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ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

OF THE

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16th 1937, AT THE TROCADERO RESTAURANT, W.I.

President : M. A. STEINMANN.

It was during a short holiday respite in the sunny south of the "old country," that I received the invitation to attend the customary Annual Banquet of the Swiss Mercantile Society.

An old adage says, that the "sun shines on the righteous ones," I am afraid I must have a very bad record, because the sun only deigned to appear for a few hours during my holiday to shed its radiant light on my countenance, and I longed to come back to the land of "rain and fog," as people "over there" will have it.

Well, the sun shone brightly enough on Saturday last, the birds were still twittering amongst the autumn leaves and a golden blue haze heralded in a lovely evening.

It was a befitting overture to the opening of the Social season of the Swiss Colony; after a brilliant day followed a brilliant night.

Having for the last few years written scores of reports about Banquets, Dances and Dinners, I expected that everything would go "according to plan," and that nothing out of the ordinary would happen, after all Banquets are all much alike, we have the usual toasts and we have the speeches, which with all due respect to the orators, vary very little from year to year. Well, on the whole all went off as on previous occasions, and yet there was a difference, everybody seemed to me especially happy and the ladies simply excelled in the brilliance of their smiles. Was it because it was the first opportunity of meeting again in a friendly circle, or was it the marvellous English climate which had put everybody into such a good mood?

I have professed quite candidly on previous occasions, much to the annoyance of some of my friends in "other circles," that the Swiss Mercantile Society is one of my "first loves" and I am glad to say, that we have been faithful to each other, no mean achievement in these days of short lived affection, and therefore meeting an old sweetheart is always a joyful event.

As it behoves a Society which consists principally of business men, the reception by Mr. Steinmann, the young President of the Society, started promptly to time. Mr. J. J. Schneider, who is the happy possessor of powerful vocal cords announced the visitors and guests, a handshake and a bow ushered them into the ante-room. Those who paid for their tickets had also to pay for their cocktails and those who came *à titre gratuit* could indulge at a separate bar without putting their hands into their pocket, it sounds paradoxical but it is nevertheless true.

After everyone had partaken of an *apéritif*, and after all the Ladies had finished criticising the dresses of some of their "sisters," it was announced that dinner was served. The Banqueting hall quickly filled up and when Monsieur Paravicini, the Swiss Minister, accompanied by Madame Paravicini and M. Steinmann, the President of the S.M.S. entered, they received a great ovation. After grace was said by Pastor Hahn an army of black coated waiters got busy.

Perusing the Menu I found it quite attractive, tasting it, I found it even more so. It started with a "Choix d'Hors d'Oeuvre Riche" or "Grape Fruit au Kirsch" my only disappointment was in the first course, as the waiter categorically refused to let me have the Kirsch without the Grape Fruit. Then a "Consomé Double aux Pâtes de Génés Witchima" followed, I did not know what "Witchima" stood for, but whatever "Ma" it was good.

The menu then took a fishy turn, and an excellent "Turbotin aux Moules et Crevettes" was served very hot, here again I was unlucky, the "moules" which were sprinkled very liberally over my "Turbotin" must have swallowed the "Crevettes" so "the poor boy had none." As a special compliment to the many financiers who were present, a "Ris de Veau à la Financière" was brought along with "Pommes Olivettes," the next course was again meant for lesser personalities and consisted of "Poulet du Surrey rôti au Cresson," with "Salade d'Hiver" the latter was the only indication that winter was approaching. The last course was "Le Turban Glacé Mondain," and as by then the Hall had become extremely hot, I should have liked to have put the "Turban" on my noble brow, but

my table companion would not let me. Contrary to custom I have given here the full menu, partly to show my readers what an excellent fare the Trocadero had provided and partly to spite those who would not come along, just to make their mouths water and to make them aware of what they missed.

Before the café was served an image all in ice was wheeled in, some said it was a chamois others would have it that it was a "Steinbock" whilst some malicious reveller said it was a goat. I am not proposing to go into the pros and cons of the case, all I can say is, that it was very cold, as it was put "on view" right at my back for several minutes.

After the animal, who did not seem to enjoy the heat too much had disappeared, the toasts were announced with my old friend the hammer; it is a nasty thing and I don't like it, what is wrong with a little bell? A bell always brings back happy memories, think of the wedding bells, the Xmas and New Years bells or the bell which announces the arrival of a cheque, etc.

The toasts to His Majesty The King and Switzerland were given by the Swiss Minister and were spontaneously received by the entire company.

