

Balthasar Zimmermann †

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plished brilliantly, and many are the pilots who have received their schooling from this energetic young officer. Caution, combined with a strong sense of responsibility, enabled him to conclude the years of the Frontier occupation without any mishaps.

In those years Balz Zimmermann took part in many demonstration flights held in various towns all over Switzerland. Together, with his comrades-in-arms, Bieder, Cartier, Comte, Frick and Högger, he sat at the control, gratifying enthusiastic crowds with their skill and air acrobatics.

Soon after the conclusion of the World War, Zimmermann quitted the military aviation service.

Endowed with great imaginative powers he could see the immense possibilities which lay ahead in the sphere of international commercial Air Transport; this branch of aviation was in its infancy, and it required a master mind to tackle the many intricate problems which confronted the originators of such gigantic schemes.

Zimmermann was ideally fitted for such a task. When the "Balair" Company in Basle started their commercial aviation transports, their choice as Manager fell on the young military instructor. With an almost unbelievable tenacity and never flagging energy Balz Zimmermann worked up an organisation, which, a short while ago was in very humble circumstances.

Before long he perceived that our country was too small for the existence of several Air Transit companies, he, therefore, propagated for an amalgamation of the then existing companies Balair and Ad-Astra; his views were accepted and thus the *Swissair*, the only large Air Transport institution, came into life.

At that period, Zimmermann came again in contact with his old comrade at arms, Walter Mittelholzer.

The two friends became the leaders of the newly founded company. Each one worked untiringly in his own sphere for the aggrandisement of the company, and how successful they were is proved to-day by the commanding position which the *Swissair* occupies in European Air Transit.

One may safely and without exaggeration declare, that the *Swissair*, as far as initiative, courage and success is concerned, stands to-day in the first rank of European Air Transit. Zimmermann and Mittelholzer proved an ideal combination, both possessed the gift of seeing further than over a small horizon, they looked beyond the frontiers, yea beyond the seas.

When the Americans started to put into their Passenger service fast machines, the two young heads of the company perceived at once the importance of such an innovation.

At a time, when throughout Europe heavy and large machines for the transport of passengers were built, (Germany: Do X and England the large Handley Page-Machines), the *Swissair* decided to introduce smaller and faster machines. Thus it was possible to reach, *f.i.*, Vienna from Basle or Zurich in two hours and London in just over 3 hours.

This service caused at the time a sensation throughout Europe, a new page was written in the annals of Air Transit and both Zimmermann and Mittelholzer could claim to be the instigators of fast travelling in Europe.

It is hard to realise that these two pioneers, after all too short a collaboration had to leave the field of their activity, a field which still required their help and advice. The *Swissair* has lost two of its best men, they will be sadly missed. Almost the only consolation is the fact, that both, during their activity, considered it a duty to get together a staff competent enough to carry on the work whatever might happen.

Balz Zimmermann played for a short while a part in the political arena of our country, he entered Parliament (National Council) in 1935 as an independent. (Duttweiler Group). On the death of Mittelholzer he vacated his seat in order to devote his full time and service to the *Swissair*.

The untimely death of this young and energetic propagator of our national Air Transit is not only a severe loss for the *Swissair* but also for our country at large.

ST.

FAREWELL DINNER TO M. DE BOURG.

Members of the Swiss Colony who wish to take part at the Farewell Dinner of M. de Bourg, Councillor of Legation, organised by the London Swiss Rifle Team, on Tuesday, October 26th, at Pagani's Restaurant, and over which the Swiss Minister will preside, are advised to get their tickets at once, as only limited accommodation is available. Tickets (7/6 each) can be obtained from members of the committee of the London Swiss Rifle Team, or from the offices of the *Swiss Observer*, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Tel: CL/Erkenwell 9595/9596.

"LA SUISSE QUI CHANTE."

It is said that "two heads are better than one," and therefore the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Orchestral Society combined together to give a concert under the name of "La Suisse qui Chante," a particularly happy title, I think.

For once, the two Societies received the support which they deserve; many would have given in long ago, as time after time, concerts have been arranged with the greatest of care, only to be played before a half empty hall. Perseverance, and an undaunted optimism have at last triumphed and, according to the figures supplied, well over 350 people filled the large Conway Hall; surely a gratifying result in every respect!! M. C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, attended the Concert right to the end.

To write about a performance given almost solely by amateurs, is always a ticklish undertaking, it is obvious that you have to make allowances, and yet criticism about some of the shortcomings is very often greatly received.

The best way perhaps, to write about a performance of this kind, is, to choose the "golden middle way" not to praise too highly nor to minimise the efforts made.

If enthusiasm and hard work were the only factors to be judged, then I would say without any hesitation whatsoever, that last Tuesday's concert was an undeniable success, and if applause is to be taken at its face value, then I might just as well lay my pen aside. Yet something ought to be said, we owe it to our readers, who for one reason or other did not attend.

The orchestra opened the evening with the "Hymne National Suisse" which was listened to by the audience upstanding.

The next numbers consisted of "Yodels" by Miss Idy Frei, who looked very charming in Swiss National costume.

Needless to say that the performance of Miss Frei, throughout the evening, received hearty applause, she has a pleasant voice and an equally pleasant personality. She sang with warmth and feeling; in at least one of her songs she did not see eye to eye with her accompanist, which is no great tragedy, as bigger lights performing at such important places as the Albert Hall seem to miss their top notes at times. It is hoped that Miss Frei will be heard on other occasions in the Colony, she can count on a friendly reception.

