

Mending a clock

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NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE

President's address to the Annual General Meeting of the London Group, held at Swiss House, February 15th, 1933.

In presenting to you the report of the work of the London Group during 1932, I would wish to make the following remarks:—

The activity of the London Group of the N.S.H. has been influenced very powerfully by the persistence of the extreme economic depression, the effects of which have been felt probably more keenly during 1932 than previously. Another influence, being a direct political outcome of the depression, has also operated strongly against the Group's activity during the period under review: I refer to the almost complete cessation of immigration of new Swiss blood into the Colony. In consequence the membership has again receded to some extent, from 157 to 149, and we may even have to reckon with a further recession during 1933. Death also has had another harvest among our members last year, removing two of our best friends. Mr. Neuschwander, our doyen, was buried in May, and in December they carried to his grave our staunch old President, Mr. Jean Baer. He was the virtual founder and first President of our Group, directing our destiny from February 1916 to March 1928. His activity in the interests of the N.H.S. has been prodigious, both here and later in Switzerland, and he has exercised a benevolent influence on the movement which goes far beyond what is generally known. — We also deplore the death recently of Mrs. Forrer. — May their memories remain fresh in our minds and may we strive to act up to their fine example.

These adverse conditions resulted naturally in a contraction of the Group's activity or, shall we say, that, although the work may not have been less arduous than last year, yet we have much less to show for it. Again we have to complain of the apparent indifference of the members of the rank and file, but it has fortunately been found possible, with the valued help of Mr. Schneider and Mr. Levy of the Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd., to attract a large number of S.M.S. students to our last lecture on Leysin. To judge by the interest displayed, we are decidedly hopeful that this new attendance will continue, and every effort will be made on our part to provide talks of a highly authoritative character.

At the moment, we cannot think of expansion: our clear duty is to preserve and strengthen the existing nucleus of the Group. In order to do so, we have to give the best possible value to our members and the Colony at large; in other words, we can only live by service, and it must ever be our first and foremost thought to detect a new want in our social life, so that we may find and apply a reasonable remedy within the limits of our activity.

The Group has held eight monthly meetings, including the Annual General Meeting of February the 24th, on the third Wednesday in each month, (except July, August and September), which were attended with commendable regularity by the Council. The activities of the Group during the year, other than administrative, may suitably be described under the following headlines:—**CAUSERIES.**—Six talks were given at the meetings, of which several with lantern slides. They proved to be of great educational value, being given by distinguished experts in most cases and were followed by interesting discussions. It is more than refreshing to know that we may rely upon such valuable co-operation and performances by some of our own members.

1932
March 16th. Dr. W. Rüfenacht: *The New British Customs Tariff.*

April Dr. Lätt's visit: no talk owing to his sudden illness.

May 18th. Mr. Rothlisberger: *A Swiss Health Resort.*

June 15th. A. F. Suter: *First impressions of Canada.*

October 19th. The Rev. Hoffmann-de Visme: *Impressions de Suède.*

November 16th. G. Finsler: *By Road to Lithuania.*

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January 18th. Dr. F. Rollier: *Leysin, Hélio-thérapie et cure de travail.*

FILM SHOWS AND LITERARY EVENINGS—

Only one film show falls within the period under review, on October the 29th. We were able to show a very famous Alpine Sports film taken by Mr. Dahinden of Zurich, with the usual success of a crammed King George's Hall twice during the afternoon. I would refer again, with the deepest gratitude, to the wholehearted appreciation of our Minister and his colleagues at the Legation, of this particular activity of our Group; M. Paravicini was again present and gave a short address to the audience. In this connection, we also have to be very thankful to the S.S.E. of Berne for their constant and ready disposition to forward us suitable films at an extremely low cost. A red letter day in our programme was the literary evening of Mr. Alfred Huggenberger's on

November the 4th, in conjunction with the Swiss Orchestral Society. It was our second venture of its kind, much more successful than the first, and it has clearly pointed the way to a form of entertainment of the highest cultural value.

GENERAL ACTIVITY.—As in former years, we participated in the Swiss Sports at the end of May at Herne Hill, where our three representatives were engaged in the general duties of administration, but there was no First of August festivity of an official character. We again thankfully accepted the invitations to various banquets of our sister societies, when your President represented your Group.

The general activity during the year followed much the usual course of events, but it is worthy of note that more and more time and work is involved in the execution of administrative matters. Apart from the very considerable amount of work created by the Film Shows, and other activities, our service to the Colony at large is constantly increasing in such matters as the provision of Swiss calendars, books, informations and recommendations. Something like 2,000 posted letters give an idea of the time involved. I mention this merely because, since May 1930, we have had no paid help in the administration of the Group.

That our relations with the Minister, the Legation and our sister Societies continue to be of the most friendly character, I need not again assure you. The encouragement and co-operation which we have received during the past year from the Minister himself and his colleagues is treasured by us with sincere gratitude and will not fail to evoke in us a greater enthusiasm for our cause and a deeper patriotism.

