

Visit of the Swiss minister to the Swiss Mervantile College

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VISIT OF THE SWISS MINISTER TO THE SWISS MERCANTILE COLLEGE.

As soon as the necessary improvements had been carried out following the taking-over of the adjoining premises to the College, thus enabling the College authorities to expand the College to its pre-war size, it was decided to extend an invitation to His Excellency, M. H. de Torrenté, the Swiss Minister in London, to pay an official visit to the College. Ever since his arrival in London, M. de Torrenté has taken a close interest in the Society's educational activities and has visited the College on previous occasions.

On Wednesday morning, 7th July, the Swiss Minister, accompanied by Dr. Bircher of the Legation, honoured us with his presence. The Minister visited two classes which were being held in the new building, and which are decorated in the same way as the original classrooms, and also saw the new and much improved canteen facilities for the students; this now provides the students with ample accommodation.

Amongst those who were at the College to greet our distinguished guests were Mr. W. Meier, President of the Society, and Mrs. Meier, Mr. W. Burren, Vice-President and Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. W. Krucker Vice-President and Chairman of the House Committee, and Mr. G. Jenny, a trustee and other members of the Education Committee and the Council.

The students assembled in Rooms 2 and 3 and the Principal, Mr. C. Slade, introduced the Minister who spoke as follows:—

Mr. President,
Mr. Principal,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me thank you and your Committee for your kind invitation to look over the enlarged premises of the Swiss Mercantile School. I had been told of your plans some time ago and I learnt that you also had some difficulties regarding their execution. I knew these obstacles would be surmounted in the usual skillful way that one expects nowadays from your President, Mr. Meier. I was hoping that I might be permitted to have a look. I was naturally delighted when the invitation came, and am even more delighted with what I have seen today. It is satisfying indeed to have contact with people who are successful, people whose enterprise is steadily growing and developing. The vital force of this steady development is supplied by the men at the head of your organisation. It is my pleasure to thank Mr. Meier and the gentlemen from the Council of the S.M.S. on behalf of the Swiss Government for the work they do for the Society, the School and indeed the whole Swiss Colony in London. I can assure them that we appreciate fully their generous, unselfish devotion.

The enlarged premises must make life quite a bit easier for the Society, as well as for the Principal and his staff. I am certain it makes a tremendous difference to all the pupils. Nothing is more detrimental to good work than being packed together like sardines.

The growing number of pupils of the Swiss Mercantile School and the inquiries which increase at even a bigger rate are a true testimonial to the ability of the Principal and the Staff. Mr. Slade is an old friend of ours. He is not only a capable Headmaster but, as the Swiss Sports have shown, he and his family are most popular with the whole Colony. In fact, he might nearly be a Swiss. However that may be, I wish to record here and now my thanks and appreciation for the work he and his staff are doing.

When I look at your happy faces, you who are pupils of the Swiss Mercantile School and visualize the growing numbers in which you are coming to this country in order to learn the language and study the British way of life, I am filled with satisfaction. It is essential for our young to go abroad and acquaint themselves with the customs of other lands. We have no colonies; working abroad nowadays becomes more and more difficult and yet it is more than ever essential for us to be in the world market, and trade with all on the basis of a "good neighbour policy". The only way in which you can acquire some of this necessary knowledge is to go abroad and study. It is most encouraging to feel that you are doing so in growing numbers. Your studies may not bring you an immediate recompense in terms of money, but they will surely pay a dividend in the years to come. For many of you it will have been a sacrifice, some of your parents may ill afford the extra costs of further education. It depends on you, whether the money has been well spent or not. I only know that under the guidance of Mr. Slade, his staff and the Swiss Mercantile Society, you have the maximum of chances to profit from your stay in this country.

Make use of it in work time and in leisure time; and your "séjour" will turn into experience which none of you will forget for the rest of your lives.

Good luck to you all!

Mr. W. Burren thanked the Minister for his speech and for the honour of his visit and also stressed the importance of the students taking full advantage of their stay at the College by working diligently.

C. Sl.

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