

A successful Swiss business man

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A SUCCESSFUL SWISS BUSINESS MAN.



W. W. Landauer.

In our last issue, the Editor proposed that in order to make the "Swiss Observer" as attractive as possible to all groups of its readers, descriptive accounts of individual or collective business ventures of members of our Colony, would be inserted from time to time in this paper's columns.

This is, of course, not a new idea; during the nearly 40 years of its existence, the "Swiss Observer" has on many occasions published accounts of successful Swiss business ventures, or biographical notes of Swiss business men in this country who have made a name for themselves.

It has often been remarked — quite wrongly — especially by members of our younger generation, that the prospects of "getting on in life", under existing conditions, are very poor.

There are plenty of examples, however, that many of our compatriots, not only in this country, but the world over, have, in spite of economic "blizzards", made a success of their ventures. It is true they have come to the top only by hard work, which is, after all, the secret of success.

To-day we have great pleasure in introducing to our readers Mr. W. W. Landauer, Managing Director of Airguard Limited, Safeguard (Engineers) Limited, and M. Nixon & Co. Ltd.

Airguard Limited employ some 200 people and, with their offices in London, the Midlands, Scotland and Ireland, are probably the largest Company in Great Britain manufacturing industrial protective clothing, such as gloves and overalls.

We understand that they are approved contractors to the Admiralty, Royal Air Force, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, General Post Office and Ministry of Supply, besides serving over 2,000 factories in a cross-section of industry in this country.

They are members of the Federation of British Industries and of the National Union of

Manufacturers. Mr. Landauer personally is a member of the London Chamber of Commerce. The Company has recently moved into new offices in Fulham, and have their up-to-date works in Beckenham.

* * *

Our readers will no doubt be interested to hear whom this Mr. Willi Landauer is. He hails from St. Gall, where he completed the normal schooling, after which he continued his commercial studies at the "Ecole Supérieure de Commerce" in Neuchâtel. He served his apprenticeship at the Textile Company of St. Gall and went to evening classes in order to learn mechanical weaving and embroidery.

Soon his employers took notice of this young, energetic, and hard-working man. They sent him travelling to various parts of the Continent and to Egypt, selling their textile goods. In the latter country, after learning the language, he dealt with his clients in such widely separated places as Cairo and Khartoum in the Sudan. Owing to contracting typhoid fever Mr. Landauer had to return to a more temperate climate. One of his most ardent wishes was to become independent and form his own Company, and he consequently severed his connection with the St. Gall Textile Company.

Spending a holiday in England he thought he would try his hand in this country, and although he had no money and spoke but little English, he, in 1936, founded his own Company.

These were anxious times for our friend, for his resources were slender, and much midnight oil must have been burned in facing the innumerable problems with which this young businessman was confronted. With keen foresight he decided that for the time being he would try to enter the business of Air Raid Protection. He found as collaborators some capable engineers, and Airguard Limited became the first Company in this country to get Government approval for trench linings and building air-raid shelters for some 200,000 people. From that time onwards Mr. Landauer never looked back. Slowly but surely business expanded, and the foundations of a large and profitable concern were laid, and with great energy and determination he put heart and soul into his venture.

Mr. Landauer was then and there entrusted with the building of shelters for many of Britain's leading factories, and was taken as a consultant by one of the largest building firms in this country. The restoration of the fabric of the Chapel of King George VI at Buckingham Palace, and the air-raid shelter for Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, were entrusted to him.

Although, owing to the remarkable increase of business, our friend was fully occupied, he decided to put his personal services at the disposal of the country which had accorded him such a generous hospitality, and when the last war broke out he volunteered as an Air Raid Warden, rendering efficient services throughout the duration of hostilities. He still takes an active interest in Civil Defence, in fact he was one of the first to re-enrol in 1950, and at present holds the rank of District Head Warden. Mr. Landauer is also an Associate Fellow of the Institute of Civil Defence.

