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Mass, Father Hanifin and his two colleagues officiating. The Swiss Minister was represented by M. De Jenner, Counsellor of Legation. It was chiefly the staff, past and present, of "Pagani's" who had come to pay their last respects to the "Padrun," and also the great majority of the Ticinese colony of London. Beautiful floral tributes were laid on the coffin; we counted twenty-five wreaths from members of the family, friends, staff and societies. Afterwards the funeral procession passed by the scarred walls of "Pagani's," on its way to the deceased's parish Church, St. Edward the Confessor, at Golders Green. Here another sun Requiem Mass was celebrated, Canon Sims officiating, with the Right Rev. Edward Myers, Bishops-Auxiliary of Westminster, and Right Rev. Mgr. Canon Joseph Tynan, in attendance. The congregation here was composed of relatives, friends, neighbours and the deputations from the Societies of the Colony. The sad procession then went on to St. Mary's Cemetery, Kensal Green, where the mortal remains were laid to rest in the Upper Catacomb to await transference to the family burial place at Magadino when favourable opportunity offers.

From these hospitable columns we renew our sincere condolences to the bereaved family, particularly to his widow, Signora Caterina, to his sons and daughters, and to his beloved mother, Signora Linda, who survives him at the robust age of 79, and assure them of our deepest sympathy in their great sorrow.

Amongst the large congregation attending the services we noticed, apart from the chief mourners, Mr. William Notari, Mr. and Mrs. F. Notari, A. Villa, F. Morosi, J. Eusebio, H. DeMaria, A. Morosi, E. Camozzi, C. Ferrari, C. Bolla, C. Berti, D. Lunghi, F. M. Gamper, W. L. Krucker, J. J. Pfaendler, W. Deutsch, Louis Chapuis, Carlo Chapuis, C. Frei, J. J. Boos, L. Jobin, A. Stauffer and P. F. Boehringer.

### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Eleventh Ordinary General Meeting of the Swiss Mercantile Society (Limited by Guarantee) was held at Swiss House on Saturday, February 14th. (It was the eleventh General Meeting since the formation of the Company and the 54th since the foundation of the Society in 1888).

Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair and over forty members were present, among whom were many Veteran Members and some who had joined the Society only recently.

The Secretary read the notice convening the meeting.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman referred to the death of a great compatriot and benefactor of the Swiss Colony, Mr. Arthur Meschini, Proprietor of Pagani's Restaurant. In a few well chosen words, the President paid tribute to the deceased and the meeting rose in his memory.

The accounts for the period under review, as submitted to the meeting, were elucidated by the auditor, Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A. As was to be expected in the circumstances, the accounts showed a considerable loss, particularly as no subsidy had as yet been received, whilst there was still a heavy expenditure to be met in connection with Swiss House, contracted

through the pre-war lease. A motion to receive and adopt the accounts as submitted was passed without dissension, and the auditor, Mr. Green, was re-appointed.

The President then reported on the activities of the Society during the past year. After briefly alluding to the momentous happenings in the world affairs, he referred to the special position of Switzerland, both from an economic and political point of view. He expressed the hope that our country might be spared the ravages of war and thus be able to continue its humanitarian work.

As in 1940, so again in 1941, the work of the Society was greatly restricted. Nevertheless, the London Section carried on and the following is a brief résumé of its activities as reported by the President.

*Membership.* There were five admissions and eleven resignations. Of the latter, however, six were transfers to Swiss Sections.

*Meetings.* The Society, the Council and the General Purposes Committee met regularly on Saturday afternoons during the winter months and on Wednesday evenings in the summer. In spite of many difficulties and restrictions the meetings were, generally speaking, well attended. Various lectures and film shows on topical subjects proved a great success and helped to keep the interest alive.

*Educational.* All educational activities remained suspended. Great interest, however, was shown in the establishment of an English Centre at Frohburg near Olten, on the lines of the S.M.S. College. The Centre is to replace the College during the period of emergency. Its formation serves to emphasise the necessity and usefulness of the latter as an institution of national importance. May the day not be too far distant when the S.M.S. College will again open its portals to our young compatriots.

*Employment Department.* Under the able management of Mr. J. Pfaendler, the Employment Department carries on its activities at Swiss House. It is worthy to record that the Department has placed over 20,000 applicants, but present conditions are making Mr. Pfaendler's task more and more difficult.

