

# Swiss Rifle Association's annual report

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## Swiss Rifle Association's Annual Banquet.

This year's great Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Rifle Association, which took place on the 29th of November at the Union Helvetia Club, was a more solemn occasion than usual as it was enriched by the formal presentation of the Association's flag. Last year it was announced that thanks to the generosity of Mme. Cusi the S.R.A.'s great wish for a worthy flag of its own could at last be fulfilled. And a very handsome emblem of the society's function it has turned out to be. On one side of the red silken square are the Swiss cross and the Union Jack in juxtaposition and on the other side Wilhelm Tell with the cross-bow. Although the flag has already accompanied the great shots of our Colony to the National Shooting Competition at Bellinzona its formal dedication has been postponed to take place at the Annual Banquet, at which, as usual, also the prize distribution took place.



A Group, taken at the S.R.A.'s Annual Banquet, during the ceremony of presentation of the New Flag.

The company present was even more numerous than last year, counting over 150 persons. Despite some waiting for the very excellent meal the banquet began in the best and jolliest of spirits. The official part of the evening was opened with the usual toasts to the King and our Home Country, proposed by our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, who presided the gathering. The first speech in eulogy of the Swiss Rifle Association was delivered by its president, Mr. Alfred Schmid. He greeted the company and especially the Minister, as Honorary President of the S.R.A., as well as Mr. De Brunner, Honorary Vice-President, and thanked everybody most heartily for their sympathy and loyal support of the society. After expressing his regret that Mme. Cusi, the donor of the flag, could not take part at the banquet, the speaker continued with the following review of the society's activities during the year:

Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over 43,000 cartridges were fired during this past season. Besides the usual competitions on our ground, we had the pleasure to pay a visit to our friends the Wimbledon Park Rifle Club. Having had a very busy season we were prevented from accepting further invitations. One especially we were sorry to have to decline, that was the one from Bisley. Bisley is the principle shooting centre of the British Empire where all its crack shots assemble every year. They do not come together for a Beer Competition so well-known on our own ground. Gt. Britain offers yearly a most marvellous collection of prizes to their sharp shooters to the value of over £60,000. It is certainly a great honor to our little Assn. to have got an invitation for such a wonderful meeting at Bisley, which proves that our English friends look upon us as true friends.

One invitation of this past season which we could not refuse was a call from our own little country to take part in the Swiss National Shooting Competition at Bellinzona. About 30 of our members including a few Ladies left Victoria Stn. on July 24th last, after a most cordial send off by relatives, representatives of the Swiss Societies and our friend Mr. De Bourg bringing us the good wishes from our Minister. Full of enthusiasm we arrived at Bale at 6 o'clock next morning, where one of the most up-to-date charabancs of Messrs.

Saurer & Co., of Arbon awaited us to take the whole party straight across Switzerland to its destination. As luck happened the sun was most kind to us. About 8 o'clock in the morning we reached a little place called Aiken where, at the Hotel Sonne, our friend Mr. Ad. Schmid had invited us to a wholesome breakfast of "Roesti" and "Chäs." Knowing that Swiss air always produces a good appetite, our members, Messrs. Wyss, Wulschleger and Struebin stopped the whole party again at Zofingen and to everyone's surprise, served them a "Znüni" of "Zibele" and "Chäscheueche" and plenty of "Gletscherwasser." From there the time table read as follows: Brunnen 1 o'clock for lunch, Bellinzona 8 p.m. for dinner; but not before 2 a.m. we arrived at Bellinzona. At 6 o'clock next morning nevertheless, when Big Bertha made herself heard to announce the opening of the shooting ground, there were a good many of our party quite ready again.

In the Town Hall of Bellinzona we had a

most touching welcome from the Mayor of Bellinzona, from the various representatives of the canton Ticino, of the Bundesrat, and of the Swiss National R.A., and from 22 most charming young ladies representing each canton of Switzerland, acting as Dames d'Honneur.

The result of our competition was that we were 6th out of 16 Associations of the Swiss Abroad. If we did not have the pleasure to be first, we, anyhow, had an opportunity to prove to our friends at home that our spirit, our goodwill, our thoughts, and our hearts are still with the country where we were born.

