

N.S.H. Honour A. Stauffer

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Two other events have just aroused considerable interest and should therefore be mentioned, although they belong to quite another domain. In view of the fact that next year will be the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Henry Dunant, who was the founder of the Red Cross, and because in five years' time it will be the hundredth anniversary of the day on which was founded the world-embracing humanitarian idea, which was conceived by Swiss citizens and born on Swiss territory, and because these events must be recalled in a solemn and fitting manner, an Honorary Committee has been set up, with the President of the Swiss Confederation at its head, the aim of which is to erect a monument in Geneva, the native town and birthplace of both Henry Dunant and the Red Cross. Another monument is to be set up in the village of Heiden, in the Canton of Appenzell, in which Henry Dunant spent the last twenty years of his life, and where he died. A widespread collection is to be organised for the purpose of obtaining the necessary money, an appeal being addressed to the entire nation for its generous contribution. The whole of the Swiss people feel that they are closely bound to the Red Cross idea and they are proud of the fact that the central International Organisation is to be found in Geneva, so that its home is on Swiss soil.

N.S.H. HONOUR A. STAUFFER.

Fred Stauffer has now been connected with the "Swiss Observer" for three decades and of those has occupied the editor's chair for a quarter of a century. Such long service warrants celebration in any case, but particularly so when it is connected with the Colony's "own newspaper". It was therefore a very appropriate decision of the Council of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique to entertain Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer, to enable members of the society and others to say "THANK YOU".

The party took place on 19th May at the Swiss Hostel for Girls. The proceedings were opened with a simple supper (which, as usual, did honour to the management of the hostel). Afterwards, over a cup of coffee, the President, Mr. W. Renz, opened the official part of the evening. He briefly explained the purpose of their meeting and offered a hearty welcome to the guests of honour. In a few words he told us, what of course we already knew, of the work of Mr. Stauffer, first as contributor, then for twenty-five years as editor, of the "Swiss Observer". He then called on H.E. our Ambassador Dr. Daeniker, to offer the main eulogy of the evening.

Dr. Daeniker spoke of the zeal and skill with which the "Swiss Observer" had been and was being edited. The founder of the paper, the late Mr. P. F.



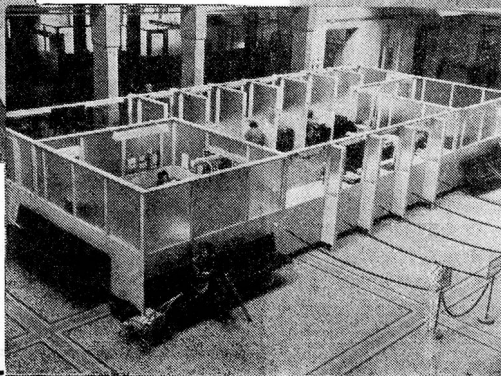
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Boehringer, in his first issue, in November 1919, had stated that he hoped the "Swiss Observer" would form a platform for discussing questions which would concern the Swiss Colony in Great Britain. By and large this had been achieved. But the paper was more than just a sheet informing us of a great amount of happenings at home and in the colony. It did that with (the editor's) consummate skill. But it was also the unofficial organ of the Swiss Embassy. On behalf of all present, indeed, on behalf of the Swiss Colony in this country, he thanked Mr. Stauffer and with him Mr. Oscar Boehringer, the present publisher and son of the founder of the "Swiss Observer". The Boehringers, father and son, could undoubtedly have employed their plant to more financial profit than to print the journal.

Mr. O. Grob, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, then added his thanks to Messrs. Stauffer and Boehringer. The S.M.S. was also indebted to the "Swiss Observer". Dr. Hans Egli, as a professional colleague as well as a former president of N.S.H., valued the work of Fred Stauffer as that of a fearless and outspoken editor. It required both humour and courage to edit a paper of this kind without making himself the enemy of everyone. Fred had both and it was remarkable that nearly always those "touched off" in the "Swiss Observer" became and remained his friends. When he (Dr. Egli) had edited the paper for a year or so in younger days, it did not have by far the influence it now had.

All the speakers mentioned the help Mrs. Stauffer must have been to Mr. Stauffer. Mrs. Meier specially thanked her for her patience in sitting through oh so many meetings which could have been of little interest to her, just to accompany her husband on his beat of duty. We all were very truly grateful to her.

All the speeches were loudly applauded, as they might be, because they were all, for once, on the brief side and throughout to the point. A special hand-clap accompanied the presentation of a bouquet to Mrs. Stauffer (presented by Miss Renz) and something in brown paper that looked like a box of cigars to her husband. There being no official announcement about the contents of the parcel, I cannot be sure.

Loud cheers greeted Fred Stauffer when he rose. He said that he and his wife were deeply appreciative of the fact that so many had come that evening to honour them. He, as editor of the "Swiss Observer", got so many bricks thrown at him that a pat on the back was really appreciated. However, they and the Colony were good to him and he would ask them to give praise also to his collaborator Mr. Oscar Boehringer, the publisher.

It was all very well to wish him to continue for many years; but, after all, the spirit might be willing

but as time went on one's powers of concentration weakened. Also, he thought, there must be many more members of the Colony who could take a more active interest in the paper.

Mr. Stauffer recounted some of his experiences. There was the story of a threatening libel action which, in the end, petered out because, as it appeared, publisher jun. was becoming engaged to the daughter of the aggrieved party. There was the lady who was curious as to the person hiding behind the letters "ST". She was in due course informed of name, age and vital statistics of the editor.

Mr. Stauffer thanked all those who had helped him. He particularly mentioned Ambassador Dr. Daeniker, who, he said, had taken great and active interest in the "Swiss Observer" and had been of great help.

When he, Mr. Stauffer, was approached and asked whether he would take on the job — of course, he was told, it would not be a gold mine — they were talking of trying for six months. Well, the six months had become a quarter of a century. And, as they had told him, there was no gold mine.

"My wife has been very good to me", Mr. Stauffer concluded; "without her help I could hardly have gone on for so long."

Prolonged applause again showed Fred how sincerely appreciative those present were of his words and deeds. Again "Thank You!"

JHB.

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