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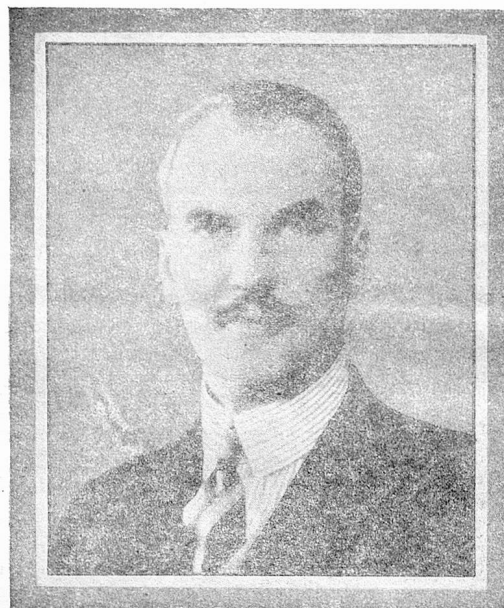
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M. C. R. PARAVICINI

Envoyé Extraordinaire et Ministre Plenipotentiaire
de la Confédération Helvétique
près de la Cour de St. James
de 1920 à 1939



As already briefly reported in our last issue, the death occurred at Oberhofen (Lake of Thoune) of Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, late Swiss Minister in London for nearly twenty years.

In August of this year the writer had the pleasure of seeing him at his country residence on the lovely Lake of Thoune, where for the last few years he lived in retirement, together with Madame Paravicini.

Having paid him a visit the previous year, I could not help but notice a change in him; he looked very frail and delicate but his mind was still as alert as ever, and for over an hour he enquired after many of his old friends in the Swiss Colony and the post war conditions in this country. Many an incident was recalled which during the long tenure of his office caused him either amusement or embarrassment.

Did he have a presentiment of his approaching end? On bidding me farewell he expressed the doubt that I might see him again, saying "one can not go on for ever, and I have had my full time." His eyes were moist and the handshake was more prolonged than usual. Almost three months to the day he closed his eyes for ever.

Charles Rudolph Paravicini was born in Basle on the 22nd of August, 1872, and belonged to an old Basle family. He received his schooling in Basle, and afterwards studied law at the Universities of Basle, Lausanne, Berlin and Paris; on his return to his native land he obtained the degree of doctor-of-law at the University of his home town. Amongst his teachers were Andreas Heusler, Fleiner and Wieland.

He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1900.

The "Consulat Général de Suisse à Londres" was in 1892 transferred into a Legation having at its head a Chargé d'Affaires in the person of Monsieur Ch. Bourcart, who thus became the first diplo-

matic representative of the Swiss Confederation, and on the request of the latter, the young diplomat Paravicini joined the Legation Staff in the year 1900 as an Attaché.

In 1902, Monsieur Bourcart left London, and was replaced by Monsieur le Ministre Carlin, who represented Switzerland until 1920.

After a stay of four years in London, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini was transferred in 1904 to the Swiss Legation in Paris with the rank of 3rd Secretary of Legation.

In 1906, the Federal Council decided to create a diplomatic representation in the Empire of the Tzars, and Monsieur Edouard Odier, National Councillor of Geneva, was appointed as Minister. Monsieur Paravicini joined the Legation at St. Petersburg in the capacity of 2nd Secretary of Legation.

During the five years, when he was *en poste* in the Russian capital, he made many valuable connections amongst the Russian and Swiss communities. His services were rewarded by promotion to the rank of 1st Secretary of Legation.

Shortly before leaving his post in St. Petersburg, Monsieur Paravicini married, in 1910, Made-moiselle Lilian de Watteville, of Berne, and there were three children of the marriage — two daughters and a son, who has taken up British nationality, being an officer in the 4th County of London Yeomanry during the war, and now British military liaison officer in the French zone of Germany.

Two years later (1912) the young couple arrived in London where Monsieur Paravicini joined again his former chief, Monsieur le Ministre Carlin. He had left previously an England ultra-conservative under the reign of King Edward VII, he returned to find an England radically governed by the Asquith-Lloyd George combination.