The next speaker was the President of the Society, Mr. A. Steinmann, who on rising from his seat was heartily cheered, and as he is a bachelor, I noticed all the young ladies clapped voraciously, which is quite natural, one can never tell when he will get caught.

When silence was restored the President addressed the gathering as follows:

Once again, as President of the S.M.S. it gives me great pleasure in welcoming you all at this our Annual Banquet. Unless my eyes and ears have deceived me, you have enjoyed the first part of our evening and I trust you are now revived and sufficiently stimulated to proceed presently with full vigour to the serious business of the evening — the dance.

I wish in particular to extend a very hearty welcome to our Minister, Monsieur Paravicini, whom we are again glad to see in the Chair, and Mme. Paravicini whom we have the honour to have also with us. I should like to take this opportunity, Sir, of reminding you of the debt of gratitude the Society owes to you of the very great personal interest you and Mme. Paravicini always take in its activities.

It will fall to the task of a later speaker to greet our guests, but I anticipate one point by saying how glad we are to see in our midst Mr. De Brunner, one of our Trustees.

I am aware you desire me, on this occasion, to give you a brief outline of the activities of our Society. The financial position of the Society is sound and our sincere appreciation and gratitude is due to the Swiss Authorities for the generous help which they have continued to give us. A word of thanks is also due to those firms and individuals who continue so faithfully to subscribe to the educational work of the Society.

Improved economic conditions have made it possible for a larger number of our compatriots to come to our College than in recent years. — Admissions since January 1st 400, compared with 345 in 1936.

External Examinations in connection with examinations held by the Institute of Commerce (Advanced stage):—

English	Commerce				
No. Cand.	1st	2nd	No. Cand.	1st	2nd
	cl.	cl.		cl.	cl.
45	23	22	41	27	14

No candidate failed.

Evening classes: 42 classes with 351 students (not final) compared with 41 classes in 1936 with 305 students.

Following the success of last year's experiment we again organised a Holiday Course during the summer and it was gratifying to see it patronised by University students and teachers who would not ordinarily have come to our College. This Holiday Course received the full support of the Minister who delivered the inaugural address.

The College arranged an "August the First" Celebration at which function Dr. Rezzonico addressed the students.

The sporting activities of the College culminated in our victory over the Metropolitan Police at Imber Court when we carried off the Athletic Cup. Mr. de Bourg has shown keen interest in these athletic meetings.

Among the many visitors to the College during the year we had the pleasure to welcome Mr. Gruber, our Zentralpräsident.

We again arranged a series of lectures in connection with the monthly meetings of the Society and have been privileged to welcome a number of highly distinguished speakers. These evenings were well attended by our own members and their friends.

The House Committee has continued its work of brightening the appearance of our lecture rooms.

Some of you may not be aware that a Philatelic Section has been started. It is good to see from the unbounded enthusiasm with which this section has commenced its activities that the other demands of our Society upon its members are not too exhausting.

It now remains for me to thank all those who have so loyally and patiently worked for the benefit of our Society and the College.

The confidence expressed at last year's Annual Banquet has, I think, been justified both in this country and our own. There has been a steady economic improvement that has been reflected in every sphere. In the many intermediate ups and downs with which those of us who are associated with the commercial and financial markets are unfortunately so very well acquainted, it is the factors of wider vision and international understanding which are so often wanting and which cause the ultimate difficulties. Here then lies one of the important tasks of our Society as a medium for the development of a wider international vision, serving thereby the interest of Switzerland and mankind in general.

In conclusion I reiterate my welcome to all present and hope you will all leave with pleasant memories of a very happy evening.

After this short speech well-rendered, there was much clapping and everyone felt proud to belong to a Society where the "financial position was sound." I noticed that some of the "non paying" guests at once ordered a second bottle, which showed a certain spirit of initiative.

It was then announced that the Honorary President of the Society, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Swiss Minister was going to speak. The long and sincere applause which greeted this announcement proved once again how popular the head of the Colony has become.

The Minister, after having expressed his satisfaction and pleasure to preside once again over the Banquet of the Society in company of Madame Paravicini, who had only returned at 4 o'clock the same day from her customary visit to Scotland, mentioned that he has recently returned from a prolonged stay in our country. "Many of you," he said "have had the opportunity of making your own observations as well, and an exchange of views when we sit down presently at the small tables will, I am sure, prove quite a fruitful form of entertainment." The Minister continued his speech by saying:—

I do not know the impressions gained by those of you who have been on tour in our country this summer or autumn, but I think my own may on the whole be considered as quite favourable. I am saying this frankly right at the beginning of my short address; as you know it is not my habit to give an optimistic display on such an occasion simply because I may happen to have had one or two happy experiences or because it is more convenient to make a bright speech than a gloomy one.

