

# The annual meeting of the federation of Swiss societies in the U.K.

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## PAUL LERCH 70

In a short article written on the occasion of the 70th birthday of Mr. Paul Lerch we wrote that he had been a "machine assembler". Although Mr. Lerch did assemble machines, in that he conducted their assembly and that his machines were marine engines, his professional title was that of "engine erector". This job entailed the supervision of the assembly of marine engines in ships and the conduction of sea trials—definitely a more responsible job than that of machine assembler, of which there are thousands in industry, and we apologise to Mr. Lerch for the confusion.

## WELFARE OFFICE FOR SWISS GIRLS IN GREAT BRITAIN

On the 17th April, 1970 the Welfare Office was transferred from 11 Belsize Grove, London N.W.3. to 31 Conway Street, W.1. This move was considered expedient in order to achieve a closer co-operation with the Swiss Benevolent Society.

The Committee wish to express their appreciation of the generous hospitality and the assistance the Swiss Hostel have extended to the Welfare Office during its tenancy at Belsize Grove.

The Committee are also very grateful to the Swiss Benevolent Society for placing accommodation at the disposal of the Welfare Office.

## THE SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

The Society Room at Swiss House was for once full when the Swiss Benevolent Society used it, on May 11th, for its Annual General Meeting. As nearly all the general meetings of the Swiss societies this year, this was efficiently and rapidly conducted. The meeting dwelt at length on the detailed and hefty accounts of the Society. Owing to the installation of central heating in the Belsize Grove building, the last financial year showed a deficit. But the Society is as active as ever and co-operates closely with the Consulate. Mr. F. Adams, our Consul in London, thanked the Chairman for the great relief which the Benevolent Society's work meant to the Embassy. Mr. X. Speckert in turn thanked Mr. Adams for giving work to the Society. Judging from the annual Report, there's no doubt that the Benevolent Society can pride itself of tremendous achievements last year. The report states that it has been in touch with 308 people last year and dealt with 2,798 applications. 482 interviews were granted and 94 visits to hospitals and pensioners homes carried out. All this thanks to the tireless work of Mrs. Sharp and the devoted ladies who help to make the Benevolent Society such a helpful institution.

(PMB)

**Young Swiss** (age 21) at present studying at the Swiss Mercantile College in London, is looking for job from July onwards where he can use his languages (German mother tongue, good knowledge of English, some French).

Contact Mr. P. Stoffel, c/o Mrs. M. Jackson-Schnucker, 62 First Avenue, London, W.3.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF SWISS SOCIETIES IN THE U.K.

As usual, the Federation of Swiss Societies in the U.K. was invited by its Honorary President, our Ambassador, Monsieur René Keller, to hold its Annual Meeting in his official residence. The meeting was preceded by a friendly reception on the shady terrace behind the building. We then proceeded to the stately dining-room of the Residence and sat around its vast table, upon which a green carpet had been laid.

Dr. Egli, the President, welcomed us all, especially the many newcomers to the Federation's annual gathering. As was to be expected the London Societies were in the great majority, but there was fortunately a valuable representation from the north—Manchester, Edinburgh and Yorkshire being present round the green table. Dr. Egli commented on the Annual Report and apologised because he found it rather short. He reminded the members present of his appeal for all the individual societies' rules and statutes. A complete collection of such documents should be kept in the Federation's archives. So far, only three societies had responded. Mr. A. Kunz, the Treasurer, then commented on the accounts. He expressed the hope that the societies who had not paid up their contribution would do so in the near future and urged the present supporters to continue to give their help.

Dr. Egli raised the problem of his eventual succession. He maintained that, with four years of Presidency, he had been at the top for long enough and, with characteristic modesty, suggested that it was time for a member from the north to succeed him. Owing to his and Mr. Kunz's involvement with the Forum, he made the proposal that, having stepped down from the Presidency to the ordinary membership of the Committee, he may continue to be entrusted, together with Mr. Kunz, with representing the interests of the Federation at the Commission dealing with the creation of the Swiss Forum. The attendance however unanimously re-elected Dr. Egli as President and re-entrusted him and Mr. Kunz with the relations between the Federation and the Forum. This was a natural and entirely expected show of confidence to

Dr. Egli and Mr. Kunz after all their service to the Federation and the Forum.

Various topics were discussed. The Forum naturally came in the forefront. Dr. Egli could not give us the precise date of the creation of the "Foundation of the Swiss Forum, London" which was initially planned for May. Mr. W. Bion was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected as the third Trustee. He objected to the new honour, alleging his other Colony engagements, but gracefully accepted when another Trustee assured him that the title hardly involved the cost of extra time. A member suggested that Mr. Kunz should be present at the Federation's meetings as manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office, which would thus be considered as any of the other member societies. Mr. Kunz strongly objected to this eventuality and said that he much preferred to sit at the Federation as an individual member, rather as the "representative" of the SNTO.

Mrs. Meier then reported on some of her activities in relation with the Commission of the Swiss Abroad. She had asked Dr. Garrot, from the Commission of the Swiss Abroad in Berne, not to come to the Federation's Meeting, as she felt that the sole attendance at the meeting didn't justify the expense of flying all the way up to London. Dr. Garrot would come to London in Autumn anyway and perhaps meet the Federation then. Mrs. Meier reminded the meeting of the theme of this year's Assembly of the Swiss Abroad, which will take place in Zofingen from 28-30th August. This Assembly will discuss the total revision of the Federal Constitution. And in this respect Mrs. Meier reminded us that the June meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique would also be devoted to this subject. Dr. H. R. Bolliger, who represents the Swiss of the North of Britain at the Commission for the Swiss Abroad, made a short review of the recent NSH seminar in Lenzburg where the image of Switzerland abroad was debated. He also made mention of future reunions of the Manchester and Edinburgh Swiss clubs, which will also be discussing the problem of the overhaul of the Swiss Constitution.

A nucleus of delegates stayed on after the meeting and went to enjoy a quiet and homely dinner at the Dorchester. The Schwarzenbach initiative counted among the many topics of conversation. It was recalled in an after-dinner speech that there were as many British residents in Switzerland as there were Swiss residents in Great Britain. As foreigners in our host country, we were in a position to appreciate for ourselves the implications of the Schwarzenbach initiative. It concerned us, Swiss abroad, as much as it did our compatriots at home because the Swiss image would be hurt so badly that we could not but feel the after-effects.

(PMB)