

# Swiss Mercantile Society

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strictly watch that other members who may harbour thirst for power, are discovered and neutralized in good time. The people must instinctively distinguish between a citizen who is ready to co-operate in an elected government, and an autocrat intent upon giving free rein to his impulse. Democracy gives to its elected governors not power, but responsibility.

9. The most important thing in the State is *Man*, and the most important thing in man is his soul. Consequently, those measures which relate to the promotion of spiritual values should have first place. Actually it is the body, or the material side which stands in the foreground.

How should the economy in a democracy be organised? Surely in this way that to each individual the utmost spiritual and material development within the written and unwritten laws is vouchsafed, but in no case so, that the State should control to the smallest detail the life of the citizen according to "scientific methods."

There is to-day in many circles a current against the man who earns his living by his own efforts. And yet, it is just this man, "large" or "small," who is the real fighter, who has to bear the consequences of his own actions or omissions, and who gives to the life of the community constantly a new impulse. Of course, he must not think of himself alone, but, in his own interest, all his actions and deliberations must be consistent with the welfare of the community.

This class, which includes the business man, the farmer, the doctor, the lawyer, the artist, in fact all except the functionaries of the State, constitutes the opposing force against the tendency to inflate the State apparatus. This class also includes employees who are independent of the apparatus of the State. If the national economy were to be organised on the lines of a State, or State-co-operative, then no system, however well meant, could prevent the simultaneous transfer of State functions as well as economic functions upon one and the same person, and the originally free community in which the Executive Government and Legislative control were neatly separated, would, perhaps slowly, but all the more surely, become a bureaucracy in which there would only be State employees but no longer any free citizens.

Inherent in the democracy, there is apparently a certain heaviness which gets on the nerves of the impatient ones, especially in eruptive times. As against that, there is no other system which, for decades ahead, offers so much protection against mistakes of individuals and, consequently, against catastrophes which can throw whole nations into misery.

### LETTER-BOX.

**Swiss Club. — Capetown.** We appreciate very much your complimentary remarks and feel somewhat "conceited" to hear that the S.O. gives you a better and more regular news service from home than you are obtaining in a direct way. Your present subscription will lapse with our issue No.1043.

**F. S. —** We are delighted to hear that our original article about the Swiss Parliament in our last issue has interested some of your English friends. We quite agree that an English translation would have enhanced its value but like everybody else we are suffering from manpower. However, we have a similar contribution in the present issue in the English version which a well-wisher has kindly supplied to us.

### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society (Limited by Guarantee) was held at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, on Saturday, February 12th.

Over sixty members were present at the luncheon preceding the meeting. They were welcomed by the President, Mr. J. J. Boos, who was in the Chair.

The Swiss Legation was represented by Monsieur E. de Graffenried, Commercial Attaché, who takes a keen interest in the activities and welfare of the S.M.S.

In opening the formal proceedings, the Chairman announced with regret that several of the older members who rarely missed such an important occasion, were unable to be present.

The Secretary, Mr. J. J. Schneider, read the notice convening the meeting and the report of the auditor.

The accounts for 1943 were presented and elucidated by Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A., the auditor. He was able to show that the Society's financial position is a sound one, although the year under review closed with a loss. The Chairman at this juncture informed the meeting that after great efforts, National Councillor Ph. Schmid-Ruedin had been able to obtain a Government subsidy for the S.M.S. in respect of the year 1942 and also a promise for a subsidy to cover the loss in 1943. This gratifying news was warmly applauded by all present. A motion to adopt the accounts as presented was carried unanimously and a hearty vote of thanks accorded to Mr. Green, who takes more than merely a professional interest in the Society.

The main item on the agenda was the Chairman's report on the Society's 55th year of activities, a résumé of which is given below:—

*Introduction.* During the year under review, war has again come much nearer to our homeland, with blockade and counter-blockade almost strangling the economic life of our country. We have to be grateful that Switzerland has been spared the horrors of actual warfare and it behoves us to be mindful of the wisdom and foresight of our Swiss leaders, the watchfulness and steadfastness of our army and the loyalty of the population. The devotion and work of our people to succour the sick, prisoners of war and refugees of all nations are facts we Swiss abroad can justly proclaim.

For the S.M.S., the year 1943 has been one of useful work in social and partly educational directions.

*Membership.* The Society to-day is composed of:—

- 249 Active Members,
- 23 Honorary Members,
- 56 Contributing Members and Donors,
- 8 Admissions during the year,
- 4 Resignations.

The admission of eight new members is gratifying, seeing that there is no influx of new members from Switzerland.