After the cessation of hostilities, our friend returned to his original trade of textiles, and now, after years of research, his Company appears to have realised his dream of successfully manufacturing an unshrinkable cotton material for overalls, which has

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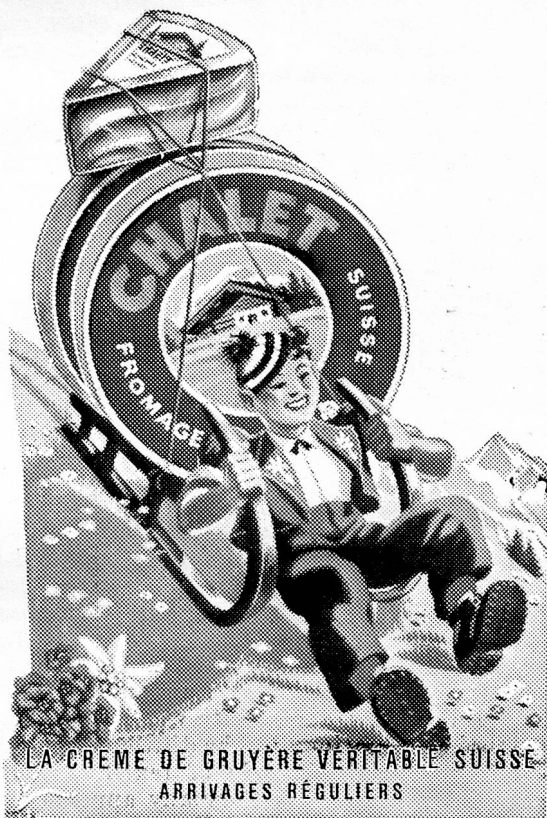


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been widely reviewed in trade papers, after having been tested by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce Testing House and Laboratory.

This, then, is the story of a successful Swiss businessman, in the summer-time of his life (he is 49 years of age). If the Goddess of Fortune has smiled on him, it has been due entirely to his own endeavours.

Success has, we are glad to say, not made him unapproachable, his early struggles having given him a fellow feeling towards the ordinary man; he is an employer who takes a real interest in his employees, from the highest to the lowest, which creates the feeling of loyalty so necessary for harmonious working conditions between management and personnel.

In conclusion, we wish to convey to Mr. Landauer the great pleasure we, his compatriots, feel in knowing that he is one of our kith and kin, and we are proud of his achievements which are equal to the best traditions of our homeland; by his efforts, energy and integrity he has added to the good name which our country enjoys everywhere. He has proved, beyond doubt, to our younger generation, that by hard work and initiative one can get "to the top".

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THE MOUNTAIN WORLD.

Throughout the ages man has striven to overcome natural obstacles. He has never ceased to pit his intelligence against the elements, he has explored unknown lands, the vastness of the oceans, the high altitudes and, of late, the mysterious outer space. To-day there exists a number of enthusiastic and dedicated men who have made it their business to study and conquer the great heights. The more forbidding and inaccessible these appear, the keener becomes the mountaineer's determination to find a way to the summit. As a result there are few, if any, great mountains in the world that have not been climbed.

The Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, under whose auspices many expeditions have been organised, is responsible for the compiling of a kind of year-book in which outstanding feats of mountain exploration throughout the world are recorded. The latest volume of "The Mountain World", published in an English text by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., price 25s. net, is now available. It is a finely-produced book of 208 pages of which 68 represent maps and photographs. Regrettably there is no index.

The sixteen contributions of which the work is composed come from the pen of experienced mountaineers of world-wide repute. The story they tell will appeal to all lovers of mountains whether active climbers or armchair admirers. The ascents described cover every part of the globe. They include the Mexican volcanoes, the Rockies and Mount Rainier in North America, several peaks in the Himalayas and many mountains in the Peruvian highlands and the Andes. Two of the papers deal with the tragedies of the Mont Blanc and the Eiger. All of it makes fascinating and interesting reading.

It is a remarkable fact that the many daring and dangerous ascents in the remote regions were accomplished with but one fatal accident whereas the more familiar heights in the Alps claimed a heavy — and