

Monthly meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society

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ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY.

**Minutes of the Second Annual General Meeting
Held at The Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane,
Tuesday, May 9th, 1950, at 12 noon.**

Chairman: The Chair was taken by Group Captain, The Viscount Acheson, O.B.E., a Patron of the Society.

1. *Notice Convening the Meeting and Auditors' Report:* The Director read the notice convening the meeting and the report of the Auditors.

2. *Minutes:* The Minutes of the First Annual General Meeting held at the Dorchester Hotel on May 11th, 1949, were approved and signed as a correct record of the proceedings thereat.

3. *Annual Report and Accounts:* The Viscount Acheson from the Chair presented the Annual Report of the Society, which had been circulated to members with the January issue of the Anglo-Swiss Leaflet. Mr. Frank Trickey, Honorary Treasurer, presented the Accounts for the year ended December 31st, 1949. Both the Report and the Accounts were unanimously adopted.

The Chairman moved a vote of thanks to the Committee and the Officials of the Society for the work which they had done.

4. *Election of Officers:* In accordance with Article 8 of the Society, the following Officers of the Society were unanimously elected:

(a) *President* — The Right Honourable Philip Noel-Baker, P.C., M.P.

(b) *Honorary Treasurer* — Mr. Frank Trickey.

(c) *Honorary Solicitor* — Mr. J. L. T. Guise.

5. *Executive Committee:* In accordance with Article 10 of the Rules of the Society the following members of the Society were unanimously elected members of the Executive Committee:

Colonel W. Sturmy Cave, Miss Elsie M. Jackson, Mr. H. C. McCarthy, Mr. E. K. Martin Mr. Vernon Morgan Mr. J. F. Pearson, Mr. Gerald Seligman, Mr. R. W. Skene, Lt.-Colonel Stuart Townend, Miss Irene Wood.

6. *Auditors:* Messrs. Barton, Mayhew & Company were unanimously elected Auditors to the Society.

7. *Amendment to Rules:* In Rule 18 of the Rules of the Society the following words were deleted "The Honorary Treasurer shall keep the Accounts of the Society and present them . . .", and the following inserted in their place "The Honorary Treasurer shall present them . . .".

8. *Future Activities:* On the invitation of the Chairman, the Director gave details of the proposed future activities of the Society and the Meeting passed a warm vote of thanks to him for the work he was doing.

The Meeting Closed at 12.30 p.m.

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MONTHLY MEETING OF THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

10th May, 1950.

The first glorious day of spring must have been responsible for an attendance which made up in quality what it lacked in numbers.

Mr. W. Meier, the president, opened the meeting by reporting the loss the Society had suffered through the death of two honorary members:

Mr. G. E. De Brunner, several times president in London, joined our section in 1897. At the turn of the century he was one of the key members who kept our section in being by his enthusiasm, loyalty and hard work. In the twenties he was one of the founders of the college. He also negotiated the lease of Swiss House and maintained his lively interest in the affairs of our Society right up to the end. Mr. de Brunner died in Switzerland where he had been for the benefit of his health.

The other departed was Mr. Marius Pachoud, several times president of our society, who left London in 1931. He met with an accident near Burgdorf while travelling alone in a car. Our corresponding member, Mr. J. Trachsel, now living in Lausanne, represented us at his funeral. — Those present rose from their seats as a silent tribute to the departed.

We made one new member and lost three through transfers back to Switzerland. — We have now received from Zurich sufficient copies of the questionnaire referred to last month to send one to each of our members. Mr. Meier again appealed for as full a response as possible for information on the effects of devaluation on our members so as to enable our Head Quarters to pass on the most valuable data to the Authorities in Berne.

The president then referred to the monthly bulletin of the Swiss Bank Corporation which reported that the educational grant for children studying in Switzerland was fixed at £320 p.a. plus £50 basic allowance for the school year ending 30th June, 1951.

The Federal subsidy has been received to cover the college deficit for 1949.

