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Autor: E.M.B.
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LHOTSE AND EVEREST.

Under the joint chairmanship of General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall, president of the Royal Geographical Society, and Sir John Hunt, president of the Alpine Club, a Meeting took place on 17th December in the lecture hall of the Royal Geographical Society in Kensington Gore. Before an audience of 700 intensely interested spectators, Dr. Eggler and his colleagues Mr. Luchsinger and Dr. von Gunten gave a report on their ascent of Lhotse and Everest in May 1956. Their talk was illustrated by over a hundred slides of a quality and beauty rarely surpassed.

Dr. Eggler, the leader of the Swiss expedition, told of their preparations and described the way up from the Indian rail-head of Srinagar to the base camp at the knee of the Khumbu Glacier. Then Mr. Luchsinger took over and told the audience of the route through the ice-fall and the Western Cwm up to the South Col and from there up a 50-degree slope and chimney to the top of Lhotse. Against a blue-black sky we saw the Nepalese and the Swiss flags floating side by side. — Dr. von Gunten then described the ascent of the second Swiss party up to the summit of Everest where under perfect weather conditions they spent two hours, one of which without any oxygen. Most impressive were the panoramic pictures taken from the summit of the highest mountain on earth. — Dr. Eggler then came once more to the microphone and told us of the return journey from base camp to Thyangboche, Namche Bazar and Katmandu.

In his summing up, Sir John Hunt, the president of the Alpine Club, not only acknowledged the magnificent achievement of the Swiss party, but referred also quite properly to Dr. Ernest Feuz, the secretary of the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, on whose shoulders rested the main burden of the tremendous amount of work involved in preparing for and organising such an expedition. He referred to the history of Himalayan climbing and the joy he felt not only at the success of the Swiss party but also the way in which they had captured in their pictures the mood and the atmosphere of an Everest expedition which could never be quite transmitted to those who followed such a tremendous achievement from armchairs, but which spoke so strongly to those few who had been privileged to experience mountaineering in the Himalayas. Sir John Hunt

congratulated Dr. Eggler and the Swiss team, as well as the Foundation for Alpine Research, who are working hand in hand with the British Himalayan Committee, on their victory.

M. Daeniker, the Swiss Minister, then approached the microphone and thanked the Royal Geographical Society for inviting representatives of the Swiss team to give that lecture in London. He expressed our delight and our pride in the achievement of our compatriots and referred especially to the happy collaboration between Swiss and British mountaineers which had contributed so much to the conquest of Everest and Lhotse.

It was, however, only after the tremendous impact of those beautiful colour photographs had somewhat faded, that the spectators realized with what unusual modesty our compatriots had given their report. Not once did they refer to the hardship, the tremendous effort and the incredible tenacity of body and mind which were needed to reach such a result. The memory of the evening is for that reason all the more profound and lasting.

E.M.B.

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