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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting was held at the Swiss Club, Charlotte Street, on Wednesday, 20th February, 1952, and was well attended. We had the pleasure of having amongst us our veterans, Messrs. Dannmeyer and Pfirter, whom the President warmly welcomed.

After the adoption of the minutes of the A.G.M. of the previous year, Mr. Robert P. Huxley, F.C.A., our auditor, briefly explained the account and balance sheet figures which show a very satisfactory state of the finances of the London section and of the Limited Company. The former finished with a surplus of £25.13.6, against a deficit of £61 in 1950, while the Company reduced the deficit in 1950 of £1,558 to one of £15.4.0 in 1951. Mr. Meier explained that we kept our assets in a readily realisable form because we shall require £2,000 for the modification and adaptation of the building next door which we shall take over next year.

The President then gave the report of the Council and introduced it by again referring to the downward tendency in our membership. In 1951 we admitted 15 new members, but lost 21 through resignations and return to Switzerland. The Society now has 20 honorary members, 254 active members, 22 corresponding members, and 65 contributory members and donors.

Among the highlights of the ten monthly meetings Mr. Meier mentioned lectures on wool, plastics, and advertising; the extremely interesting talk by Mr. Louis Chapuis on his trip to the U.S.A., and the beautiful coloured Swiss films shown at our December meeting.

Mrs. W. Meier then reported the unavoidable closing of the Ladies' section of our society on 22nd January last. She gave a brief account of the many successful activities this section had to its credit since its inception at the end of the war, which are well remembered by our regular attendants at our meetings. The active membership had dwindled to two, herself and Mrs. Jenne, and they had handed the balance in hand of £3 to the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls in Britain for the purchase of linen. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the two stalwarts who had throughout borne the brunt of the work.

Mr. W. Burren gave an account of the activities of the College, which had run three courses in 1951, attended by 407 students, whose stay in England tended to increase in length. The school fees had been raised to £18 per course for students who hold the Federal Proficiency Certificate (Fähigkeitsausweis), and £22 for all other students. 233 students sat for the diploma examinations, of whom 180 passed successfully. The College lost Mr. J. P. Pattinson who resigned as a teacher owing to illhealth, and who has been replaced by Mr. T. R. Gibson, B.A. London. While the attendance at evening classes has declined, they are still going strong and were frequented by 491 students of whom 405 were women. A special course of six months was now running, preparing about a dozen students for the Cambridge Examination for English.

In the absence of Mr. L. W. Krucker in Switzerland, Mr. O. Grob reported on the affairs of the House Committee, and said that Swiss House was in good repair. Part of our accommodation at 27 Fitzroy Square had been let for three years at a satisfactory rental, and

that the Employment Dept. would be transferred back to Swiss House as soon as practicable.

Under Mr. J. Zimmermann the Employment Dept. was reorganised and adapted to the changed conditions since Mr. Pfaendler's death. In spite of the difficult economic conditions 32 compatriots had been placed in this country and overseas.

Mr. Robert P. Huxley was re-elected as auditor for 1952.

Mr. A. C. Stahelin acted as temporary Chairman for election purposes. Mr. Huber, who had served on the Education Committee since the war, and was its Vice-Chairman, had decided not to stand for re-election for personal reasons. He was heartily thanked for the services he had rendered the College. The following members were proposed and seconded to serve:

On the General Purposes Committee, Mr. J. Bonjour and Mr. H. Wallimann;

On the Education Committee, Mr. L. Schmidlin and Mr. O. Luterbacher.

Mr. W. Meier was re-elected as President for another term with acclamation, and was at once invited by Mr. Stahelin to resume the chair. The remaining Council and Committee members being willing to stand again, they were declared elected en bloc by the President.

It was reported that our General Secretary, Mr. Ph. Schmid-Ruedin, would be in London on 28th May next, that we would postpone our monthly meeting to coincide with this date, and that our guest would address us on the working of the Swiss Parliament.

E.H.S.

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