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Ce sont, aujourd'hui, les partis qui font la politique. Et, dans les partis, un petit cénacle, un comité, assisté de délégués triés sur le volet. On dira qu'il en fut toujours ainsi : ce n'est pas vrai. Il fut un temps où un député aux Chambres fédérales, représentant d'un parti, certes, mais *élu par la majorité des citoyens* de son canton, avait vraiment conscience de son rôle de mandataire du

peuple. Or il ne l'a plus, depuis que, à la faveur du cumul (antidémocratique au plus haut degré), il peut être assuré, d'avance, de son élection, due à un infime contingent.

Car c'est mathématique.

Dans un canton qui dispose, mettons de six sièges au National, et où il y a, par exemple, 18,000 votants, le citoyen Tartempion, qui figure, en qualité de candidat cumulé sur la liste, disons du parti "progressiste et démocratique," est sûr, absolument sûr, de son affaire si son parti dispose de trois mille électeurs. Toute la question se résume en ceci : trouvera-t-on ces trois mille électeurs. Supposons qu'ils existent : Tartempion n'a plus à se faire de souci. Même les bulletins qui ne porteraient que l'en-tête progressiste et démocratique, sans aucun nom de candidat, vaudront pour son groupe, et comme le cumul le met lui-même à l'abri des fantaisies du "panachage," il peut dormir tranquille. Personne ne le connaît. Il n'a jamais rien fait pour son pays, pour son canton, que des discours dans des assemblées. Mais, du moment que son parti a droit à un siège, en vertu de la répartition proportionnelle et qu'il jouit, lui, Tartempion du cumul, on ne lui peut rien. Avouez que c'est extravagant, et qu'il n'y a plus l'ombre de démocratie dans cette cuisine électorale.

D'ailleurs, si notre Tartempion ne jouissait pas du cumul, et que, pour cette raison, il ne fût pas élu, un autre citoyen, tout aussi obscur et dépourvu de mérites, pourrait prendre sa place, jusqu'au jour où, en sa qualité de suppléant, Tartempion ferait son entrée aux Chambres, en suite d'un décès ou d'une démission.

Car c'est encore une des joies de la R. P. : des gens qui n'ont pas été élus deviennent automatiquement conseillers nationaux lorsque le siège se trouve vacant au cours d'une législature. Le simple fait d'avoir été inscrit sur une liste par un comité électoral peut faire de vous, un jour ou l'autre, un représentant du peuple. C'est ahurissant !

Et cela dégoûte les électeurs. Comme je les comprends ! Cela ne dégoûte aussi, bien qu'après quinze ans de journalisme on soit habitué aux mauvaises odeurs.

Conséquence : les citoyens qui ne sont pas inféodés à un parti, mais qui voteraient volontiers pour un homme, candidat d'un parti, à la condition qu'il se présentât loyalement aux suffrages populaires, se refusent à la basse comédie à laquelle on les invite, en leur proposant de voter principalement pour un parti et, subsidiairement pour les personnages, souvent falots, qu'une coterie d'agents électoraux ont désignés. C'est probablement la principale cause pour laquelle les urnes sont de plus en plus désertées.

Autre conséquence : la qualité de la représentation populaire souffre beaucoup de ce maquignonnage. Par le subterfuge de la R.P., des politiciens inexistantes, qui n'auraient jamais regni, d'une façon normale, l'investiture de leurs concitoyens, vont délibérer à Berne de nos plus graves intérêts... C'est un chapitre sur lequel il y aurait long à dire.

Le spectacle de notre vie politique est fort attristant aujourd'hui. Nous sommes arrivés à cette période de crise où ce sont les factions qui gouvernent.

Je laisse à ceux qui connaissent l'Histoire romaine le soin de conclure ce que cela présage.

Léon Savary.