In reply Monsieur Paravicini began by lamenting the fact that owing to a slight oversight—on who's part he did not say—the speech which he had carefully prepared and rehearsed a fortnight beforehand had become quite useless. In England singing one's own praise was not considered good form and therefore it was customary to leave that pleasant duty to the Honorary President while the real President responded, bashfully acknowledging any compliments. But in Switzerland this order was reversed—the S.R.A. that night followed the Swiss custom. There was not much to be said of the Association after the President's speech, Monsieur Paravicini continued. He, the Minister, could not say that his record of activities on the shooting range at Hendon was remarkable. He preferred to be on duty at the dinners and let himself be represented at Hendon by his collaborators, especially by M. de Bourg, who was such a good shot that with only three cartridges spent he managed to put the target out of order.

The figure three, Monsieur Paravicini jocularly continued, played a very important role in the Rifle Association's history. It was founded in 1923, it got its flag in 1929. It had three presidents, even as Switzerland was founded by three men, the "drei Eidgenossen." The S.R.A. got into sixth position at Bellinzona.

The next speaker was Mr. Chas. Strublin, Vice-President of the S.R.A., who welcomed the guests and thanked Monsieur Paravicini for having accepted the chair. He also stated how pleased he was to have with us Mr. De Brunner, Hon. Vice-President and Mr. De Bourg, First Secretary of Legation and other guests and representatives of Swiss Societies.

On behalf of the guests Mr. Paschoud, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, replied, not

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failing to weave a good tale into his words, as one has become accustomed to expect of him. He said:

The Swiss Rifle Association keeps up a tradition of our country. Throughout the world, the story of William Tell is known, whether as a legend or as an historical fact. What is remembered is not so much the question of the fight for independence, but Tell's shooting ability. One therefore associates the name of Swiss with that of a good shot, and truly rifle shooting can be called our national sport. When I was in the Argentine, I happened to see an advertisement in a paper concerning a "Tiro Suizo" which, I concluded, was some shooting competition organized by the Swiss Colony. But no, I found that "Tiro Suizo" is the name given there to all rifle ranges. Rifle shooting as we practice it was formerly unknown in the Argentine, but the Swiss opened a range, and made it so popular that numerous other ranges were opened by the Argentines themselves, their Government being behind the movement, and that is how all are called "Swiss shooting." What better proof do you require of shooting being a Swiss sport: "par excellence."

Many years before your association was formed, I remember numerous occasions when the want of a Swiss rifle range was felt, and when it finally came to be it was a welcome and very necessary addition to the amenities of the Swiss Colony. May the Swiss Rifle Association flourish and grow year by year.

In 1716, in St. Denis, near Paris, a petition was sent to the King by the male population asking that the Swiss companies should be moved elsewhere. The reason was that they found the Swiss soldiers had too much success with the fair sex. The ladies of St. Denis promptly fought the petition by declaring that if the Swiss were moved elsewhere, they would move with them, and the ladies won as they always do. A soldier is always popular with the fair sex, but these were more than ordinary soldiers, they were Swiss Riflemen.

Mr. Haesler brought out the toast to the ladies in his well-known, almost defiantly humorous vein, alternately disclosing his ardent admiration for the other sex and pouring scorn over its weaknesses.

Then followed the short but very dignified ceremony of the dedication of the flag. Besides Monsieur Paravicini and Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, who conducted the ceremony, Messrs. De Brunner, Strubin and Schmid, successively presidents of the S.R.A., stood on the platform, as well as Messrs. Werner and Senn, representing the City Swiss Club, who's flag had been placed beside the R.A.'s new standard; and two ladies. Monsieur Paravicini, handing the new flag to Mr. Senn, as god-father in the ceremony, said the Swiss cross on the standard meant fidelity to our home-land and the Union Jack our loyalty to our English hosts. Monsieur le Pasteur then called God's blessings on the new flag which, he said, was a symbol of our country's great causes, a sign of victory over tyranny, a token of faithful loyalty to the fatherland, the emblem of a greater love to humanity and of one who gave his life for us. The Rifle Association stood for the defence of our home-land and the ideal of fellowship. May it always serve and follow its flag and ideals with love and devotion!

