux partisans de l'adaptation.

En face de ce problème, la situation — comme on dit en style militaire — est la suivante. Les trois quarts des Suisses, pris individuellement, sont partisans d'une réduction des prix sur toute la ligne. Mais, en tant que membres des associations professionnelles ou économiques, ils en deviennent les adversaires, parce qu'ils entendent être les derniers à en supporter les conséquences. Que les autres commencent! Et puis, à quoi serviraient les secrétariats généraux, grossièrement rémunérés, de ces groupements si puissants, s'ils ne recouraient pas de temps à autres aux pratiques de la démagogie?

Qu'on veuille bien se souvenir des luttes si âpres qui ont marqué les débats des Chambres sur le prix du blé et sur les appointements des fonctionnaires, et l'on sera pleinement édifié. L'adaptation des prix n'a de chances d'être agréée que si le gouvernement fédéral en décide le principe le plus tôt possible, tambour battant pour ainsi dire, de façon à lier par avance le successeur de M. Schulthess. Il faut voir les choses telles qu'elles sont et non pas telles qu'on voudrait qu'elles fussent. Ce tableau est malheureusement le seul qui réponde à la réalité.

Avant d'élire le successeur de M. Schulthess, l'on ferait peut-être bien, aussi, d'examiner un point qui ne manque pas d'importance: la division du commerce doit-elle continuer d'être attribuée au département de l'économie publique? On sait que la loi de 1913 sur la répartition des services prescrit son rattachement au département politique. Après le départ de M. Hoffmann, pour des raisons tant personnelles que d'actualité, elle fut placée de nouveau sous la direction de M. Schulthess. Des arrêtés fédéraux pris tous les cinq ans ont depuis lors sanctionné la prolongation de cette situation provisoire. Mais les raisons invoquées en 1917 auront toutes disparu avec la démission du conseiller fédéral argovien.

Pendant la guerre, en effet, le département politique était surchargé de besogne, tandis que celui de l'industrie et de l'agriculture offrait un champ trop faible à l'activité débordante de son chef. Aujourd'hui, c'est exactement le contraire. Le département politique n'a plus guère de gros problèmes à résoudre, tandis que l'économie publique accapare les problèmes les plus importants qui se posent à l'attention de nos sept sages. Les arguments qui en 1913 militaient en faveur du rattachement de la division du commerce au département politique ont repris leur pleine et entière valeur. De plus, cette mesure faciliterait grandement le choix du successeur de M. Schulthess comme conseiller fédéral et comme chef de département. Elle serait encore de nature à favoriser une évolution de la politique économique du Conseil fédéral en faveur des idées nouvelles.

Il y a là peut-être une issue à une situation, qui, sans elle, risque de rester inextricable. Mais il va de soi que cette réforme si désirable peut jouer un rôle important dans l'élection du nouveau conseiller fédéral, et devrait être décidée sans tarder. Si l'on ne voulait pas s'y résoudre, on risquerait d'embrouiller encore l'écheveau qu'il s'agit de démêler.

R. BOVET-GRISEL.

"WANDERER GEGEN ABEND."

We have much pleasure to inform our readers, that Miss Marie Bretscher, author of the above mentioned book, and sister of our valued collaborator "Kyburg" has been awarded an amount of 500 frs. by the government of the canton of Zurich for her literary work. (The book has been reviewed by the editor in our issue of the 5th of January, No. 689).

**WANDERER GEGEN ABEND**  
 Novelle von Marie Bretscher  
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 Ich habe seit langem keine neue Erzählung von solch starker, ursprünglicher Bildhaftigkeit zu lesen bekommen.  
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NEWS FROM THE COLONY.  
 SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY BANQUET.

In accordance with the still difficult times, the Swiss Societies in London, have curtailed their social functions to a minimum. Apart from the brilliant Annual Banquet of the City Swiss Club, at the Grosvenor House, last November, where again a record attendance was registered, no large Banquet has been held since. Various Societies had their Annual dinners, Cinderella or Fancy Dress Dances, concerts, etc., which were on the whole, fairly well attended. —

The next important function in the Colony will be the Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Mercantile Society, which will take place on Saturday, February 23rd, at the Trocadero Restaurant. Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who is the Honorary President of the Society, will be in the Chair.

The Swiss Mercantile Society has this year, broken with an age long tradition in going to the Trocadero Restaurant. For many years their Annual function has been held at the Midland Hotel, a place which harbours many affectionate memories amongst the older members of the Society; and although one always feels sad to depart from old friends, I consider that the change has been a wise one, and was in accordance with the time. Furthermore, in going this year to the Trocadero Restaurant, the Society is not going to a totally strange place, as this establishment is under the efficient management of our popular compatriot M. F. Delaloye, who will no doubt do his utmost to make his countrymen at this Annual function feel at home. I have before me the Menu, which makes excellent reading, and I have not the slightest doubt, that the promises made in print, will come up to the expectations of even the most particular gourmets.

The Swiss Mercantile Society needs hardly any introduction, during the last few years they have gone from success to success; they have built up an organisation which can claim the admiration of everyone of our compatriots in this hospitable island, and one does not exaggerate, when one speaks of their work and achievements, as of national importance.