News has been received of the death on January 7th, 1944, of the late Central President, Mr. Alfred Gubser, who, in consideration of his outstanding services to the S.K.V. in general and to the London Section in particular, was elected an Honorary Member of the S.M.S. in 1941. He led our association with foresight, tact and success for seven years. He will be remembered by many of our members as the leader of the delegation from Headquarters on the occasion of

the Golden Jubilee of the S.M.S. in 1938. — The meeting rose in memory of the deceased.

*Meetings.* Meetings of the Society, the Council and the Committee were held regularly during the year. Despite travelling restrictions, black-out and Civil Defence duties, increased attendances at the Society's meetings could be recorded, which is a source of satisfaction to the President and the Committee. The war-time practice of holding meetings on Wednesday evenings in summer and Saturday afternoons in winter was continued.

*Education and Social.* All educational activities remained suspended through force of circumstances. The Council is, however, mindful of the fact that preparations are needed for an early resumption of educational activities when hostilities cease. A special sub-committee has been appointed to study and report on future possibilities, in full co-operation with the authorities at home.

It has been suggested that for the benefit of our members, language circles be formed, and it is hoped that French, Spanish and Italian circles will be operating this year.

The following lectures, discussions and socials were held during the year:—

January — Social.

February — Annual General Meeting.

March — "Views on the News," address by Mr. Gottfried J. Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association.

April — "Some Aspects of Switzerland's Economic Position To-day." Address by Monsieur E. de Graffenried, First Secretary of Legation and Commercial Attaché.

May — Social.

June — "A Target for Trade in Peace Time." Discussion on trade possibilities lead by Mr. W. Meier, Vice-President.

July — Social.

August — No meeting.

September — "The Beveridge Plan." Address by Mr. J. J. Boos, followed by general discussion.

October — 55th Anniversary Celebration at the Dorchester Hotel — Lecture by Dr. G. P. Gooch, C.H., on "World Outlook."

November — "The Keynes Plan." Address by Mr. C. Mayr, Sub-Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation, followed by general discussion.

December — Film Show — Red Cross Film "Flag of Mercy" and latest Ministry of Information films.

*S.K.V.* Despite difficulties of communication, the Society is able to keep in touch with Headquarters. In this connection it is worthy to record the steady growth of the Association, the number of active members having risen to 44,613 on the 31st December, 1943.

*Employment Department.* Conditions have become more difficult than ever. It speaks well for Mr. Pfaendler's abilities, however, that despite restrictions and regulations which abound in all directions, he was able to place over 200 applicants during the past year.

*Swiss House.* The scheduled repair work was completed early in the year and sufficient accommoda-

tion for present requirements is available. Swiss House is placed at the disposal of the whole Colony and remains an active and useful centre of Swiss activities.

*Finance.* Donors and contributors both here and in Switzerland have generously subscribed a substantial amount towards the Society's expenses which, together with the support received from the Swiss Government, enables the S.M.S. to carry on its work at Swiss House, until such time as arrangements for a resumption of full scale activities can be made.

The response to the appeal for funds to assist the London and Milan Sections, launched by Headquarters amongst S.K.V. sections and firms in Switzerland, has been very gratifying and a source of great encouragement to both sections. The purpose of the collection is to enable London and Milan, whose buildings suffered through air raids, to restart their activities at the end of the war. In order to provide establishments which will do honour to such important centres as London and Milan and come up to the standard of our home institutions, very large sums of money will be needed.

Amounts received by London in direct contribution as a result of this appeal, including a donation of £1,000.— from Messrs. Volkart Brothers, have been merged into a Building and Re-equipment Fund. The President gave an assurance that the sums received would be devoted to the best interests of the purpose for which they had been given and on behalf of the S.M.S. expressed sincere thanks to all donors for their splendid support.

*Affiliations.* The N.S.H., the Swiss Choral Society, the London Swiss Philatelic Society and the Ladies' Section of the Unione Ticinese regularly meet at Swiss House, and the S.M.S. maintains the best relations with them, as well as the other Swiss Societies.

*Conclusion.* Finally the President made a fervent appeal for continued support of the Society's activities and thanked all who had helped to further the aims of the S.M.S.

A motion to adopt the report was received with prolonged acclamation.

After Mr. Percy H. Green, F.A.C., had been re-appointed as Auditor, the President vacated the Chair, Mr. W. Gattiker acting as Chairman *pro tem* during the election.

Mr. Gattiker's association with the S.M.S. goes back to 1895 and he will, therefore, celebrate his golden jubilee next year.

He paid a well deserved tribute to the President, Mr. J. J. Boos, who has held that office for five years, some of the most difficult in the history of the Society. He was particularly glad to announce that Mr. Boos had declared his willingness to stand for re-election, which was greeted with prolonged cheers. Mr. Boos was thereupon unanimously re-elected as President.

