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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society Limited (by Guarantee) was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, 11th February.

The Chairman, Mr. O. Grob, welcomed the members present and called on the Secretary to read the notice convening the meeting and also the auditor's report.

In reviewing the accounts for the year ended 31st December 1958, which had been circulated to the members, the Chairman stated that the result could be considered satisfactory, the deficit being within the range of subsidy granted by the Swiss Government on an agreed basis. He stressed the need for building up adequate reserves in view of the Society's increased commitments.

The accounts as presented were adopted unanimously and the auditor, Mr. Robert P. Huxley, F.C.A., was re-appointed by the meeting.

Reporting on the Society's activities during the past year, the Chairman made special reference to the memorable and most successful 70th anniversary celebration in September and gave brief details of the varied and interesting programme of lectures, film shows, etc., in connection with the monthly meetings. These were, generally, well supported and had already been fully reported in the columns of the "Swiss Observer".

The total membership had shown a slight increase over the preceding year and the Society at 31st December had 27 honorary, 220 active, 15 corresponding and 54 contributing members.

In the unavoidable absence of the Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. A. Jaccard, the report of the College was read by the Vice-Chairman, Mr. A. Faes.

The report stated that the attendance at the College had again been satisfactory, 414 students having been admitted during the year, compared with 390 in 1957. As usual, there had been a capacity attendance during the summer months though more students could have been accommodated during the winter period which still did not find favour with many intending students due to the exaggerated ideas in Switzerland regarding the fog in England during the winter months.

A commendable increase in the number of students presenting themselves for the diploma examinations could also be recorded, 267 candidates having sat, compared with 257 in the preceding year. Of these 244 (91%) had been successful, compared with 225 (88%) in 1957.

Of equal popularity were the evening classes, the enrolments for which were increasing steadily year by year. During last year, no less than 850 students had registered for 43 classes, compared with 734 students for 37 classes in 1957. In some of the classes, students had again been prepared for external examinations. An increasing number of candidates were being entered for the examinations for the Lower Certificate and the Certificate of Proficiency in English of Cambridge University, which are held annually in June and December. The results last year had again been very satisfactory and the percentage of passes well above the average for the country as a whole.

A varied programme of studies had been enriched by a number of excursions to places of historic and cultural interest, as well as by visits to industrial and commercial undertakings, the Stock Exchange, some of the various produce exchanges, and Lloyd's.

The College football team had a most successful season and again won the Lints-Smith Cup presented by "The Times" (newspaper) as well as the cup for the London Hospital six-a-side tournament in which 42 teams competed.

The College had a full-time staff of 10 qualified teachers, most of whom had had many years of experience in teaching English in all its aspects to foreign students.

Thanks were expressed to both the teaching and administrative staffs for the efficient manner in which they had carried out their duties.

The Chairman of the House Committee, Mr. R. Chappuis, reported on the repairs, renovations and improvements made at Swiss House during the period under review and stated that accommodation had again been provided for meetings of various Swiss societies. Swiss House had also continued to serve as a centre for the examinations of the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, who, in view of the ever increasing number of candidates, were making extended use of the facilities offered.

Finally, Mr. Grob expressed thanks to all who had continued to give their support and encouragement during the past year, mentioning in particular the Swiss Embassy, the Central Secretariat in Zurich, the Federal Authorities (B.I.G.A.) in Berne, as well as the active and contributing members, and last, but not least, the Trustees and his colleagues on the Council and the Committees.

The reports as presented were unanimously adopted with acclamation.

The President then vacated the Chair and Mr. A. C. Stahelin, Hon. Member of the S.K.V. and the London Section, was appointed Chairman pro tem. to conduct the election. He was pleased to announce that all members of the Council and the Committees had offered themselves for re-election. Mr. W. Schedler was nominated to fill the vacancy on the House Committee created by the death of Mr. W. Fuchs, and Mr. E. Zwicky was proposed as an additional member of the General Purposes Committee. There being no further nominations, Mr. Stahelin took a vote by show of hands and declared all candidates duly elected. On behalf of the meeting, he expressed thanks to all concerned for their good work during the past year and added a special word of praise for the President for the efficient manner in which he had handled the Society's affairs during his first year of office.

Mr. Grob, on resuming the Chair, thanked Mr. Stahelin for the able and expeditious manner in which he had conducted the election and expressed the hope that members would continue to give their full support during his new term of presidency.

The proceedings then terminated.

W.B.