In the course of my stay in Switzerland I met all kinds of people with whom I exchanged views, and I kept an eye open all the time to see how things were looking in the various parts and in the different fields. —

First I saw a good many of my colleagues at the *Conférence des Ministres de Suisse en congrès*, when for two days we had time to talk about things in Switzerland and things abroad, amongst diplomats and the members of their Government.

Then I visited the Comptoir Suisse at Lausanne on the official day, and I was also at the principal assembly of the "Suisse à l'étranger," which took place in Berne under the presidency of our friend, Professor Lätt.

On each of these occasions I heard a speech, invariably remarkable, made by the President of the Confederation, and, of course, in each instance I did not fail to partake of the equally remarkable and most copious Banquet that followed.

Then, as is only natural, I also discussed certain questions with the various Departments at the "Bundeshaus." This I should not even mention were it not for the fact that amongst other things I had a conference with the heads of the offices specially concerned with the employment of Swiss abroad. On this occasion I heard some appreciative comments upon the activity of the Head of your Employment Department; I was by no means unprepared for this, but such praise is always pleasant to hear. Without going into details I can tell you, and M. Hilfiker, who was present at the conference, can tell you too, that there are chances of still improving the position regarding the employment of Swiss in England.

Now as I said that things are satisfactory in Switzerland I ought to give you at least a few instances. But statistics are a dry dish and I am not going to offer you much of it. Nevertheless, two or three figures compiled for your benefit by the Head of my Commercial Division should perhaps be mentioned:

First we have unemployment. The present figure of registered unemployed is 52,000 as against something over 80,000 last year — an improvement of 35%.

Secondly, the tourist traffic, both last winter and this summer, is back at pre-crisis numbers, although it is perhaps not yet as remunerative as formerly.

Thirdly, the railway traffic shows 1,300,000 more travellers this July than in July, 1936, an improvement of 14½%, and the transport of goods shows an improvement of 28%.

To these figures could be added favourable records in many branches of industry, so that we are certainly not going too far in stating that Switzerland is about to turn, or has happily turned, the corner of the World Crisis.

But when I say this, mind you, I am speaking about the crisis which started in 1929, and which was then a purely, or practically purely economic crisis.

Unfortunately I have to point this out specially, because to-day we are faced once more with a crisis equally alarming although this time mainly political.

Steady Economic progress would seem to be comparatively easy to-day for our country if there were no political difficulties. Yet countries like ours, that are virtually outside the political turmoil, can do a great deal to have a salutary influence on matters in general.

Like our British friends, we are all for bi-lateral arrangements with other countries. We have been successful just lately more than once in this way, for instance, with the U.S.A., with France, and I see no reason why an improvement of this kind in the Anglo-Swiss trade should not materialise in a near future.

No two countries could be better suited to give each other, even under present conditions, the greatest possible business chances than Switzerland and Great Britain, these two countries which — in that unsettled state of world affairs — are considered by many economists as being, with perhaps one or possibly two other countries, the most stable centres of world trade.

The orator was greeted with loud applause on resuming the "Fauteuil Présidentiel." M. G. Jenne a member of the Council then greeted the official guests and the Ladies.

He expressed his pleasure that so many representatives of Sister Societies and institutions had come to share the evening with the members of the Society. He mentioned that the following were present:

Mr. and Mrs. Boehringer, City Swiss Club.
Mr. and Mrs. Campart, Société de Secours Mutuals.

Messrs. Eusebio and Orelli, Unione Ticinese.
Mr. and Mrs. Dupraz, Fonds de Secours.

Mr. and Mrs. Suter, Nouvelle Société Helvétique.

Mr. Brun, senior and junior, Swiss Club Birmingham.

Messrs. Dick and Pellet, Swiss Orchestral Society.

Mr. De Brunner, Trustee of the S.M.S.
M. Rezzonico, Counsellor of Legation.

M. Hilfiker, Vice-Consul and Chancellor of Legation.

Pasteur Hahn and Mrs. Hahn, Swiss Church.
Mr. and Mrs. Stauffer, Swiss Observer.
Mr. and Mrs. Kessler, London correspondent of the N.Z.Z.

Dr. Egli, London correspondent of the "Bund."