Mr. De Brunner then, with great vigour and eloquence, delivered the following words, after expressing his and the S.R.A.'s grateful appreciation to the sponsors of the flag ceremonial:

Members of the S.R.A.: Behold our beautiful new flag and reflect for a moment what it stands for: Love for, and devotion to, our dear Homeland and its best traditions, Unity, Solidarity, Mutual Good-Will, true Fellowship and last but not least Sportsmanship! Its acceptance at the hands of our Hon. President, M. Paravicini, imposes, however, certain duties on all our Members, namely, to cherish, respect and defend our banner at all times and under all conditions. In this respect my feelings tonight are rather of a mixed character, for since its birth we have witnessed many changes and difficulties, and unfortunately a great deal of the spirit which prevailed in the early days has become lost or at least undermined. In addressing you thus, my plea must be: "The better the day the better the deed" and I venture to hope that you will bear with me if I take this unique opportunity of making a most earnest appeal to all and sundry of the S.R.A. to consider to-night the beginning of a new era and to make up your minds that henceforth the spirit of sportsmanship and mutual goodwill and support shall manifest itself to the highest degree possible! Whoever is true to the precepts of sport can be false to no man, and the application of these principles to one's daily avocation will bring its own reward.

The sight and knowledge of possessing such a lovely banner will, I trust, prove a never fail-

ing incentive to stand fast and hold together, come what may, and to add lustre to our emblem of brotherhood on foreign soil, so as to be able to pass it on, pure and covered with fame, to those who will follow in our wake.

In conclusion Mr. Werner presented a bouquet as a token of the Rifle Association's cordial relations with the City Swiss Club and the Colony at large. Monsieur Paravicini then invited Miss Buechi to put the first laurel-crown on the flag with her pure "lily white hands."

After the ceremony followed the distribution of the prizes, which proved to be a somewhat lengthy business owing to the fact that the S.R.A., in truly democratic spirit, has discovered a simple way of excluding all possibility of envy for the best shots by rewarding all and sundry not only with one, but with several prizes. The profusion of silver cups, large and small, of bottles and cigar cases was bewildering to behold. The pleasurable sight of the valiant "boys," lean and fat, aged and young, being called up time and again to proudly fetch prize after prize fully compensated the ladies and guests for having to wait for the dance right until midnight. Following is a list of the three best shots in each competition:

300 Meter.			100 Yards.		
1. Schmid, Ad.	522		1. Schmid, Alf.	946	
2. Hirt	521		2. Haesler	941	
3. Brullhard, O.	513		3. Rhyn, A.	938	

#### ENDSCHIESSEN, CATEGORIE: A and B.

A 100 Yards.			B 100 Yards.		
1. Burger, G.	96		1. Odermatt	94	
2. Brullhard, R.	95		2. Senn	86	
3. Rhyn, Alf.	95		3. Conrad	80	

A 300 Metres.			B 300 Metres.		
1. Brullhard, E.	105		1. Buchi	87	
2. Fuchs	99		2. Conrad	79	
3. Hirt	98		3. Wullschlegler	78	

GLUECK.			KUNST.		
1. Haesler	95		1. Burger	258	
2. Hirt	94		2. Wetter	239	
3. Brullhard, O.	88		3. Hirt	235	

#### PRESENTATION OF THE SWISS GYMNASIUM SOCIETY'S FLAG.

The large hall of the Union Helvetia Club attracted a representative gathering of the Colony last Sunday to witness the presentation of a flag to the Swiss Gymnastic Society. At four o'clock sharp, the president, Mr. E. S. Block, introduced his forces: the gymnasts proper, arrayed in the dress colours of our home prototypes, the ladies, wearing black sports costumes and the boys in white shorts, all proudly displaying the picturesque badge of their society.

The programme began with work by the men on the horizontal bars; the difficulties in some of the exercises were apparent, but the performances of Messrs. Schlaeppli and Gysi were marked by their perfect accuracy. A "Wand Drill" by the junior section followed and one wondered how the little mites all remembered the different movements. During this turn the Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, arrived. He was cordially welcomed by the president who hoped that he would not regret having spent Sunday afternoon in their midst. Mr. Block also extended a hearty welcome to the representatives of the sister societies.

After an exhibition of "Rhythmic Movements," gracefully performed by the ladies, the forum was cleared for the ceremony of presenting the flag.