Then came the first world war, and for him years of absorbing and intense labour began; his

task at the Legation increased in a large measure, as during the hostilities the Legation had not only the care of looking after Swiss interests but was also entrusted to look after the interests of countries then at war with Great Britain.

In September 1917, Monsieur Paravicini, who since 1913, had held the rank of Counsellor of Legation was called to the post of "Chef de la Division des Affaires Etrangère du Département Politique Fédéral" in Berne, where he served under the successive heads of the Department, M. Ador and M. Calonder.

During his stay in the Federal capital many foreign diplomatic missions came to Berne, the political outlook outside the frontiers of the Confederation was bewildering, thrones had fallen and sovereigns deprived of their right to reign were seeking refuge in our country.

This was a time when, Monsieur Paravicini had the opportunity of applying all his facilities of tact and statesmanship as well as his great knowledge of men and their ways.

During this delicate period, he was guided by his good sense, which was deeply rooted in an attachment to our best patriotic traditions.

Because of his painstaking work, he was now singled out for an important diplomatic post abroad, and especially for Great Britain, the country for which he had always had a special admiration.

In 1920, the Federal Council entrusted him with the mission to represent the Swiss Confederation in Great Britain, and for the third time he returned to London, this time as Minister.

Madame Paravicini, whose great-grandfather had commanded one of the Swiss regiments in the service of Great Britain in the Spanish wars, and in Canada during the Napoleon period, was happy to accompany her husband to a country where already she had made so many friends.

During the nineteen years as chief of the Swiss Diplomatic mission and head of the Swiss colonies in the British Empire he consecrated himself to certain tasks which amongst many others were chiefly the following:

Firstly, the development of the Swiss representation, by introducing a commercial service at the Legation, and the creation of several new consular posts in Great Britain, and the colonies, with which the Legation was in close touch.

Secondly, he devoted himself untiringly to furthering friendly relations between Great Britain and his country in different spheres such as economics, intellectual and social.

On several occasions, Monsieur Paravicini visited Ireland where he entertained cordial relations with the authorities of that country, and where he made close contacts with our compatriots. He also visited Egypt and was received by King Fuad, his dispatches sent to Berne, during his visit were of great value to our country, and led to a lively intercourse in the commercial sphere.

Furthermore, he took a keen interest in the

social, intellectual and sportive life of our colony. The many Swiss Societies found in him an always willing adviser, and generous supporter, and in spite of his heavy engagements he made it a point to attend, whenever possible, the often too numerous social and business functions held by Swiss Societies and institutions.

Monsieur Paravicini kept an open house at Bryanston Square, where many of the great ones in this country were entertained, and his parties to members of the Swiss Colony became famous. Many well-known Swiss artistes, both here and at home found in him a benevolent supporter, and his musical evenings at his private residence were events of much importance.

The residence of the Minister was furnished in the best of taste and contained many pictures, prints and ornaments which proved him to be a collector of no mean repute. He made a name for himself as a connoisseur of books and objects of art.

In his endeavours, especially on the social side, he found in Madame Paravicini an ideal partner, her beautiful appearance, coupled with such pleasing manners made her an excellent hostess, and the Swiss Colony was proud to see their country represented in this great capital by such distinguished personalities.

Amongst the many achievements during his long and distinguished diplomatic career may be mentioned, that in 1920, he was instrumental in negotiating the London Declaration, which recognised that the maintenance of the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland was not incompatible with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Many of my readers will, no doubt, remember two outstanding functions, arranged by the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, which both took place at the Restaurant Monico; they were spontaneous expressions of affection towards Monsieur and Madame Paravicini, the first one, on May 31st, 1930, was to commemorate the 10th Anniversary as Swiss Minister in London, and the second one, on December 15th, 1939, was to bid farewell to the Minister and Madame Paravicini.

More than 400 members of the Colony attended these functions, a sure proof of how deeply the Colony was attached to its head.

In 1940, Monsieur Paravicini, retired from the Diplomatic Service having reached the age limit, and thus a man, who by his own personal charm and by his remarkable understanding of the English way of life made him one of the most popular members of the Diplomatic Corps, disappeared from the public eye.

Our country has lost in Charles Paravicini one of its most distinguished sons, and a great patriot, the Swiss Colony in Great Britain deplores the passing of a friend, who in good and evil days was steadfast and helpful, his friends, colleagues and subordinates mourn the parting from a man who will linger for many a day in their grateful memory.

