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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. Annual General Meeting.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Saturday, February 23rd, with Mr. J. J. Boos, President, in the Chair.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman extended a cordial welcome to the members present, numbering about 50.

The Hon. Secretary read the notice convening the meeting and the minutes of the last General Meeting, which were duly passed.

In elucidating the accounts, Mr. Robert P. Huxley, Chartered Accountant, stated that the Society's activities in 1945 had been on the same basis as during the whole of the war years, with the College remaining closed. The accounts showed a slightly smaller deficit than in the preceding year and no provision had been made in respect of any subsidy that may be received from the Swiss Government.

Turning to the balance sheet, the auditor was pleased to report that the Society's financial position was as sound as it had ever been and that the accumulated general and re-establishment funds were intact in readily convertible gilt edged securities. He then presented the accounts for adoption by the meeting. This was duly moved, seconded and passed.

As customary, the main item on the agenda was the Chairman's report on the Society's activities during the period under review. In a preamble, he referred to the general world situation and the momentous events which took place during the year, culminating in the termination of hostilities in Europe and the Far East and leaving Switzerland, almost miraculously, unscathed from the horrors of actual warfare.

Turning to the Society's affairs, the Chairman gave a detailed account of the activities, a *résumé* of which is given below:—

“For the S.M.S., the year 1945 was quite a momentous one, as this 57th and my 7th, yearly report will show.

Although early in the year the danger from flying bombs and rockets was still real, and blackout and travelling conditions were severe, our educational and social activities increased as soon as all dangers had passed.

MEMBERSHIP: The Society to-day is composed of:— 25 Honorary Members; 70 Contributing Members, Firms and Donors; 262 Active Members (18 Ladies and 244 Gentlemen). Admissions during the year 10; Resignations 2.

LADIES' GROUP: The Ladies' Group, which originated in 1944, was increased by four new members. Their aim to create a more active participation of the

fair sex is being realised whilst their contribution to the social part of our meetings by way of providing refreshments, is much appreciated.

MEETINGS: The Society, as well as the Council and General Purposes Committee, met at regular intervals and the attendance at the Monthly Meetings was even better than in the previous year. This was largely due, no doubt, to the excellent programme of lectures, film shows and socials, which have already been fully reported in the columns of this paper.

EDUCATIONAL: (a) *Evening Classes.* The educational activities were again restricted to evening classes, which were, however, considerably extended with a view to giving members an opportunity of brushing up their knowledge of foreign languages and learning new ones. Three courses in Russian, one in French and four in Italian were attended by 27, 8 and 41 students respectively and although these are modest figures compared with pre-war reports, they nevertheless show a gradually increasing activity in the educational sphere and with war conditions behind us, we are confident that further great strides will be made in the coming year.

(b) *Re-opening of College.* Ever since the College was closed at the outbreak of war in 1939, our thoughts and part of our efforts have been directed towards starting anew an institution which has been of such great help in the education of our young compatriots and has given so much credit to the S.M.S. Permission to re-open the College was granted by the British Authorities in October and both the Council and the Education Commission have ever since devoted much time and attention to the re-establishment of the College. Plans are now sufficiently advanced to make it possible to start after Easter, although on a somewhat smaller scale than originally contemplated. This is due to the fact that the repairs and alterations have not as yet been carried out at Swiss House. As soon as these are completed, the intake of students can be doubled, but even so only a fraction of those who have applied for admission can be accommodated. A waiting list has therefore been established and preference will be given to older students already engaged in commercial pursuits, who have had their stay deferred by several years owing to the intervening war period. For many it will therefore be a question of patience and learning as much at home as is possible without a sojourn in the country whose language and commerce they wish to study. Board residence is one of the most difficult questions to be solved and any assistance which members and friends can give in the finding of suitable accommodation with English or Swiss families will be greatly appreciated.

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SWISS HOUSE: As in previous years, Swiss House has been the centre of much Swiss activity. The temporary tenancy agreement expired at the end of 1945 and negotiations for a new lease of seven years are still in progress. Repairs, renovations and rebuilding will be carried out by the Landlord and the S.M.S., and it is hoped that before the end of the present year, Swiss House will be fully restored and once again become a centre of education and social activities as it was known in pre-war years.

S.K.V. HEADQUARTERS. With the resumption of more or less normal postal facilities, the S.M.S. has been able to resume its close contact with the association and its leading organs at home. The "Kaufm. Zentralblatt," which now arrives again regularly, keeps us fully informed of what is happening, just the same as our friends in Switzerland are pleased to learn how its largest section abroad is faring. The S.M.S. will always form a strong link in an association now comprising about 120 sections and 50,000 active members as well as 5,000 junior members."

