

Unione Ticinese

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Swiss Embassy

On behalf of the Council I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our Ambassador, Monsieur Béat de Fischer, for his assistance and support. The place of Monsieur Heimo, Commercial Counsellor, was taken by Dr. M. Feller, who, in turn, we learn with regret, is leaving us before the year ends, after only a short stay in London to take up the post of Counsellor and Deputy to the Minister in Brussels. We thank him for his untiring efforts and wish him every success in the future.

Chairmanship

As your Chairman for over five years I feel the time has come for a change of leadership. I sincerely hope the Committee's proposal to proceed with the formation of the planned Institute of Anglo/Swiss Trade Promotion will be approved by the forthcoming Annual General Meeting, in which case, it is my firm belief that this will be an opportune moment for the appointment of a new Chairman who can, with a fresh and vigorous approach, form and start the New Venture.

Mr. Christen next expressed the hope that the Council would accept his Committee's proposal that Dr. H. B. Knuchel, Deputy Managing Director of Geigy U.K. Ltd., be elected his successor as Chairman of the Council. He could warmly recommend him as "the right man for the job"; Dr. Knuchel had been a member for a number of years, also of the Committee, and he was a keen and enthusiastic supporter of a Trade Centre.

In terminating my term of office which I enjoyed at all times, I wish to express my personal thanks to all of you but, of course, in particular to my Colleagues on the Committee for their loyal support and assistance and wish the Council every success in the future.

J. P. CHRISTEN,
Chairman.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council was held on 13th of October, as usually at the Dorchester Hotel, followed by an excellent Dinner.

The proposals of the Committee, contained in the Annual Report reproduced above, were all duly accepted unanimously. Thus the planning of the proposed Institute of Anglo-Swiss Trade Promotion will be proceeded with by the Committee, especially as regards its appropriate rules and organisation. In consultation with the other interested parties, the promised amounts due to the Swiss Economic Council will be called in as a starting basis for the scheme.

The Council also accepted Mr. Christen's decision to lay down the chairmanship at this stage of progress and elected as his successor Dr. H. B. Knuchel, Deputy Managing Director of Geigy (U.K.) Ltd., as proposed by Mr. Christen and the Committee. Mr. Christen's devoted and energetic stewardship during more than five years was acknowledged by a special vote of thanks and prolonged acclamation. Messrs. R. J. Keller and O. Rohn were re-elected Vice-Chairmen and Dr. Speckert as treasurer. Mr. R. M. Suess accepted re-election fully as Honorary Secretary, dropping the proviso "pro tem". Messrs. H. Knoll and M. Wiesendanger having retired from the Committee, three new members were elected to it: Messrs. Theo von Speyr, Max Keller and P. Müller. With the aid of various drawings Mr. Kunz gave the meeting a vivid account of the splendid things to come at the Swiss Centre.

E.

UNIONE TICINESE

An Interesting Evening

In pursuance of their new policy of having monthly meetings, the Unione Ticinese called their members together on Thursday evening, 13th October, to inform them, in an entertaining and at the same time instructive way, of an important problem that is occupying public opinion in the Home Canton.

Proceedings opened with two films kindly lent by the Swiss National Tourist Office. The first one took us on a trip right from the *St. Gotthard Pass to Chiasso*, with stops in the main towns and a view of the spots which attract the modern tourist. The second was a documentary on *Ascona*, the go-ahead lakeside resort, which though close to Locarno, has of late years built up its own reputation.

After the showing of the films, the President, *Mr. Virgilio Berti*, called on our old, but as regards the Society elusive friend, Giuseppe Eusebio, a past President and "socio benemerito" to give a talk on the burning topic of present-day "ticinese" politics, the *St. Gotthard* road tunnel and the related subject of toll charges.

By showing to his audience first how the Canton Ticino belonged to the Swiss Confederation by historical evolution, Mr. Eusebio analysed then how the economical structure of the territory had transformed itself as a consequence both of technical and economic changes affecting the whole of the country over the last hundred years. This led up to the "Rivendicazioni ticinesi" first of 1925 and then to the subsequent "rivendicazioni" which were presented to Berne in 1938, but which before being studied and implemented were overtaken by the outbreak of the last war. The main plank of these last "rivendicazioni" had been the request by the Cantonal authority that a road tunnel should be built under the *St. Gotthard Pass* to enable traffic with the rest of the country to be maintained uninterrupted through the winter months. When the Federal Authorities took over the responsibility for the trunk roads, so as to convert them into motor-roads, the *St. Gotthard* road tunnel was not foreseen. It has, however, subsequently been decided upon, but owing to the anti-inflation measures it would be subject, like other costly stretches of the "national roads" to toll charges.

The Federal Council's intention to ask Parliament to amend the Constitution to enable the levying of these tolls was received as a bitter blow in the Ticino for the benefit to be derived by the Southern Canton of nearness and easier access to the rest of the country without hindrance all the year round is considerably nullified by the imposition of this financial burden. It would be a manner of speaking for the "Ticinesi" a tax in order to be Swiss. The "Ticinesi" rightly consider that their faithful attachment to the Mother Country over the centuries, despite the harsh treatment during the long Bailiwick period, during the even greater economic difficulties of two world wars, the gradual, but painful detachment from practically all commercial intercourse with neighbouring Lombardy, should naturally and as a matter of course call for recognition by the making of every effort by all concerned into integrating them into the Swiss economy, and therefore, avoiding any action which would be contrary to this end, as there road tolls would be.

After a lively question period, following upon the talk, a pleasant evening came to an end.

J.E.