Journal Suisse de Paris.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. held their Monthly Meeting at the Swiss Club, 74, Charlotte Street, W.1., on Wednesday, October 14th. Mr. M. Paschoud, President, opened the proceedings shortly after 8.30 p.m., when over 50 members and guests were present. This Meeting was not an ordinary gathering of members to deal with matters of routine, but bore a special note by the presence of the Hon. President, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, Swiss Minister, and his collaborators including practically the whole of the Legation staff. The presence of the representatives of the Confederation not only honoured the S.M.S., but proved once more the happy ties between the former and the latter. Before proceeding with the Agenda, the Chairman called on Mr. Paravicini who had to impart a very sad message to the assembly. He wished to say a few words in memory of his regretted friend and colleague, Monsieur Th. de Sonnenberg, who died at Lausanne on the ninth of this month. He took it that a good number of those present had the privilege of having met him during his comparatively short time of activity on the Staff of the Swiss Legation, and he was sure that this short acquaintance had given them the impression of having met a man of rare comprehension and intellect. He had an outstanding gift of assimilation to any new situation, a man of capacities who had no doubt been one of the remarkable assets to the Legation in the interests of Switzerland and of the Swiss in London and abroad. He said that Mr. de Sonnen-

berg left a gap in the Swiss Diplomatic Service which would be difficult to replace. He asked the meeting to rise from their seats in memory of the deceased.

Mr. Paschoud in a short reply said that the Society felt the loss referred to by the Minister. Many of our Members had the opportunity of appreciating his willingness always to help our Society. It was really gratifying that the souvenir of such a personality was brought to the notice of our members.

The President then proceeded to the first item on the Agenda, viz. the minutes of the Meetings of May, August and September. These were passed as read by the Hon. Secretary, Mr. G. Haberstick.

The Chairman then passed on to an item, which had no doubt attracted many of the members present, the representatives of the Legation, City Swiss Club and last but not least the "Press." Mr. Paschoud announced the departure of a dear friend and supporter of the Society, Mr. Cl. Rezzonico, First Secretary of Legation, who had been transferred to Rome. He was leaving very shortly to a more sunny field of activity. Though everyone was pleased that he would establish himself in a more sunny climate and in better conditions than in London, all were sorry to lose such a strong supporter of the S.M.S. during the years he had been in London. As Honorary President of the Education Department he showed the greatest interest in the School. Despite his numerous duties he had visited the College on many occasions and closely followed its activities. It was gratifying, and a pleasure to all, that the Society's activities were so closely followed by the official representatives of the country. This material help we had in several cases, when we had to face attacks in Switzerland, which were not only answered by us but the Legation was also instrumental in reporting favourably to Switzerland. The members were sorry to hear of the departure of Mr. Rezzonico and wished him God Speed and every success in his new career. In order to thank him for all he had done for the Society, if the times had been more favourable and conditions better, they would perhaps have presented Mr. Rezzonico with a souvenir which he would have been able to treasure as valuable. But as times were rather adverse, it was decided on some little useful object. The President had very much pleasure in presenting him, as a little souvenir, a gold fountain pen, with the engraving "S.M.S. London 1931." When using it he would be thinking of the many friends he left behind in London. The President therefore once more thanked him for all the favour and help he had given us. After a hearty applause the Chairman called on Mr. Paravicini who asked Mr. Rezzonico to excuse him if he had to go through a further ordeal of a speech by his chief, before he could thank the President for the words to which the meeting had just listened. He saw the Swiss Legation was represented in full on that evening and wondered whether it was a good sign for the Swiss Legation or the S.M.S. In order to bring the Swiss Legation in full nothing less than some sort of a funeral is wanted. But nothing could have been more pleasant than to witness a manifestation like the present one, an assembly of compatriots anxious to honour whatever work done by one colleague of 32, Queen Anne Street. If he said it gave him pleasure he had to say that no pleasure was without a shade of bitterness. It caused, of course, a black spot in the picture, feeling that we had that evening amongst us for the last time, for the time being, our friend Mr. Rezzonico who had been not only a personal friend of the S.M.S. He knew that Dr. Rezzonico's nature of modesty did not agree with listening to a long eulogy, and he would therefore say a few words only to give him in their presence testimony of a good "boy." Personally he had more than the mere satisfaction of the collaboration with our friend for more than 7 years in his quality as at first Attaché and then as Head of the Economical Department of the Legation. As the Chairman said, Mr. Rezzonico had the gift of comprehension and is an intelligent "boy." He assisted with great energy any cause in the interest of our countrymen and our country within and without. In the field of his splendid activities he had also done really good work at the Legation. He had been a very nice colleague to them all and it gave the Minister really great pleasure to hear that the same feelings existed among the members of the S.M.S., for whom, he knew, Mr. Rezzonico had a very warm spot in his heart all the time. He had been working with them, and for them, and he heard that his activities in the Education Department of the Society had every reason to be appreciated to their full value. Well, he may have had the feeling that he might take with him the assurance, that, when he jumped into the train, he left behind in London nothing else but good friends and at the same time he took with himself the very best wishes for a long and fruitful career.