ST.

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO OUR LATE MINISTER, M. C. R. PARAVICINI.

Held at the Eglise Suisse, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2.

On Tuesday, November 18th, 1947, the Swiss Church was filled almost to capacity with members of the colony who had come to pay their last tribute of esteem and affection to their late Minister, who had guided them over so many years. It was a large and representative gathering of both sexes, amongst which the older members of the Swiss in London were particularly numerous, doubtless due to the fact that they had known M. Paravicini already during those years, when he was attached to the Legation in the capacity of Secretary and Counsellor. It was then that he began to endear himself to his compatriots by his unfailing courtesy and great charm of manner, but when he returned to London as Minister, he became known to a still larger circle of his countrymen and countrywomen, who learnt to admire and esteem him for his many great qualities. The senior members of the Legation were nearly all present, to do honour to their late chief.

At 12.30 p.m. a small procession entered, headed by M. le Pasteur M. Pradervand, followed by Lieut.-Col. Vincent Paravicini, the son, Mme G. Mc. Murtrie Godley, elder daughter, M. le Ministre Paul Ruegger and Mme Ruegger, and Dr. Escher, Counsellor of Legation, whilst the organ pealed forth the ever impressive and moving strains of Chopin's funeral march.

M. Pradervand then led the congregation in prayer, after which followed the Hymn "Consolez vos cœurs qui pleurent." The readings from the Scriptures com-

prised the 121st Psalm, the Epistle of St. John, Chap. 14, verses 1—4 and 15—21 and lastly the First Letter of the Corinthians, Chap. 15. M. Pradervand then addressed the assembly, stressing that, whilst all who had known the dear departed, deplored and mourned his passing, there was also reason for Christian joy and gratitude. A rich and full life had come to a peaceful close; a life not lived for selfish ends, but in the service of his beloved country and devoted to his fellow countrymen; a shining example to follow.

The congregation then listened devoutly to a beautiful soprano solo: "God shall wipe away all tears." Amidst an expectant hush the Swiss Minister, M. P. Ruegger, rose to pay his tribute to his late and revered chief. He was greatly moved and said that only those who had served under M. Paravicini could fully gauge the loss they had suffered, which Switzerland had suffered and what a great void his passing left behind. The Minister mentioned the great tasks his predecessor had so nobly fulfilled, at home and abroad and particularly during his long and distinguished tenure of office in London. Even after his retirement from the Diplomatic Service, during the last great war, the Swiss Government frequently sought the advice of M. Paravicini, whose unrivalled experience was invaluable to them and who gladly assisted them with his great knowledge of men and affairs.

After the Minister's sympathetic peroration there followed another Hymn: "Nous sommes au Seigneur et non point à nous-même" and a beautiful concluding prayer, spoken by the Rev. H. K. Blum.

M. Pradervand pronounced the benediction and then the large congregation filed slowly out from the little Church, so dear to every Swiss, and on this occasion so beautifully decorated with white and bronze chrysanthemums, into the cold November air, but uplifted by the thought that a moving and worthy tribute had been paid to one who had deserved so well of his country and the stirring times in which he spent his great and busy life.

His memory will live amongst all who were privileged to know him; may he rest in peace!

W.D.

TO : THE SWISS COLONY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Deeply touched by your most kind messages of sympathy in my grievous loss and by the magnificent wreath from "Die Schweizer Vereine, London," I beg you on behalf of myself and on behalf of my children, to accept our profound gratitude.

God, in His mercy, granted my dear husband a painless and a sudden death.

Since we returned to our beloved country, his affection for the Colony and interest in its welfare remained unchanged and he was full of admiration for and took pride in the heroism of his countrymen in Great Britain during the war.

My husband was so pleased when he heard that the interests of the Colony in the United Kingdom were to be placed in the able hands of his dear friend Minister Ruegger.

With the renewed assurance of our heartfelt thanks, I remain, dear Friends, yours gratefully,
Lilian Paravicini-de Watteville.

Oberhofen,
Lac de Thoune.

Gang lueg d'Heimat a !
Va revoir ton beau Pays !
Va a vedere il tuo Paese !
Va a vera teis Pajais !.....

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