In conclusion, the Chairman expressed thanks to all who had loyally supported the cause of the S.M.S., members, patrons and donors, and expressed the wish that they may continue to give their help as readily as they did in the past and thus further the aims and objects of the Society, chief of which, he said, was the education of our young compatriots.

The President's address was cordially applauded and a motion that the report be adopted, printed and circulated, was passed unanimously.

Mr. R. P. Huxley, C.A., was re-appointed auditor for the financial year 1946.

Before vacating the chair for the election of Council and Committees, Mr. Boos informed the meeting that Mr. Charles Chapuis, who had been a member of the Council ever since the Society was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee, did not seek re-election. He expressed to Mr. Chapuis the Society's sincere thanks for the excellent services he had rendered and the keen interest he had always taken in all its affairs. This was supported by all present by prolonged acclamation.

Mr. P. F. Boehringer, past President and Honorary Member, who acted as Chairman *pro tem*, thanked the outgoing members of the Council and Committee for the way they had steered the Society through a very critical period, particularly as most of them had served right through the war years, and was pleased to state that with the one exception already mentioned, all had offered themselves for re-election. He further submitted nominations for both the Education and House Committees, whose services had been dispensed with during the period of emergency but which, with the return to normal and increased activity, were now being reformed in accordance with the Bye Laws. In a humorous aside, Mr. Boehringer recalled his own term of Presidency over 40 years ago, when the Society, during a turbulent period, was carried on by a triumvirate (sic).

As a result of the ensuing election, the Council and Committees for the financial year 1946 were constituted as follows:—

Council: Chairman: Mr. J. J. Boos; Vice-Chairman: Mr. W. Meier; Trustees: Messrs. G. E. De Brunner, W. Eichenberger, E. Steiner; Members: Messrs. W. Burren, R. Chappuis, O. Grob, M. Heil-

inger, G. Jenne, L. W. Krucker, J. J. Pfaendler, A. C. Stahelin, A. Steinmann, F. Streit.

General Purposes Committee: President: Mr. J. J. Boos; Vice-Presidents: Messrs. W. Meier and L. W. Krucker; Hon. Secretary: Mr. W. Burren; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. H. Heilinger; Members: Messrs. W. Fuchs, A. Haerri, E. H. Schlatter, R. Senn.

Education Committee: Chairman: Mr. W. Meier; Members: Messrs. K. E. Ammann, F. Burri, E. M. Huber, H. Knoll, O. Roethlisberger.

House Committee: Chairman: Mr. L. W. Krucker; Members: Mr. O. Grob, Mrs. G. Jenne, Mr. J. Trachsel.

Auditor: Mr. Robert P. Huxley, C.A.

Press Reporter: Mr. W. Burren.

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

Delegate to the N.S.H.: Mr. R. Weist.

This terminated the proceedings, the Annual General Meeting being followed by an Ordinary Monthly Meeting, at the close of which tea and refreshments were served by the lady members, which was much appreciated by all present.

The next Monthly Meeting will be held at Swiss House on Wednesday, April 10th, to be followed by a talk by Monsieur E. de Graffenried, Commercial Attaché and First Secretary of Legation, on the Monetary Agreement between Great Britain and Switzerland. This will prove a most interesting and topical subject and members will be able to put questions following the address. Please, therefore, reserve April 10th for the S.M.S.

W.B.

SWISS SOCIETIES, INSTITUTIONS AND CLUBS IN THE LONDON COLONY.

- SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY (FONDS DE SECOURS),
31, Conway Street, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- SECOURS MUTUELS DES SUISSES A LONDRES,
74, Charlotte Street, W.1.
- CITY SWISS CLUB, Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1.
- UNIONE TICINESE,
"Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- UNIONE TICINESE (SEZIONE FEMINILE),
"Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY,
"Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- UNION HELVETIA,
1, Gerrard Place, W.1.
- SWISS CLUB (SCHWEIZERBUND),
74, Charlotte Street, W.1.
- NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE,
"Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- SWISS Y.M.C.A.,
12, Bateman Street, W.1.
- SWISS MALE CHOIR,
74, Charlotte Street, W.1.
- LONDON-SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY,
"Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.
- RÜTLI LADIES CLUB,
74, Charlotte Street, W.1.
- THE EDELWEISS CLUB,
Trinity Hall, Great Portland Street, W.1.
- EGLISE SUISSE,
Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.
- SCHWEIZERKIRCHE,
"Oak Room," Kingsway Hall, W.C.2.