Mr. Rezzonico replying in suitable terms mentioned that a philosopher once said, "Partir c'est mourir un peu." He had tried with the means at his disposal to find in the execution of his duties that personal pleasure which one had

if one did not only the minimum, but just a little more.. He thanked the Minister for all that he taught him by his example, not only as chief but also as counsellor. He expressed in a frank sense his deep gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Paravicini. Mentioning several of his colleagues, he said that he had seen many of them come and go, but he would like to say how much his gratitude went to them all. Judging by the former orations he had the feeling that among the members of the colony he had only friends. Speaking of the S.M.S. he said that it had always been his "enfant gâté"; that it gave him very little trouble and a great deal of satisfaction. But "children" would all be the same. When he heard of his impending departure, he threatened owing to the difficult times through which we are going, not to accept any souvenir. He said he was at a loss what to do, as he could not under the circumstances, refuse what the President called "a modest present." He said he was grateful to all and would go away with great regret but take with him only pleasant memories. After Mr. Rezzonico bade "au revoir" to the assembly, he received three mighty cheers.

The Chairman now proceeded to the admissions and resignations of members. An application for membership was received from Mr. W. de Bourg, First Secretary of Legation, which was accepted by acclamation.

Dr. Rüfenacht, the successor of Mr. Rezzonico, was also elected a member of the Society. The Chairman said he was sure that they would be active members in the real sense of the word.

Mr. de Bourg replied on behalf of himself and Dr. Rüfenacht. He said "mieux vaut tard que jamais" and if he had not joined the rank and file of the Society before, he had always followed with great interest the activities and development of the Society and gave his assurance that as active member he would continue to do so with great pleasure.

Passing on to the last item on the Agenda, the President read a letter of good wishes sent to the New York Section which was founded there recently.

The President then referred to the recent "Gewerbliche Studienreise" to London. This body wrote a letter dated 16th September addressed to the "Schweizer Verein" London, not knowing that there are about 15 of them. The Legation naturally was somewhat perplexed. Mr. De Bourg telephoned to the President on Friday, September 25th to inform him of this letter. It was agreed that something should be done and the letter in question was received by the Chairman on September 28th. The party asked for a "Schweizerabend" to be held on the following Monday, October 5th. "Ein bescheidener Anlass mit gutem Schweizergeist in der Form eines Bieroder Teeabends der keine Vorbereitung beansprucht." The President explained the reasons which made it impossible for the Swiss Choral Society and the Swiss Institute Orchestral Society to assist with musical numbers so that only circumstances in general could be blamed for not offering a more lively evening to the visitors.

The Minister here interposed that to have a really truly patriotic Meeting it was always preferable to arrange for a "Bierabend" rather than a "Teeabend." The President mentioned that free beer was offered to the visitors at Swiss House and as a proof that these visitors did not take away a bad impression, he mentioned that the very day they made a collection amongst themselves, which yielded the handsome sum of 350 Swiss Francs, which on our own suggestion, it was decided to use for the help of needy students, who are unable to extend their stay at the College for a month or so. This fund will no doubt be found useful and greatly appreciated.

The Chairman then informed the Meeting that at the Council Meeting held the previous evening, it was decided for reasons of economy, not to hold the Annual Banquet next February. He was sure that as this function made a heavy call on the members they would agree with this decision. The Chairman also mentioned that as the hall had been reserved for this occasion, this function would be replaced by a Cinderella Dance, which would be far less expensive. As it was customary to make a collection for the benefit of the "Fonds de Secours" at the Annual Banquet, it was decided to carry on the good work and to make collections at the Cinderella Dances.

Referring to the Banquet the Minister said that it was a very sound way to look at things at the present moment and gave a very good example to the Swiss Colony at large, all the more so as it does not neglect the support given to the "Fonds de Secours" which we all have at heart.

Referring to the "Ferienreise" part, Mr. C. Chapuis suggested that a Central Committee of Representatives of all the Swiss Societies and Clubs in London should be formed under the auspices of the Swiss Legation to deal with matters of such a nature.

Before the Meeting closed, the Minister expressed his great pleasure for the pleasant evening he had spent in the midst of the S.M.S..

The Meeting was followed by a musical evening.

WB.