The Presidents' Committee has decided to hold this year's First of August Celebration indoors on a Sunday, and it was agreed to donate £55.0 towards the cost.

Education: Mr. W. Burren informed us of the scare caused by a case of suspected smallpox among the 30 students who arrived by air from Switzerland for the new term. Fortunately the lady concerned was

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not suffering from smallpox, but from the after effects of the vaccination against the disease. 156 students, of whom 111 men and 45 women (47 continuation students) are attending our college this term, the largest number since the war. The Employment Dept. has now moved into its new quarters in Fitzroy Square. The front room has been taken over by the Society and College as its office, and the back room, previously used as secretariat, has been turned into an additional class room.

Three whole-day excursions are planned for this term, one to Margate by boat, one to Salisbury and Stonehenge, and one to Cambridge.

At this point Mrs. W. Meier took the chair to introduce the speaker of the evening, Miss E. Botting, almoner of the Charing Cross Hospital, who addressed us on the "Social Care of the Patient under the National Health Service." She introduced her subject by mentioning the social provisions and enactments of the last six years.

The Children Act deals with the care of neglected children. In spite of lack of accommodation in suitable homes and of skilled workers, considerable forward strides have been made. Under this act the adoption of children, which used to be haphazard, is now carried out more scientifically.

The children's allowance has proved a great blessing, particularly among the poorer classes, where it is a help in providing better and more adequate clothing and other essentials.

The Education Act introduced a school medical service on a national plan under the supervision of the Board of Education. The vast improvement in the health of children in the last 50 years is to-day a solid fact recognised by all. Miss Botting here made special reference to her home town of Norwich. There, a few years ago, 120 beds catered for children alone, while to-day 40 are found to be sufficient and the remainder are being used for the care of adults.

Disabled Persons Act. 1944. To-day all persons who are disabled for a period of over six months are entered in an official register, whether the disability dates from birth or is contracted later in life. Any employer of twenty or more persons must employ 5% disabled persons. The Ministry of Labour manages and supervises the working of this act. Employment Exchanges have a special section dealing with disabled. Under this, advice on training and retraining is given both to patients in hospital wards and to outpatients. The work is carried on on the clear understanding that

even if disabled people can only work at home, they are happier in the consciousness that they are leading useful lives than when cast on the human scrap heap. There are a number of Rehabilitation Centres, open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. where men and women are fitted again for work adapted to their special needs. The well-known one in Egham, Surrey came in for special mention. It is composed of a number of small workshops, where the disabled can try their hands at plastic work, various branches of engineering, leather work, etc., some particularly suited for work at home.

The National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) 1946 Act, brought about uniformity and improvement in the matter of industrial injury.

The National Health Service introduced in July, 1948, is free to all who wish to avail themselves of it.

The great increase in the number of persons to-day asking for, and obtaining treatment is, in the view of our lecturer, not an indication of abuse, of which she has had no evidence, but proof of the fact that before the National Health Act many people had to deny themselves medical treatment for lack of funds.

Miss Botting gave us an insight into the duties and work of a hospital almoner. She carries out social investigation of patient's circumstances, finds out the home background and its influence on the thoughts and actions of patients, contacts the Disablement Resettlement Officers to find new outlets for the resettlement of patients who leave hospitals partially disabled, enlists the help of teachers and others willing to lend a helping hand in the rehabilitation of patients, seeks material help from voluntary organisations, contacts Welfare Officers for poor girls. All the information thus gathered is put before the doctors, whose work is considerably eased and facilitated by it, because patients are not mere machines which have broken down, but men and women who have bodies and souls, whose state of mind is recognised to have considerable bearing on their health and ill-health.

Miss Botting's remarks were characterised by an extraordinary zest and enthusiasm for her work and the tremendous scope of the legislation as we know it at present. She may not have convinced all her hearers that everything in the garden is lovely — she did not claim as much — but she did confirm at least one in his firm belief that the National Health Scheme is a great, noble social experiment which will be followed by other great nations when the full extent of improved health and vitality, which are bound to accrue, become more generally recognised. *E.H.S.*

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