I would not omit to express our thanks for various publications and printed matters sent to us by a number of Associations and Institutions.

We may therefore look back upon the completed year with a certain satisfaction that we have "kept things going." The ever-present crisis, although it has handicapped us sadly in some respects, has not sapped our strength, but has rather increased our determination to follow the appointed path in an even stride, and to find satisfaction in the simpler pleasures of life which are also the higher pleasures. The cultural and moral value of our activity will always stand in direct relation to the necessities of the times.

Taking this view, there is bound to be a great deal of work in front of us and we may therefore look to the future of the London Group with calm assurance. Work and service alone will be able to purify our aim and patriotic endeavour. Therefore, let us try to do better this coming year what we believe we have done well last year and let us proudly stand by our motto

HELVETICA DIGNITATE AC SECURITATE.

MENDING A CLOCK.

The following article has appeared in the "Yorkshire Evening News" under the heading "Courtesy Pays in Business."

Which is the better method in business — to be the hard, efficient go-better, impersonal, coldly conscientious, aloof; or to be helpfully friendly, efficient without crisp smartness, indicating personal interest in the affairs of clients?

There are people who stake everything on the 100 per cent. efficiency method — the cold, hard, too-busy-to-stop system and impress-them-with-speed tactics.

But there is a new feeling in commerce these days. Business men are making friends of their clients by courteous dealing. They give you the feeling that they really are interested in your requirements just as much as in the profit they are likely to make through their transaction with you.

Indeed, so painstaking are some people you feel that if you are not satisfied, the managing director, the secretary and a horde of clerks and typists will spend sleepless nights worrying over your displeasure.

At least, that was the impression created upon a friend of mine during the last few days.

A year ago he bought a travelling clock for about £3 from a Swiss firm in London. Recently it failed, and he sent it back for examination.

Apologetic.

They wrote to him almost apologising for the fact that the broken mainspring, which caused all the trouble, did not "come under the terms of the usual guarantee" and informing him that they "wrote to advise him that they would be prepared to have a new one fitted at a nominal charge of 3s. 6d."

"Will you kindly advise us whether you are agreeable; and with compliments" was the conclusion of the communication.

Slightly dazed by the kindly interest over a matter of 3s. 6d., my friend remitted the amount.

He expected the clock back when the repair had been executed. Instead, he received a second letter with courteous thanks for his money, and the advice, "We have now put in hand the fitting of the new mainspring and will complete the work as soon as possible."

It might have been a £20,000 contract with which they were dealing!

A third letter came, informing my friend, "We found when proceeding ... that the centre wheel was broken."

Sending to Switzerland.

In friendly fashion they explained that this breakage caused the mainspring trouble and added, "Unfortunately our stock of this particular type ... is exhausted ... it has therefore been necessary for us to obtain one from Switzerland ... you may rest assured that the matter will not be lost sight of," with compliments again.

And then, as if to show no inefficiency was lost in the course of this pleasant exchange of correspondence, they added a postscript, "We have just received the new part so shall be able to complete the repairs within a few days."

"Really," said my friend, "it made me feel quite sorry that I had put them to so much trouble."

This is quite understandable. The firm, of course, did not tell him that they were ordering a few gross of the wheels required for this class of clock.

And although he realised this probability, the meticulous attention they had paid to his trifling requirements impressed him so much that he has vowed them his lifelong patronage.

So which is the better method of business?

DAVOS.

Land of sunshine and of snow,
Hotels, Cafés where e're we go;
Ladies airing Seal and Mink,
Grandma's skating on the Rink.

Papas, Colonels and old Barons,
In youngish, fearless mood,
Run races, risk their brittle bones,
Convinced they are still good.

Every hill and every mountain,
Much alive with things on ski-s;
Do at times shake off and hurt them,
Those tiny harmless human fleas.

Plenty of scope for everyone,
In this happy vale of snow;
Bob for young ones, walks for old,
Endless sport for brave and bold.

Cocktails, Concerts, Pictureshows,
Alpinebahn and herds of cows;
Dinner-dances in the bars,
Thank goodness, no motor-cars.

One day we enjoyed right hearty
Our Mr. Gredigs tailing party;
He took along as perfect host,
One of his cooks, also the roast.

Installed, hard to believe it's so,
A grill on white billowy snow;
And there turned out such dainty bits,
None better could be had at Ritz.

Behold to crown this rare old fun,
Dancing to accordion began;
No wonder everyone was "ivre,"
Not from bottles, but "Joie de vivre."

Such holidays pass with feverish haste,
We can't stop, nor delay the race;
The ideal would be if such days spent,
Were all a beginning without an end.

H.E.

SCHWEIZ

PROF. BUSER'S

Voralpines Töchter - Institut
TEUFEN via St. Gallen. — Sonnenreiche
Höhenlage im Säntisgebiet.

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Französisches Zweiginstitut:
Institut pour jeunes filles,

sur VEVEY
Chexbres près LAUSANNE.

In schönster Lage des Genfer Sees.

Schweizer-Elternreferenzen in England.