An open rectangular was formed by the three sections of the society. The president and officials of both the Swiss Rifle Association and the Swiss Gymnastic Society took their stand in the centre and were joined by the Swiss Minister who unfolded the flag. He said he keenly felt the importance of the occasion and appreciated the distinction of taking part in this solemn act. Gymnastics were one of our national sports and it seemed strange that this essential pastime was not officially represented in our Colony until 1925 when, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Block, the present society came into existence. The Flag had been presented by a well-wisher who desired to remain anonymous which was typical of the unobtrusive and healthy spirit that prevailed in their society. This fellowship was further illustrated by the fact that the Swiss Rifle Association, whose banner was scarcely a week old had already assumed the dignity of god-father. Before the Flag was handed over it received its blessing from the Rev. C. Th. Hahn. He reminded the audience that Gymnastics, as they are now cultivated in Switzerland, were mainly the heritage of Pestalozzi who sought to interest youth and manhood in a healthy and ennobling pastime. The four letters F so prominently embroidered on the Banner and symbolising the moral standard of the gymnast "frisch, fromm, fröhlich, frei" (alert, pious, joyous and free) should for ever be foremost in our minds. Mr. Block in receiving the Flag on behalf of his Society thanked the Swiss Minister for the warm interest and encouraging support he had never failed to testify. He also thanked the Rev. Hahn for his valued co-operation and his friends of the Swiss Rifle Association for acting as sponsors.

He could promise that they would always faithfully honour the Flag and never forget the generosity of the unknown donor. For them the Flag was not only a symbol of duty and devotion, of unity and of love to our Country, but a symbol of sportsmanship in the truest English conception. The singing of the national anthem concluded the ceremony and the members of the Society then passed in file under the Flag.

The remainder of the programme then followed in quick succession. The work on the Parallel Bars evoked general applause, the performances of Messrs. Knoll and Gysi being outstanding features. The Indian Club Swinging by such an expert exponent as Mr. O'Brien hardly needs our praise. A delightful change afforded a Gipsy Dance executed by the Ladies' section in appropriate attire to the strains of Brahms Hungarian Dances. The usual Pyramids in which the "Juniors" took a prominent if at times amusing part concluded the entertainment.

Before the Swiss Minister left he presented Mr. J. Sermier, one of the veterans of the Society, with a gold badge in recognition of many years undefatigable activity in the cause of gymnastics. He also complimented Mr. Block on the unqualified success which the Society had secured under his leadership; he did so with the full knowledge of the exceptional difficulties against which they had to contend.

The gathering dispersed soon after six and in writing this report we are surprised at the amount of activity that had been pressed into the short space of two hours. The few speeches were short and to the point, the different numbers of the programme followed each other with clock-like precision, though we did notice once or twice a severe look on the President's face who evidently was pulling all the strings by himself.

#### FOYER SUISSE.

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It was founded by the Swiss Church of London during the war, registered in November 1917 and opened in April 1923 at Nos. 12, 13, 14, 15, Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

The Trust stands under the high patronage of the Swiss Minister, M. C. R. Paravicini, the hon. president. All members give their time and service free. The present activities of the Institution are twofold viz:

- 1.—The domiciliary accommodation of guests, mainly Swiss young people, of whom about 4,000 have been received since 1923.
- 2.—Provision for social requirements of young people for which purpose a house (No. 15) has been reserved and specially equipped and has been utilized free of all charge by hundreds of young Swiss of both sexes every week.

#### UNIONE TICINESE.

This society was founded on the 8th of February 1874 and its membership is strictly limited to citizens of the Ticino, resident in this country. The main objects of the society are: (a) To give assistance to its own members in case of illness or serious need (b) To maintain and develop among its members the spirit and success of Ticinese characteristics and to strengthen the bonds of friendship and brotherhood among the Ticinesi (c) To promote or encourage, in a general way, benevolent and patriotic activities which are in keeping with the sentiments of its members.

Although the membership of the Unione Ticinese does not run into several hundred, as it used to in the days of unrestricted immigration, the position of the society, in every respect, is sound and prosperous. Under the leadership of Mr. W. Notari, now president for the 10th successive year, all the aims are easily attained and the position has been well consolidated.

The various social events which are arranged in the course of each year are extremely well patronised and give a ready opportunity to members and non-members to spend at least a few hours now and then under conditions which make them feel very near to the beloved Ticino.

#### Annual Concert And Dance.

The Annual Concert and Dance of the Unione Ticinese, in aid of the Swiss Benevolent Society, took place on the 28th ult., at the "Schweizerbund," and proved as successful as usual.

The concert started at 8 p.m. with an item by Mr. Claude Chandler, the humorous entertainer, who is so well-known at our functions. Miss Swan again delighted us with several speciality dances and Miss Nellie Norway gave us some well appreciated handbell solos. Signor G. Berni, with his lady soprano and the "Lazzaroni" quartet undoubtedly proved to be the pièce de résistance of the evening. The well-rendered Neapolitan songs and selections from Italian operas introduced that warm atmosphere, which goes a long way to make such an evening a real success. It was good that neither Signor Berni nor his groupe seemed to tire, because the audience did