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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

After a short recess, the Society resumed its activities on Wednesday, September 11th, when about 50 members and friends attended the Monthly Meeting at Swiss House.

The Chairman, Mr. J. J. Boos, bade a hearty welcome to all who had spent a well deserved holiday, particularly those who had just returned from Switzerland after their first visit for many years.

Three new members, Miss M. Bauer, Mr. W. Egger and Mr. R. Zwingli, were duly elected, two of these being transfers from Swiss Sections. There was one resignation, Miss I. Gnos, who had returned to Switzerland where she joined the local Section.

A very able and informative account of the 74th Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. at Davos on May 25th and 26th, attended by some 300 delegates representing 110 Sections with 48,000 members, was given by Mr. M. E. Hauwyler, one of the Society's official delegates. Although the report was somewhat belated, due to the fact that Mr. Hauwyler had but recently returned to the U.K., it proved nevertheless of great interest and was couched in such terms as to make it still topical and supplementary to what had been stated at a previous meeting.

It was decided to subscribe an amount of five guineas to the "General Guisan Fund" and to make a collection amongst all the members individually. The President made a personal appeal for a generous support of this worthy cause, the proceeds being destined for a special centre in Switzerland for soldiers who have become disabled through tuberculosis or other incurable illnesses.

M. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, gave the latest news regarding the College, as already summarised in an article published in the last issue of the SWISS OBSERVER.

A programme of activities for the first half of the winter session, as submitted by the General Purposes Committee, was duly adopted and includes the following functions:—

Wednesday, October 9th, at 7.30 p.m., at Swiss House: Lecture by Professor G. P. Gooch, M.A., Companion of Honour, on "The World Situation."

Saturday, November 2nd, at 1 p.m., at the Dorchester Hotel: Anniversary Luncheon and Tea Dance — Tickets 15/6d.

Wednesday, November 13th, at Swiss House: Monthly Meeting followed by Lantern Lecture.

Saturday, December 14th, at 2.30 p.m., at Swiss House: Social Afternoon and Film Show.

The latter function is intended to be a family affair for members and their friends and to give a special treat to the children.

Following the official part of the meeting, Mr. C. Slade, M.A. (Cantab), late Staff Captain in the Control Commission for Germany, addressed the members on "From D-Day on the Normandy Beaches to Belsen."

Mr. Slade, who was a master at the College of the S.M.S. until the outbreak of war, has now resumed his activities at Swiss House and took this early opportunity of relating to the members some of his exciting experiences during this vital phase of the war.

He gave a vivid account of the preparations for the greatest naval operation in history, the actual crossing of the Channel on D-Day and the subsequent battles around Caen. Although we had read a great deal

about this momentous venture, it was interesting to hear the reminiscences of one who actually took part and was able to relate his personal experiences in contrast with the overall picture of the various stages of the operation. Mr. Slade then went on to describe many interesting incidents, often not without grim humour, which he experienced in the drive across France and the entry into Brussels. The Battle of the Ardennes in the fierce winter of 1944/5 and the subsequent crossing of the Rhine provided many more exciting encounters and stories of hardship and endurance.

Finally, the lecturer retold the sordid sights which he found at Belsen, where he spent the remainder of his days on active service, being placed in charge of Displaced Persons.


A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Slade at the conclusion of his address for the most interesting manner in which he had related his experiences.

W.B.


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