

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK

Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom

Band: - (1942)

Heft: 996

Rubrik: Swiss Mercantile Society

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 13.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

difficult to apportion to each reason its relative importance and its interrelation with the others. At the end of our thinking we stand in all humility and wonder at the mighty wisdom of our forefathers.

For us Swiss in Great Britain, it is difficult indeed to be neutral as a Swiss should be:— We believe in the righteousness of defending freedom and democracy; our convictions of right and wrong cover precisely those of the British people; so many of our sons are fighting in the British ranks, and we cannot ourselves always keep cool the martial blood of our forbears in our veins. Even if our heads are, can our hearts be neutral? There is fortunately direction in what our poet Spitteler said during the last war: —“Wohlan, füllen wir angesichts dieser Unsumme von internationalem Leid unsere Herzen mit schweigender Ergriffenheit und unsere Seelen mit Andacht, und vor allem, nehmen wir den Hut ab; dann stehen wir auf dem richtigen neutralen, dem Schweizerpunkt.” This advice, at first sight, seems curiously negative, but it does in reality lead us directly to the one great service which we as a nation can do for humanity to-day, and for the practice of which we possess the ideal instrument of our own making in the shape of the Internat. Red Cross Organisation in Geneva.

Our Federal President Wetter, in a public speech in Zurich on November the 21st, reminded his hearers that Swiss neutrality imposed upon them the duties of caution in critique, charity to humanity through the work of the Red Cross Organisation, and the example of fraternity between nations as exemplified in our own confederation. And he admits that even at home, the practice of absolute neutrality is very difficult indeed.

So let our good resolutions be few and restricted and for that reason, no doubt they will stand a better chance of being performed. Let us be loyal above all things and to all things we owe loyalty. Let us preserve our broad, sane patriotism of the Swiss, not of the Thurgauer, or the Vaudois, or the St. Galler or the Valaisan. Let us keep bright the flame of that yearning in our hearts which hurts so much, to be back in our mountains, on the pastures, on our shimmering lakes, in our green forests, and in our beautiful old world villages and towns.

In closing this report, I am happy to extend the thanks of our Group to all those who have, with their assistance or their sympathy, enriched our work during 1941. In the first place, these thanks are due to our Minister, whose presence here is such an encouragement to us, and who has given us so many proofs of his approval and sympathy; to the Swiss Mercantile Society, our good friends and landlords; to our lecturer in chief, Mr. G. J. Keller, for his invaluable gift of accurate knowledge. I am exceedingly sorry that he has been prevented from being with us to-day. Our thanks also go to our honorary secretary Mr. Cesar Campart for his most excellent minutes of the proceedings which will afford later generations of Swiss in London most useful information of the happenings of the present time; and to that other honoured secretary of ours who does her work so assiduously behind the curtain and renders such great services to the Group, Mrs. Clara Muller.

A. Fred. SUTER.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House, on Saturday, January 24th. Mr. J. J. Boos presided.

There were three applications for membership, one resignation and five members, now permanently resident in Switzerland, had their membership transferred to Swiss Sections.

The Chairman informed the Meeting that the English course held at Frohurg had proved a success and a second course had already been started. These courses are held under the auspices of the S.K.V. and subsidised by the Swiss Government. They are run on the lines of the S.M.S. College and must be considered a war-time measure designed to replace the courses held in London, as far as this is possible.

It was decided to hold the Annual General Meeting at Swiss House on Saturday, February 14th, at 2 p.m. The Chairman expressed the hope that members would be present in large numbers.

The meeting was followed by a film show. Unfortunately, the attendance was not as good as usual, no doubt due to the severe weather. Those who did brave the elements did not regret it for a single moment, for they were treated to a most instructive and entertaining afternoon by Mr. A. Kern, Export Manager of the well-known American firm of Standard Brands Ltd., a compatriot who was introduced to the audience by Mr. J. J. Pfaendler as a traveller whose business had taken him to many countries. Mr. Kern on his journeys recorded his impressions in a number of films. He took the audience on a tour round the Mediterranean, to countries which are now often in the limelight. One reads and hears a great deal of the remotest places these days, but it is not always easy to imagine what they look like. Mr. Kern filled many gaps in our knowledge, both with pictures and words, for he gave a running commentary on all the films he showed. The journey started with Spain, approaching the Pyrenees from the north and thence to Barcelona, with its majestic harbour and to Madrid, famous for its bull-fights. We had all heard of Matadors, Pica-dors and Toreadors, but few of us had seen a bull fight on the screen. Mr. Kern had very ably filmed a bull fight and we were able to see the whole process from beginning to end. It is rather a bloodthirsty sport, but nevertheless very thrilling. When viewing the many fine buildings of Barcelona and Madrid, we could not help wondering what these looked like after the Civil War. The first film ended with scenes on the world famous beach of San Sebastian, where holiday makers were surf-riding in canoes. The next film took us on a trip from Italy to Egypt. In turn we saw the ports of Genoa and Naples, passing Vesuvius and the isle of Capri. After crossing the Mediterranean, Alexandria was reached, where the English fleet was in port. The film was taken in 1936, during the time of the Abyssinian crisis. Of particular interest was a visit to a Swiss cement factory at Tourah on the Nile. The third film depicted a journey from Port Said to Rhodes, the Italian island in the Dodecanese, thence through the Dardanelles to Istanbul, Gallipoli and on to Athens. Most interesting was a trip through the Corinth Canal. Finally this journey concluded at Brindisi and Venice, town of the gondolas. Next we saw a film on Palestine and Syria, with many famous sites in the Holy Land portrayed in vivid colour.

