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**MEETING OF THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL,
in connection with the "Swiss Fortnight",
on 26th February at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane,
W.1.**

The Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council, which was held on 26th February at the Dorchester Hotel, was preceded by dinner.

Mr. M. Wiesendanger was in the Chair, and there were 22 members present.

This Meeting was specially convened in order to give information to the members about the work done so far, both by the small committee which was appointed by the Council some time ago, and by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (OSEC) Zurich, in connection with the Swiss Fortnight, which is to be held from 5th to 17th October 1959.

The Chairman welcomed Monsieur René Faessler, Commercial Counsellor of the Swiss Embassy, and Dr. H. Müller, Secretary at the Embassy. He voiced his pleasure at seeing amongst the company Director A. J. Staehelin and Deputy Director Dr. John Brunner of the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (OSEC), who came specially from Zurich to be present at the Meeting. Mr. Wiesendanger also welcomed two new members, viz., Mr. R. L. Thomas, General Manager of British Brown-Boveri Limited, and Mr. O. Grob, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society. The Chairman then called upon Director Staehelin to address the Council.

The Director of OSEC, Mr. Staehelin, in his opening address paid a warm tribute to the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Armin Daeniker, and his collaborators at the Embassy, Dr. R. Faessler and Dr. E. M. Bircher, Commercial and Cultural Councillors respectively, for the great interest they are taking in connection with the "Swiss Fortnight". He expressed equal appreciation concerning the work which is being done by the "working committee of the Swiss Economic Council under the able chairmanship of Mr. Alfred Renou.

Mr. Staehelin said that it was essential to co-ordinate all the efforts of those who helped in the preparation of this extensive goodwill action. "Such co-ordination", he said, "is not only necessary between the organisers in Switzerland and London, but also amongst the participants at both ends, and more particularly amongst those in the commercial sector."

He mentioned that the programme of the "Swiss Fortnight", which had been published in the "Swiss Observer" on 30th January 1959, had up to date not undergone any substantial change, but that a few minor alterations may yet become unavoidable. He also said that Madame Daeniker had kindly agreed to call upon circles of Swiss ladies in London for their assistance in connection with some special features in the programme.

Referring to the financing of this Swiss manifestation in London, Manchester and Glasgow, Mr. Staehelin mentioned that the total budget would amount to S.Francs 1,250,000.—.

"It is estimated", he said, "that of this large expenditure four-fifths would be covered by contributions from the Foundation 'Pro Helvetia', the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swissair, OSEC, the export associations and individual exhibitors, Banks, Insurance and Shipping Companies, Book Publishers, etc.

"The leading concerns of the Swiss Chemical Industry, which are only indirectly concerned with the 'Swiss Fortnight', have consented to grant a special contribution."

"Experience has shown", he continued "that in principal the professional associations whose consent to take part in the 'Swiss Fortnight' is assured, are prepared to defray their direct outlays, but not expenditure relating to costs of the indispensable overall costs of propaganda and publicity."

Mr. Staehelin then related that for this reason OSEC called upon the Federal authorities for financial assistance. "For the time being", he said "the financial basis cannot be considered to have been fully secured, but it is hoped that, by continuing the negotiations with the participants and the Federal Department of Finance, the necessary funds can in course of time be collected."

In concluding his lucid and interesting address, Mr. Staehelin made a strong appeal to the members of the Swiss Economic Council morally to support the financial endeavours of OSEC.

On resuming his seat the speaker was loudly cheered, and the Chairman, on behalf of the members, expressed appreciation to Mr. Staehelin for his untiring endeavours to bring the "Swiss Fortnight" into being.

Dr. Brunner, who as Head of the Exhibition Department of OSEC bears special responsibility with regard to the technical preparation of the shop window propaganda and other features of the programme, explained in detail to the Meeting the preparations he has undertaken so far.

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“ The organisation of a manifestation of the size in view ”, he said, “ calls for a concentration of all efforts. The help which the working committee of the Council can lend in this direction is of the utmost importance if the technical organisation is to become adequate.”

Dr. Brunner's capable *exposé* was greatly appreciated, and the Chairman extended thanks to him for his laudable efforts.

Mr. Wiesendanger then called upon Mr. Renou, Chairman of the Executive Committee in London, who gave an extensive résumé of the work done by the small working committee of the Swiss Economic Council. He paid a generous tribute to Mr. Staehelin and Dr. Brunner of OSEC for their spade-work and collaboration, and to his colleagues of the working committee, Messrs. R. J. Keller, W. Wyler, M. Wiesendanger, O. Rohn and G. Ronus, saying that whatever had been achieved so far was done in complete agreement and harmony and with enthusiasm by all.