The Overture "Fingals Cave" by F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was played by the Orchestra, under the able conductorship of Mr. E. P. Dick, with much "gusto." Mr. Dick seems to have his players well in hand.

Almost the best part of the first and second half of the programme was taken up by the well-known "professional" singers, Misses Marietta and Martha Amstad, they are well-known in this country as well as at home. They sang with grace, expression and sentiment solos and duets mostly of Swiss origin. I do not know who was responsible for arranging the programme, but, with all due respect to the artistes, I consider that the number of songs rendered could have been halved without any loss either to the performers or to the audience. However, songs, such as "O Du liebs Aengeli," "Lötscherberger Schlofliedli" or "Es kam ein Herr zum Schloßli" I would not have liked to miss for anything. Most of these German-Swiss Folk songs were arranged by J. B. Hilber, i.e., made suitable for concert performance, and I cannot help feeling that thus they lose the character of unspoiled folk-lore, and become in the end monotonous.

The Group of songs from "Suisse Romande, Southern Switzerland and Grisons" on the whole appealed to me more, especially songs as these: "Coucou, canary jaloux," "Sur la route d'Estavayer," "Dormi, dormi bel bambin" and "Cucu" which were sung in fine style.

The accompaniment of the songs was in the capable hands of M. E. P. Dick, who accomplished his task in an excellent manner.

The Orchestra made an undoubted hit with the "Orpheus Themes" by Offenbach, and the prolonged applause which this performance earned was fully justified.

I heard many comments during the evening as to the marvellous progress this orchestra has made, and to the excellence of their playing. I think, many of us would look forward to a concert where they were the solo performers and I hope this can be arranged before very long.

The concert finished with the orchestra playing the "Bärner Marsch" no doubt as a compliment to the conductor, who hails from the "Mutzenstadt," and the National Anthem.

To sum up, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Orchestral Society are to be congratulated, especially M. E. P. Dick, who has worked like a Trojan, to make this evening a success. The Soloists equally share in the success, they were rightly rewarded by lovely bouquets of flowers, another bouquet, although it was not presented, should go to Mrs. Muller of the N.S.H.

who untiringly supported Mr. Dick in his endeavours to present the Swiss Colony with a first class entertainment. A very good evening indeed, for which we are all grateful.

ST.

N. S. H. EVENING AT THE FOYER.

The London branch of the New Helvetic Society resumed its monthly meetings after the holidays with a very pleasant dinner at the "Foyer Suisse" last week, followed by an instructive discourse on the "Inns of Court" by Mr. Henry C. Balsler, who is the only Swiss Barrister-at-Law practising in England at the present time. While the N.S.H. generally devotes its lectures and discussions to questions of specifically Swiss interest — political, social, economic or otherwise — it is not averse, now and then, from deviating into other fields of more general interest. So many of us have by direct contact, not usually of the most pleasant character, been baffled by the strangely antiquated, yet fully alive English system of jurisdiction and legal practise that Mr. Balsler's lucid explanation of some of its aspects were sure to attract a considerable crowd.

Following a previous exposition of the dual system of the legal profession — solicitors and barristers — the lecturer gave his hearers an account of the curious history of the Inns of Court in London and the peculiar status of the barristers, the "way they are made" or rather the way the law student graduates into the profession, the difficulties they have to contend with and the prospects before them. Perhaps the most interesting point that emerged from the lecture, and more clearly still from the lively discussion that followed, was the fact that the careful preservation of old customs and forms in the English legal system helps to maintain a tradition of integrity of the profession and administration of justice unrivalled or at least unsurpassed anywhere else in the world. A comparison with conditions in Switzerland leads to the conclusion that the adoption of a more uniformly strict etiquette in the legal profession of our country after the English example might be a desirable thing.

Dr. E.

SWISS CELEBRATION IN LIVERPOOL.

On Friday last, about 70 compatriots and friends met at the Bear's Paw Restaurant, Liverpool — the usual venue of our Colony — to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the appointment of Mr. Emil Montag to the post of Consul for Switzerland in Liverpool.

The evening had an essentially family air. Not only was the Swiss Colony well and worthily represented, but quite a few English friends were there, evidently as a mark of their appreciation of our Consul.

After a simple but satisfying meal, the President of the Liverpool Swiss Club — Mr. Louis Comte — said a few words of praise for Mr. Montag's work here. As a matter of fact, they seemed rather few his words; but the *mot d'ordre* for the evening was "no speeches" and Mr. President followed the order, which was imitated later by an English friend who felt it necessary to second the President's remarks and finally by Mr. Montag, in his reply. — Well, we Swiss people, are not exactly "hot air artists" and can convey our feeling by means others than words. Mr. Montag knows this and realises how we deeply appreciate his work, his help and his leadership.

The proceedings were enlivened later by the singing of the Misses Amstad of Beckenried, Nidwalden. The "Swiss Nightingales" have been heard in several places in England, so that I need not say much about the excellence and variety of their repertoire; to us, it was a real treat. The evening finished off with some dancing and yodeling — altogether a very enjoyable evening, so much so that it was there and then decided to hold a similar function in the very near future.

G. Ray.

PERSONAL.

We are extending heartiest congratulations, to M. and Mme. Vincent, R. Paravicini, the son and daughter-in-law respectively, of our Minister, on the arrival of a son.

We extend sincere congratulations to Mr. E. Montag, on the occasion of his 10th anniversary as Swiss Consul in Liverpool.

Drink delicious "Ovaltine"
at every meal — for Health!