It is all the more to be regretted, that so many of the members, especially the older ones, show but little interest in the working of this institution. The Meetings are badly attended, and the same is to be said about the very interesting lectures, given by well-known lecturers. The Society is spending large amounts on procuring first class men to lecture on various subjects of general interest, and their laudable endeavours surely deserve a better reward.

Whatever the justifications are, for not attending the meetings or lectures, there should be none whatever in attending the Annual Banquet of this Society. The various committees, throughout the years have been working hard, and giving their services and work freely, and it is only right that they should get an acknowledgement for their services rendered.

This can best be done by attending their Annual Banquet, by doing so they will feel that their work is appreciated, and that they have still the support of the large masses of the Colony. We feel sure that such a spontaneous support will be greatly appreciated by all those who, throughout the year, are so generously and unselfishly working in the interest of the Society.

Furthermore, the coming Annual Banquet is a splendid opportunity to re-visit once again old friends and members, and I would like to make a passionate appeal to some of my one-time co-workers in the Society, to come along and spend a few happy hours amongst the younger *élite*.

I feel sure that in doing so, they would pass a most enjoyable evening, and old and dear remembrances could be exchanged, old friendships could be cemented and new ones made. I have been informed from competent quarters, that the speech making will take but little time (the dancing is to start at 8.45) and therefore this excuse for not attending, which is so often used, will not hold good.

Let us hope then, that this important event will also register a record attendance, the Society and their leaders fully deserve this support.

They ask you for it, and I feel confident that you are not going to let them down. The invitation to take part in this Annual gathering is extended to all of our compatriots, whether members or not. Therefore "An revoir" at the Trocadero Restaurant on the 23rd inst.

ST.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to the Dinner and Dance of the City Swiss Club, which is taking place at the May Fair Hotel on Saturday next (16th.). Tickets can be obtained from the members of the Committee.

NOUVELLE SOCIETE HELVETIQUE.  
 London Group.

Supper at the Foyer Suisse, Upper Bedford Place, on February the 15th. at 8 o'clock.

We would remind our members and friends that only a limited number of guests can be seated, and that it will be necessary to secure tickets early, in any case not later than the 12th inst.

The supper will not be a banquet, but an intimate meal without pretensions, in true Swiss simplicity. With Mr. de Jenner in the chair, and Mlle. Alice Briod as guest of honour, we shall be given first hand information of the inner working of the S.S.E. in Berne, the only institution which devotes itself exclusively to the welfare of the Swiss Abroad, and our only direct representation in Switzerland.

We hope to bring together a small, but presentative, gathering of our Colony to meet Miss Briod in appreciation of the fine work which her institution is doing for us Swiss Abroad.

A. F. S.

NEW GENERAL MANAGER AT THE RITZ HOTEL.

We extend hearty congratulations to Mr. L. Hilpert, on his appointment as General Manager of the Ritz Hotel, in succession to the late Mr. John S. Walter (who was also a Swiss).

Mr. Hilpert was born at Einsiedeln and hails from a family with a long and distinguished hotel-keeping tradition, his brother Mr. Ernest Hilpert, is assistant manager of the Plaza Hotel, New York.

Mr. Hilpert began his career with alternate seasons as a waiter at the National, Lucerne, and the Cap Martin, Monte Carlo.

In 1913 he went to the Imperial Mentone, and subsequently to the Stephanie, Baden-Baden, and the Grand Bretagne near Lake Como.

In 1914 he was cashier in the restaurant of the Charing Cross Hotel, then head receptionist at the Metropole (London), whence he went to the Ritz, first as head receptionist 14 year ago, and then as assistant manager.

PERSONAL.

We extend hearty congratulations to M. Paul Hilfiker, chancellor of the Swiss Legation, on his promotion to the rank of Vice-Consul. M. Hilfiker will still act as chancellor.

\* \* \*

The many friends of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Berger, will sympathise with them in their loss; Mr. Berger's brother having died at Geneva at an early age.

9th ANNUAL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP CONGRESS OF TABLE TENNIS.

The draw for the 9th Annual World Championship Congress of Table Tennis was held at the Savoy Hotel on January 29th. M. de Bourg, Councillor at the Swiss Legation was present.

The Championship in which sixteen countries are taking part, has started on the 8th inst. at the Imperial Institute, and the finals will be held on February 16th at the Wembley Stadium.

A Swiss team will compete for the Swaythling Cup and for the Marcel Corbillon Cup, and the Competition of the teams is the following:—

Non-playing Captain: P. Barbier.  
 Men's: E. Crivelli, P. Tagliabine, L. Furno, P. Vergain, F. Loubet.  
 Women's: Miss M. Isely and Miss B. Wyss.  
 Delegates: A. Emery and E. Tripet.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.  
 ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL  
 on  
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, 1935  
 at the  
 Trocadero Restaurant  
 Piccadilly Circus, W.1  
 In the chair: M. C. R. PARAVICINI, Swiss Minister.  
 RECEPTION at 6.30 p.m. DINNER at 7 p.m. DANCING 8.45 p.m. till midnight  
 TICKETS at 12/6 can be obtained at Swiss House, 34-35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. (Tel. Museum 6908). City Office, 24, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4. (Tel. City 330), and Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.4. (Tel. Clerkwell 9595)