All the Council and Committee members had also offered themselves for re-election. Messrs. F. Streit and W. Burren, who had hitherto served on the General Purposes Committee, were duly proposed as additional Council members and Messrs. K. E. Ammann and W. Landauer were nominated in their place on the Committee. The Council and the General Purposes Committee for the financial year 1944, as a result of the election, were constituted as follows:—



*Council :*

Chairman, Mr. J. J. Boos; Vice-Chairman, Mr. W. Meier; Trustees: Messrs G. E. De Brunner, W. Eichenberger and E. Steiner; Members: Messrs. W. Burren, Ch. Chapuis, R. Chappuis, O. Grob, E. Hardmeier, M. Heilingner, G. Jenne, L. W. Krucker, J. J. Pfändler, A. C. Stahelin, A. Steinmann, F. Streit.

*General Purposes Committee :*

President: Mr. J. J. Boos; Vice-Presidents: W. Meier and L. W. Krucker; Hon. Secretary: Mr. R. Chappuis; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. M. Heilingner; Members: Messrs. K. E. Ammann, W. Fuchs, W. Landauer, R. Senn.

*Auditor :*

Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A.,

*Secretary:* Mr. J. J. Schneider, F.I.A.C.

*Press Reporter:* Mr. W. Burren.

*Delegate on the Advisory Board of the Employment Department:* Mr. Ch. Chapuis.

*Delegate to the N.S.H.:* Mr. W. Burren.

This terminated the proceedings.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by an ordinary Monthly Meeting to deal with the usual routine matters. One of the interesting points raised was the question of establishing closer contact among the lady members, and Mrs. G. Jenne and Miss J. Bossard undertook to study this matter and to report at a later stage.

Mr. A. Renou, Hon. Secretary to the Council for the Study of Swiss Problems, gave a general review of the progress of the Council's activities to date, and he complimented the S.M.S. on the great support given to this venture from the very outset, particularly in their sphere of activity.

As a fitting conclusion, the President and Mrs. Boos invited the assembly to have tea with them, which gesture was very much appreciated by all present.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Saturday, March 11th, when it is hoped to arrange for a most interesting lecture on matters of great national importance to Switzerland. Full details will be announced in due course.

WB.

**MR. SUTER'S VISIT TO MANCHESTER.**

The Swiss Club and the Swiss Relief Society for Manchester held their Annual General Meeting on Saturday, the 12 inst., at the Midland Hotel, when Mr. E. Kuebler entered upon his 10th year as President of the Club. He conducted the proceedings in his masterly way. He knows what he wants and has a way of getting it. The routine items on the Agenda were liquidated in the twinkling of an eye. Although the Club's activities during the past year have entailed expenditure in excess of current income, the Meeting graciously agreed to pass the sponge over the resulting deficit and accepted both the General and the Financial Reports with unanimity. The Committee heaved a sigh of relief and turned the face to the future, accepting re-election "en bloc." It is comfortable to enjoy such a measure of confidence from the members, but is it really good for the Club to leave the same set of old hands to carry on year after year? One would like to make room for eager new collaborators and would welcome a brisker interest in the affairs of the community than is denoted by mere contentedness; for, our Club's function is not limited to its own membership, it being the centre of a whole Swiss Community scattered over several Northern Counties. And it is just in these times when we feel so far from home that we have the greater need to keep together and to impart to our gatherings as nearly as possible the reality of a "homecoming."

The re-elected old crew, inspired by this responsibility, will do its best and it received considerable encouragement from the Meeting's ready acquiescence to raise the rates of subscription in a manner which will permit the maintenance, perhaps even an acceleration, of our activities. Even now, full membership costs only 20/- a year and country-members pay half of that. We can't run far on this, but perhaps the year will make history in another way, as the general discussion revealed a readiness to give the Swiss ladies of the community the opportunity, if they will take it, for organised co-operation. The ways and means remain to be explored and debated. In the past the Club looked on it as a privilege and pleasure to treat the fair sex with manly chivalry on suitable occasions. This noble tradition shall in no way suffer by our joining in the march of time towards their and our own full emancipation and equality of rights. We shall beware of the snares and pitfalls, but taking step by step, the venture holds the promise of stimulating and enriching our communal life.

The Relief Society transacted its annual business immediately the Club had done its work, Mr. J. A. Steiner taking the Presidential chair. The few calls which have been made upon its succour have enabled the funds of the Society to swell a little in the past few years, amounting now to the handsome sum of £2074.4.1, and its investments are as safe as can be said of the best these days. Thanks to the vigilance of Messrs. Steiner and Bébié who share the burden of collecting the subscriptions, the income was well maintained. The President appealed for unflinching support as none can know that harder times may not be coming to make greater demands on the Society's help, especially in view of the higher cost of living. — Mr. E. A. Pernet, Acting Consul was elected a Consulting Member of the Committee in place of his predecessor Mr. Hirs, and Mr. F. Meyer accepted his election as a

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