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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The monthly meeting held on 8th June was fairly well attended, considering the difficulties of travelling due to the railway strike. It was especially cheering to see such veterans as Messrs. W. E. Gattiker, C. Chapuis, J. J. Schneider and F. Kibiger among those present. We were sorry, however, that Mr. G. Jenne, our Trustee, was not with us as we would have liked to congratulate him on receiving, at St. Gall, the bronze plaque for 50 years membership of our society.

Mr. W. Meier opened the meeting by reporting the loss of our friends Charles E. Gruber-Schaefer, corresponding member, and C. H. Gallmann, contributing member, to whose memory we paid the usual silent tribute by standing.

A letter from Mr. Phillip Schmid-Ruedin was then read, thanking the London section for our annual report and for the very great efforts we had made in the S.M.S. through the college for the Swiss commercial youth.

Our president briefly referred to the Swiss Sports, which, having regard to the strike and to the vagaries of the weather, was quite a success, even though our competitors did not do as well in the matter of prizes as in some previous years.

He made another strong appeal for new subscribers to the Echo, the special publication for the Swiss abroad, well written in three languages, and illustrated. It costs 12/- per year, payable to the account of the N.S.H. with the Swiss Bank Corporation. It needs more funds to meet the rising cost of production.

Mr. J. J. Boos gave a report on the Annual Delegate Meeting held at St. Gall on 7/8th May, which he attended as our delegate. He had met our Trustee, Mr. G. Jenne and Mrs. Jenne, who attended the meeting at St. Gall. While our friend was recovering from his long illness, he was still not strong and robust, but intended firmly to come back to London in the not too distant future.

It was 23 years since the last Delegate Meeting was held at St. Gall. Meanwhile we had gained 20,000 more members, but with 62,000 members the S.K.V. still had a long way to go before we could speak for the majority of the 360,000 commercial employees of Switzerland.

Three principle resolutions were fully discussed and passed by the meeting:—

1. The question of real earnings of employees. Though Switzerland still enjoyed an economic and commercial boom, it was only the younger members of our calling who were financially benefitting from these favourable conditions, while the middle-aged and older generation of employees were in some cases earning no more in terms of actual buying power than in 1939. The Central Authorities were instructed to press forward with vigour to secure a fair share of the profits for our members.

2. The S.K.V. has concerned itself for years with the length of the working week. In the large towns the 44 hour week is an established fact, but in smaller places and in the country 48 hours are still common. Modern working methods necessitate the general observance of a 44 hour week, also the granting of a

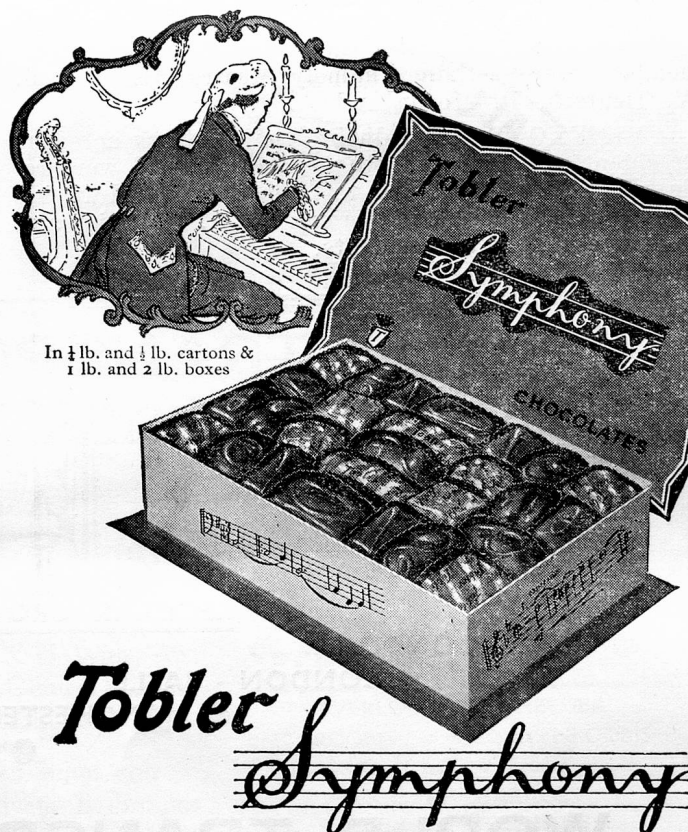
four week of paid holidays per year for employees of old standing. Two further postulates were:

- a. the introduction of pension schemes by all firms;
- b. revision of the legal provisions which protect the rights of prospective recipients of such pension schemes.

3. Social policy. The Federal Authorities are to be urged:

- a. to prevent a further increase in the cost of living;
- b. to secure the building of adequate living accommodation at small rentals;
- c. to see that any excess of income over expenditure of the A.V.S. (A.H.V.) is used for the improvement of benefits;
- d. to secure the early introduction of a state invalidity pension;
- e. to create a law protecting commercial employees in the conditions of their employment in the same way as manual labour is protected.

Our President thanked Mr. Boos for his representation of the S.M.S., and for his full and interesting report and then passed on to the lighter side of the evening. He stated that Mr. Gattiker had completed 60 years membership of our society, and thanked him warmly for his enduring loyalty and devotion. Mrs. Meier put a red carnation in his button hole and the assembled company lustily sang, "For he is a jolly good fellow". Mr. Gattiker modestly wondered why



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anyone should want to make a fuss about him, who in the late nineties was a member of the "Vergnuegungskomitee", and that was all his merits, he thought. All we had to do was to have plenty of patience, and we would reach the same position when our time came. He regaled us with some reminiscences in his best humorous style, in which he was followed by Mr. Carlo Chapuis and Mr. F. Kibiger.

After deciding not to hold meetings in July and August, this pleasant and homely meeting came to a close shortly before 9 o'clock.

E.H.S.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER OF THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council took place on Thursday, June 16th, 1955, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Mr. H. Oswald was in the Chair, and there were 32 members and guests present. In his opening address the Chairman introduced a new member in the person of Mr. M. Grether.

The minutes were read by Mr. J. Zimmermann, Hon. Secretary, after which the President submitted his report, dealing with the activities of the Council during 1954/55, in which he mentioned the addresses given by Dr. A. Weitnauer, Counsellor of Legation (now at Washington) on "Switzerland and the future of the European Payments Union", and Dr. H. Miesch on "The Anglo-Swiss Convention for the avoidance of double taxation".

In accordance with the rules four committee members were retiring, namely Messrs. H. Oswald, W. Deutsch, P. Moehr and A. Renou.

Mr. F. G. Sommer during the elections acted as President *pro tem*, and all the above named were re-elected. Mr. H. Oswald was also confirmed in his office as Chairman, and Messrs. A. A. Gauthier and C. Voegeli as Vice Presidents.

Mr. R. de Cintra, Hon. Treasurer, presented the accounts which were accepted.

The Chairman *pro tem* thanked Mr. Oswald, the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer and the committee for the services they had rendered.

After a short discussion concerning various matters the Chairman closed the meeting, which was followed by a dinner.

* * *

Mr. Oswald extended a hearty welcome to the guests who participated at the dinner, namely Messrs. Dr. Faessler, Dr. E. M. Bircher and P. Thevenaz of the Swiss Legation, and Mr. Coates of the firm Brown Boveri.

After an excellent dinner for which thanks were given from the chair to Mr. G. A. Ronus, Manager of the Dorchester and a member of the Council, a very interesting coloured talking film was shown of the headquarters in Baden of the world wide known concern of Brown Boveri, which employs a staff of 12,000 in Baden alone.

It was this an innovation which was greatly enjoyed by all those present.

Close of the Meeting, 10 o'clock.

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