Mr. Jenne, who is an old friend of mine then paid a glowing tribute to the Ladies, he said such a lot of nice things about them, that I began to wonder if he really was sincere, and if he really meant what he said, why on earth he had remained a bachelor. As a matter of fact, I quite expected that in the course of the evening he would announce that at last he had said valet to his bachelorhood and was going to marry one of those charming, lovely, radiant creatures of whom he had spoken with such enthusiasm. Nothing happened though, but if he does not do something in this matter soon, I for one will refuse to listen to him, should he again eulogize the Ladies; not that I do not agree with him in everything he said, but how on earth should he know "all about it?" This is a hint and a threat at the same time.

It was left to Mr. Boehringer, President of the City Swiss Club, to voice on behalf of the guests his thanks for the hospitality extended to them, it was noticed with consternation that the speaker said that he did not enjoy the evening, but all was smiles again, when he explained that the reason of his statement was due to the fact that he had to make a speech, and that he would have preferred to sit at a somehow less conspicuous position amongst his friends far from the top table; where he would be allowed to criticise more freely without the risk of getting into hot water. The applause with which his utterances were greeted proved that the members did not take his criticism too seriously.

The last speech on the list was made on behalf of Charity by Mr. M. Schneider, Hon. Secretary of the Society.

His sincere appeal, not to forget our less fortunate compatriots was successful, an amount of £32 8s. 0d. having been collected.

This concluded the official part of the evening, and let us say with a grateful heart that the speeches were all "short and sweet."

Dancing, intermingled with two cabaret turns then took place until midnight, when everybody, still smiling, left the Trocadero with the feeling of having spent a happy and enjoyable evening. May this first big function in the Colony prove a happy augury for the future Swiss events of the Social Season.

ST.

UNION HELVETIA. Memorial Service 1937.

Members of the Union Helvética Society and relatives of deceased members who are buried in the Society's graves in Hendon Park Cemetery held their annual memorial service on Sunday the 17th October, 1937. Over forty persons attended and many wreaths were placed on the graves by friends, relatives and the Society.

Short services were conducted by the Reverend C. Th. Hahn, who offered prayers for both the dead and the living; and, in his address, gave comfort to all who must follow those who have gone on before.

Men stood beside these graves bar-headed and in prayer; sorrow reflected in women's eyes. Men and women, side by side, conscious of that something so little understood; — mysterious, incomprehensible, yet unbounded good; each in turn gazed wistfully at the sky; for each one knew, in time, they too must die ere they could reach the realm above where all is Justice, Beauty, Truth and Love.

H. L. Stubbs,
Secretary.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, October 26th, at 6.30 for 7 o'clock — Swiss Rifle Team — Farewell Dinner to M. W. de Bourg, Counsellor of Legation, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1. (See announcement).

Wednesday, November 3rd, at 7.30 p.m. — Société de Secours Mutuals — Monthly Meeting — at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Saturday, November 13th, — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — at 2 and 4 o'clock — Film Show: "A Travers la Suisse," at King George's Hall, Caroline Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.C.1. Calendars on sale.

Friday, November 19th — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — at "Swiss House" 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1 at 7.45 p.m. Monthly Meeting to be followed by a causerie by J. Eusebio, Esq., on: "A few 'Ticinesi' worth talking about."

Friday, November 26th — City Swiss Club — Annual Banquet and Ball — at the Grosvenor House, Park Lane, W.1.

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In order to avoid disappointment, customers are requested to place their orders early.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

L'ASSEMBLÉE MENSUELLE

aura lieu Mardi 2 Novembre au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1. et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

ORDRE DU JOUR:

Procès-verbal.	Démissions.
Admissions.	Banquet Annuel
	Divers.

Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595).

Le Comité.

Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762).

(Langue française).

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Dimanche 24 octobre :

11h. — Prédication : Mr. Exbrayat.

11h. — Ecole de Dimanche.

6h.30 — Prédication : M. le pasteur Christol.

Le Pasteur Emery reçoit le Mercredi de 11 heures à midi 30, à l'église, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2. S'adresser à lui pour tous les actes pastoraux. (Téléphone : Museum 3100, domicile : Foyer Suisse, 12, Upper Bedford Place, W.C.1.)

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 24. Oktober 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorprobe.

Anfragen wegen Religions-bezw. Confirmanden-stunden und Amtshandlungen sind erbeten an den Pfarrer der Gemeinde : C. Th. Hahn, 43, Priory Road, Bedford Park, W.4 (Telephon : Chiswick 4156). Sprechstunden : Dienstag 12-2 Uhr in der Kirche.