Mr. Renou also expressed thanks to the Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Armin Daeniker, and his collaborators at the Embassy, Dr. R. Faessler and Dr. E. M. Bircher.

The speaker referred at some length to the efforts which are being made to co-ordinate the “Fête Suisse” with the demonstration organised by the Pestalozzi Village Association in London for a Folklore Evening at the Royal Albert Hall.

Mr. Renou closed his most interesting address with the words: “ Any effort we make, we love to make! ” (*Applause*).

Mr. O. Rohn, in charge of Publicity and the Hortological Section, gave a most interesting report about the endeavours which have been made in this direction. His address and suggestions were listened to with the keenest interest and warmly acknowledged.

The Chairman then opened the discussion in which various members of the Council took part.

This interesting and useful Meeting came to a close at 10.30 p.m. *ST.*

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE. Annual General Meeting.

Come to work to have pleasure! This seems to have been the motto for the members of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, whose Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday, 10th March, at the “Schweizerbund”, 74 Charlotte Street, W.1. The meeting was followed by a dinner which was evidently enjoyed by all, both in its physical (food and wine) aspect and its social amiability.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. W. Renz, who could welcome a fairly large gathering, amongst them some official guests. The Annual Report of the Council registered the fact of the continuing useful activity of the society. There were eight meetings during the year, with a variety of themes — lectures, film shows, colour slides of foreign countries.

The Annual Report of the Council and the Treasurer's Report were accepted with due thanks to those concerned. As a variation of an old theme the Hon. Treasurer could tell us that we had indeed “ an excess of income over expenditure ” carried to Balance.

All the previous members of the Council were re-elected with the addition of Messrs. H. Mock and J. H. Büchi.

Mr. A. F. Suter, Honorary President of the Society, who had conducted from the Chair the election part of the meeting, proffered warm thanks to the outgoing Committee and Council Members. He also mentioned the forthcoming *Journée Suisse* and expressed the hope that some members could arrange their holidays in Switzerland so as to be able to take part in that, for “Ausland-Schweizer”, so important annual conference.

What we lost at the N.S.H. Annual Film Show some time ago, we were privileged to enjoy after the dinner debris had been cleared away and the tables pushed back. *Scntes et Rocs au Saleve*, a lovely colour film, showed us Raymond Lambert and partner climbing the most forbidding mountain walls. The film not only brought out clearly the wonderful technique of the climbers — some shots were almost frightening to watch — but also their coolness and stamina. This was indeed a most excellent “dessert”.

Finally we were asked to note in our calendars 21st April as the day for the next meeting. Details will follow in due course. *J.H.B.*

AN APPEAL.

Dear Compatriots,

Mindful of the great losses sustained by thousands of Swiss abroad during the two world wars, the Assembly of Swiss Abroad in 1958 at Baden founded the “Solidarity Fund for Swiss Abroad”, a co-operative society. The purpose of this society is to provide immediate financial assistance to persons deprived of their means of livelihood as a result of war, internal unrest or social or economic emergency regulations. As the name implies, the idea behind the scheme is mutual assistance and solidarity among Swiss living in all parts of the globe.

The fund will be built up gradually through annual contributions from the Swiss abroad. These contributions are not lost, they are returnable to the depositor without interest on his reaching the age of 65, or, earlier death intervening, to his heirs. Persons losing their means of livelihood will receive compensation equal to 100 times their annual contribution. Further particulars regarding this “Solidarity Fund for Swiss Abroad” are given in the attached leaflet, and a copy of the Statutes can be obtained from the Embassy.

The Statutes provide that the Confederation should make good any deficit in the event of the financial resources of the society proving insufficient to compensate its members for losses sustained. The Federal Council is prepared to give favourable consideration to an application of this kind from the society and will submit it in due course to the Federal Assembly, provided that a sufficiently large number of Swiss abroad demonstrate their solidarity by subscribing to this fund.

I appeal therefore to all compatriots (including dual-nationals) resident in the United Kingdom to set an example by joining this world-wide scheme of self help.

By lending your support you are not only helping yourselves by covering the risks outlined above, but, at the same time, you are demonstrating your solidarity as Swiss abroad.

THE SWISS AMBASSADOR :
A. DAENIKER.