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CITY SWISS CLUB. An Interesting Lecture.

The Monthly Meeting of the City Swiss Club took place, on Tuesday, October 7th, 1947, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Mr. R. de Cintra, President of the Club, was in the Chair, and there were about sixty members and guests present.

The principal guest of the evening was Mr. Arnold Muggli, Chief of the Swiss Rationing Office.

The President, in opening the Meeting, extended a hearty welcome to Mr. Muggli, Dr. A. Escher, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, and Mr. F. Matthey, a former member of the Club, at present on a visit to this country from the U.S.A.

To arrange for a lecture on "Rationing" was, the least said, a daring subject for an evening's "amusement." We hear about it from morning, noon and night and most of us are sick and tired of listening to the various excuses with which our brave housewives introduce the daily meagre fare.

Mr. Muggli, who introduced his subject under the title of "Reminiscences of Swiss Rationing" is to be heartily congratulated on the way in which he dealt with a somewhat unpopular subject; not only did he spare the meeting irksome statistics, but he succeeded in interesting his hearers from beginning to end. He was assisted in his endeavours by the Management of the Dorchester Hotel, who, by serving an excellent dinner, made us forget, that we are still rationed.

The speaker dealt with the history of Swiss rationing, which became necessary right from the beginning of the war in September 1939, owing to the fact that Switzerland was devoid of most of the essential food-stuffs and products such as raw materials, coal, iron, etc.

Mr. Muggli pointed out, that one of the successes, why, on the whole rationing worked smoothly throughout the war, was due to the fact, that the Swiss Government entrusted not the cantons, but the communities as such, with the rationing administration, thus getting first hand information as to the needs of the population. The Government by doing so solved one of the most important problems of victualling the country.

As in all other countries, a flood of printed matter, such as rationing cards, clothing coupons, etc., had to be introduced by the authorities, which induced one of the papers, the "Nebelspalter," to the following poetic outburst:

"Von der Wiege bis zur Bahre
Schreibt der Schweizer Formulare."

"And yet," the speaker said, "None of these numerous decrees were issued before they were thoroughly discussed with the individuals for whom they were intended." A useful link was thus created between the authorities and the population creating an atmosphere of trust and goodwill.

The speaker then gave some amusing examples about rationing of such commodities as sugar, cheese, eggs and chocolates.

One important fact was mentioned, namely that at no time during and after the war the rationing executive enjoyed the privilege of being protected by the censor, which meant that every Swiss citizen had an opportunity to criticise freely the doings of the rationing Board, an opportunity which was freely taken advantage of.

Mr. Muggli paid a great tribute to the late Federal Councillor Obrecht, who, previous to the outbreak of the war, by his foresight saw that the country had a fair stock of foodstuff in hand, thus solving one of the most difficult problems of a country which for a long period was completely cut off from the outside world. He furthermore acknowledged the great services which his former colleague and now Press Attaché at the Swiss Legation, Dr. A. R. Lindt, had rendered to the administration.

Unfortunately space does not allow me to report more fully this most interesting *exposé* of Mr. Muggli, but I feel sure that all those who were privileged to listen to this talk, were convinced that this important undertaking was dealt with by competent men in a competent manner.

The speaker on resuming his seat received a well deserved ovation.

Mr. de Cintra in thanking the speaker, on behalf of the members, for the excellent way in which he had treated his subject, acquainted the meeting that Mr. Muggli was the promoter of the famous "Mahlzeiten Coupons."

Dr. A. Escher, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, associated himself with the President, saying that he had the impression that the rationing authorities had accomplished their task with great credit.

The President then called on Mr. A. Renou to give the Meeting an account of the "Auslandsschweizertag" which he attended as one of the London Swiss Delegates. Mr. Renou, in a witty and competent manner gave a detailed description of the event which took place in Berne during last month.

Dr. H. W. Egli, another member of the Delegation also referred to the said meeting.

Close of the Meeting 9.50 p.m.

ST.

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