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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

26th JANUARY 1963

When I received the invitation of the Swiss Mercantile Society to attend their Annual Dinner and Dance I accepted with mixed feelings. Wistfully, I remembered the first time I attended this function in February 1936 at the Trocadero as the young wife of the then Chairman of the SMS Education Committee. I recalled the war-time Annual Luncheons and Tea Dances and remembered the first time after the war when the banquets were resumed and I had the privilege of sitting at the top table as the President's wife. But my feelings also included those of pride that I should on this occasion be a guest of the SMS to which my husband had devoted over thirty years. In fact, I don't know in which capacity I felt prouder attending the Banquet at the Dorchester Hotel on 26th January of this year, as an old member of the SMS in my own right or as the Editor of the "Swiss Observer". But of one thing I have no doubt — the evening was most successful and will be remembered by all of us who attended — as one of the highlights of this coldest of all winters. In fact, as the Ambassador mentioned in his speech, the kind and warm welcome accorded gave such pleasure. "It is always better to have a warm welcome on a cold night than a cold welcome on a warm night."

The President, Mr. R. Chappuis, chaired the Dinner and welcomed a number of guests, notably the Swiss Ambassador who was on his own, as Madame Daeniker was in Switzerland for reasons of health. He was, however, accompanied by Monsieur M. Heimo, Counsellor of Embassy, Economic Section, and Madame Heimo. The Consul, Monsieur E. Tosio, and his wife, as well as other members of the Embassy were present. The Chairman expressed the Society's gratitude for and appreciation of the keen interest the Embassy always took in the affairs of our Colony at large and the Swiss Mercantile Society and the College in particular, and asked the Ambassador to convey best wishes to Madame Daeniker.

Next, Monsieur Chappuis welcomed Mr. V. Berti, President of the "Schweizerbund" who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Assembly of Presidents of the Swiss Societies in Great Britain, later, in a few short, well-chosen words, thanked the SMS for their hospitality. The guests included Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Westcott, Personnel Manager of the Times Publishing Company and Vice-President of the Times Football Club with which the SMS have an annual match of special importance, and the Principal of the College Mr. C. Slade (and his wife) who, at the head of an efficient staff was largely responsible for the successful year at the College which the President was able to report. The Swiss Ministers of Religion, Herr Pfarrer P. K. Wipf, Monsieur le Pasteur Ph. Nicole, and the Rev. Father J. Scherer, the former with their wives, were also welcomed by the Chairman. He was glad of the oppor-

tunity offered to him of thanking them for the selfless way in which they discharged their very often arduous duties.

Then the President welcomed the Editor of the "Swiss Observer" and two of the Trustees present Mr. J. J. Boos and Mr. L. W. Krucker. He was also pleased to have present several of the Society's Honorary Members and their ladies. In pride of place was the Veteran Past-President, Mr. A. Stauffer, who had been at the head of the Society 45 years ago. Last but not least, the President mentioned his predecessor, Mr. O. Grob, and the very active Secretary Mr. W. Burren.



The President with his guests

Mr. Chappuis concluded by announcing that on 19th October the SMS London would be celebrating its 75th Anniversary. He himself would no longer be in the chair. He had been a member of one SMS Committee or another for over two decades and felt a younger man should be given the opportunity of taking over the leadership. His work had been a source of real pleasure and he expressed his thanks and appreciation to the members of the Council and Committee for their loyal support and co-operation, and to his fellow members for their confidence and friendship. He then introduced Mr. A. Jaccard, the very able Chairman of the Education Committee, who had accepted nomination as President and would be put forward to the AGM in a few weeks' time.

It has been a tradition at the SMS Banquet to couple the toast of the guests with that of the ladies. The mem-

bers perform this little ceremony at the bidding of their President, and this delightful custom is accepted as a token of respect and admiration, a small compensation for the many hours wives have to be without their husbands owing to the many meetings necessitated in an active society like the SMS. A difficulty arises only when, as in my case, the member is also a woman and this year even a guest. As I had always done, I rose as a member, drank the health of my sisters and my fellow guests and hoped that this would not look in any way discourteous towards my hosts.

The Toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society and the College was proposed by the Swiss Ambassador, who had made his first official appearance in the Swiss Colony at the SMS Banquet eight years ago. He brought greetings from Madame Daeniker and then handed over the Charter of the Swiss National Exhibition in 1964, expressing on behalf of the Organising Committee their desire to see as many compatriots as possible amongst the millions of people who are expected to go to Lausanne next year. Monsieur Daeniker, in his capacity as official representative of Switzerland, then thanked the Society for all the work done with so much devotion and competence. He expressed his regrets at Mr. Chappuis's retirement from the presidency and commented on the high standard of the College. "It is of great importance", the Ambassador continued, "that no efforts should be spared to ensure that the younger generation grow up with a wide intellectual horizon and be given the necessary armour to preserve and foster the links between our country and the rest of the world. The comparatively short period which your students spend at the College may be of lasting significance for their later life and decisive for the careers of many of them."

The Ambassador then turned to Switzerland's burning problems of over-employment, foreign labour and inflation (reported on page 408). He regretted to introduce a gloomy note into the evening which should be given up to gaiety. But knowing of the interest taken by the members in national matters and being aware of their patriotic sentiments and their alertness to all questions affecting the well-being of their homeland, he wanted to mention these subjects to those whom he considered to be the present and the future tycoons in the Swiss Colony.

The Ambassador's words were received with lively interest and the sombre tone of his address did not deflect from the evening's gaiety. It was a social event in the best SMS tradition. A friendly welcome, pleasant company of old and new friends, excellent food (the *consommé*, the sole with scampi, the *entrecôte*, the ice cream and strawberry sweet made a choice meal), good speeches — not too long, yet with some substance, good dancing with short but sweet rounds allowing for plenty of change, a few pleasing compliments (the Chairman said in his speech that the pleasure of having us around was worth at least twice the price of the ticket!), and above all, the happy, intimate atmosphere which has always been a sterling hallmark of any SMS gathering.

Mariann.

PERSONAL

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. E. P. Dick, of Flat 4, 15 St. Winifreds Road, Bournemouth. An obituary will appear in the next issue.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Every Sunday 7 to 11 p.m. — The Swiss Catholic Youth Club — Social at Westminster Cathedral School, 48 Great Peter Street, S.W.1.

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Every Thursday, from 6 to 7.30 p.m. — Discussion Circle in English — Young men specially invited. Tea from 6 to 6.15 p.m. Swiss Y.M.C.A., London Central Y.M.C.A. Building, Great Russell Street, W.C.1.

* * *

Every Thursday from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. — Unione Ticinese — meets at the Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3. All Ticinese welcome. The "Corale" rehearses from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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Every 1st Wednesday at 7 p.m. — Swiss Social Meeting at 2 Sussex Place, Widcombe, Bath.

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Every 1st Wednesday in the month — Secours Mutuels des Suisses à Londres — meeting at Swiss House, 35 Fitzroy Square, W.1, at 7 p.m.

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Friday, 8th February 1963 — London Swiss Philatelic Society — Annual Dinner — Montana Hotel, S.W.7.

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Tuesday, 19th February — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — TALK ON TUNISIA (with slides) by Monsieur W. Roch — 7.45 p.m. — Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, N.W.3. (See advertisement.)

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Tuesday, 19th February — 8.30 p.m. — Charity Gala Performance in aid of French Hospital of French film "La Guerre des Boutons" — Institut Français, Queensberry Place, S.W.7. Tickets (1 Gn.) from Hon. Treasurer, Flat 6, 1 Bryanston Square, W.1, only.

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Wednesday, 20th February, 7.15 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING at Swiss House, 34/35 Fitzroy Square, W.1.

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Wednesday, 20th February, 8.15 p.m. — Charity Performance in aid of French Hospital of "La Guerre des Boutons" — Institut Français, S.W.7. Tickets (5/-) from Hon Treasurer, Flat 6, 1 Bryanston Square, W.1, only.

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Tuesday, 19th March — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — Swiss Hostel for Girls. (Particulars to follow).

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Wednesday, 8th May — FETE SUISSE at Central Hall, Westminster.

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Saturday, 19th October — Swiss Mercantile Society — 75th ANNIVERSARY DINNER — Dorchester Hotel. (Particulars to follow.)