There were views of Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Beyrouth, etc., with numerous scenes of Eastern life. The film show was wound up with a journey from Andalusia via Gibraltar to Tangiers, Fez, Algiers and Tunis.

At the end of his most interesting talk and film show, Mr. Kern was accorded a very hearty vote of thanks, proposed by Mr. Pfaendler and enthusiastically endorsed by the audience.

P.S. — Please note the date of the Annual General Meeting — February 14th, 2 p.m., at Swiss House.

W. B.

SHIPPING WORRIES OF THE SWISS.

(From "Shipping World," January 14th, 1942)

As the Swiss might have foreseen, it is not too difficult a matter to buy merchant ships even in time of war, but it is not so easy to employ them during a struggle in which practically the whole civilised world is involved. The Republic now owns just under 40,000 tons of shipping, which is a much smaller fleet than the Swiss need. It has, however, been difficult to man even this small number of ships since all the maritime nations except Spain and Portugal now need all the seamen they can secure, so the crews are a very mixed lot and are not very efficient, with the usual results. Nor can the vessels be operated as cheaply as was estimated. Wages are much higher than was expected. According to the *Journal de Geneva*, in addition to food and life and accident insurance premiums, a seaman receives \$150 a month, a cook \$215, a first engineer \$340, a first officer \$360, and a master \$560. The majority of the men are unwilling to sign on without a guarantee that part of their wages will be paid to their families, which means further negotiations.

COMMUNICATED BY THE LEGATION.

18, Montagu Place,
Bryanston Square, W.1.
December 26th, 1941.

Dear Mr. Böhringer,

I have received from the Chief of the Political Department, M. le Conseiller Fédéral Pilet-Golaz, the following cable:—

"De cœur avec vous en cette veille de fête, je vous prie de transmettre à vaillante Colonie Suisse mes souhaits chaleureux de Noël."

I should be very much obliged if you would kindly publish this message in your next number of the Swiss Observer.

With my best wishes for the New Year,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

W. THURNHEER.

PERSONAL.

The many friends of Mr. S. P. Tettamanti, of 92, Maple Road, Surbiton, will be pleased to hear that he is slowly recovering from the bad accident he met with some time ago. He has now left the Surbiton Hospital where he also celebrated his seventy-fifth anniversary on Boxing Day.

We wish to join our compatriots in New York in offering Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hoehener hearty congratulations on the 20th anniversary of their marriage; they were married at the Swiss Church in London by the Rev. Wildbolz on December 23rd, 1921. Mr. Hoehener is an extremely active Member of the Swiss Colony in New York and, inter alia, President of the Board which publishes the "Swiss-American," the monthly journal of the North American Swiss Alliance.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

The Editor wishes to heartily reciprocate the good wishes contained in the many letters received from subscribers and is gratified to learn that the "Swiss Observer" is passed on to a large circle of friends. He also has pleasure in specially thanking the following for extra amounts added to the usual subscription:— C. Fügistall, A. E. Grau, Mlle. C. Rougemont, R. Schmid, H. Küng, L. Forrer, G. Widmer, O. A. Dettwiler, J. Paravicini, J. F. Meier, M. Meyer, C. Kunzle, W. Eichenberger, A. Hinderling, J. H. Magron, E. Lucca, J. Tache, Chas. Rutz.

Our next issue will appear on February 27th.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

E. Fankhauser, L. Schobinger, W. Studer, Miss Späni, E. Oggier, A. C. Baume, G. L. Guggenheim, H. Steiner, R. Sanger, M. Zullig, W. Deutsch, Mrs. Honegger, H. Spahlinger, P. Bornant, Dr. Ch. Hagenbach, H. Ott, H. Koch, W. P. Weibel, E. Hungerbühler, Mrs. Portman, H. L. Charnaux, Jos. Ecker, A. Bleiker, Mrs. A. Dimier, H. Huber, E. G. Hantsch, K. Pluss, C. Fügistall, F. Isler, E. Flury, J. Hausermann, J. J. Schneider, Mrs. A. J. Whitiker, E. Hentsch, C. Schorno, R. Schmid, Miss C. Rougemont, H. E. Messmer, H. Kung, G. H. Smith, G. Widmer, O. A. Dettwiler, E. Reichenbach, Alf. Bloch, J. Paravicini, Chas. Rutz, G. Gysi, J. J. Wetter, F. M. Rohr, Miss M. Flury, R. H. Stoll, Geo. Bouverat, F. J. Meier, Miss Dupuis, H. Wälti, J. Obrist, Miss E. Jones, J. Dubs, G. E. De Brunner, M. E. Perrenoud, M. Paur, H. M. Ochsner, Miss I. Wyss, E. Gassmann, Nestanglo, Swiss Club Manchester, E. H. Muller, Theo Bruderer, C. Kunzle, A. Hinderling, Bonnet, J. H. Magron, E. Lucca, J. Tache.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, February 7th, at 12.45 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1. (See Advt.).

Saturday, February 14th at 2 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Annual General Meeting — (see report) at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, February 21st, at 2 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Members Meeting to be followed by Mr. G. Keller's "Comments on Current Events," at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.