*Headquarters S.K.V.* Despite difficulties of communication, the Society kept in close contact with Headquarters. It followed with interest the drive for new members which has resulted in the membership of the whole association reaching the imposing figure of 50,000. Unfortunately, special circumstances did not allow the London Section to contribute towards these efforts.

*Swiss House.* The lease of Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square expires in March 1942 and in view of the uncertain situation, the Trustees and the Council do not deem it advisable to renew the lease, but only to retain No. 35, Fitzroy Square, i.e., the original Swiss House, which will offer sufficient accommodation for the S.M.S., as well as the affiliated Societies which have their headquarters at Swiss House.

*Finance.* The President in his report mentioned that for 1941 no subsidy had been received from the Swiss Government, but that a petition had been forwarded to our authorities, who, it is hoped, will give it their favourable consideration. As all the educational activities were entirely suspended during last year, no appeal was made to the many business firms and friends of the Society both here and in Switzer-

land, who for so many years contributed towards the expenses of the College. In thanking the donors and contributors most heartily for their support in the past, the Chairman expressed the hope that their help could again be enlisted when normal activities were resumed.

**Conclusion.** In concluding his report, the Chairman thanked the Swiss Minister, Dr. W. Thurnheer, for the interest he has shown in the Society and the Staff of the Legation for their support and assistance. He also expressed his appreciation of the loyal support and co-operation from the members of the Society, the Council and the Committee in trying circumstances.

The adoption of the Chairman's report was passed with a hearty vote of thanks.

The President then vacated the Chair and Mr. A. Stauffer, a former President and Hon. Member, was elected Chairman pro tem. to conduct the elections. He paid a very sincere tribute to the President who had so ably guided the Society during the past three years, a most difficult period. By his immense efforts and undying optimism he had kept the flag proudly flying and Mr. Stauffer moved that Mr. Boos be re-elected for another term of office, which was duly seconded and passed with prolonged acclamation. All other retiring members of the Council and the General Purposes Committee had offered themselves for re-election and as no further nominations were received, they were declared duly elected without opposition.

The proceedings then terminated.

#### CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 1942.

**Council:** Chairman: Mr. J. J. Boos; Vice-Chairman: Mr. W. Meier. Trustees: Messrs. G. E. De Brunner, W. Eichenberger, E. Steiner. Members: Messrs. Ch. Chapuis, R. Chappuis, G. E. De Brunner (Trustee), O. Grob, E. Hardmeier, M. Heilinger, G. Jenne, L. W. Krucker, J. J. Pfaendler, A. C. Stahelin, A. Steinmann.

**General Purposes Committee:** President: Mr. J. J. Boos, Vice-President: Messrs. W. Meier and L. W. Krucker; Hon. Secretary: Mr. R. Chappuis; Hon. Treasurer: Mr. M. Heilinger. Members: Messrs. W. Burren, W. Fuchs, R. Seun and F. Streit.

**Auditor:** Mr. Percy H. Green, F.C.A.

**Secretary:** Mr. J. J. Schneider, F.I.A.C.

**Press Reporter:** Mr. W. Burren.

**Delegate to the Advisory Board of the Employment Department:** Mr. Ch. Chapuis.

**Delegates to the Swiss Sports Committee:** Messrs. R. Chappuis and F. von Bergen.

**Delegate to the Nouvelle Société Helvétique:** Mr. F. Streit.

The next Monthly Meeting of the Society will be held at Swiss House on Saturday, March 14th at 2 p.m. This will be the last meeting with the S.M.S. in full possession of Swiss House. The cosy Members' Room and some of the larger rooms upstairs will be available for games of cards and table-tennis, darts, etc. The Committee hopes that many members will avail themselves of this last opportunity. Philatelists will also have a room placed at their disposal. Please, therefore, reserve March 14th for the S.M.S.

W.B.

## RECENT SWISS RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

(*"Modern Transport," 14th February, 1942.*)

Considerable attention has been attracted by a succession of serious railway accidents which took place on the Swiss railways during 1941, notably at Piano Tondo Tunnel on the Gotthard line and near Veytoux-Chillon on the Lausanne-Brigue line, Swiss Federal Railways, and at Kiesen station on the Berne-Thun section of the Lötschberg route, also on the Federal system but involving a Berne-Lötschberg-Simplon Railway express. Official comment on the causes of these three accidents is guarded and very scanty.

This reticence is not unnatural in the case of the Piano Tondo and Veytoux disasters. It will be remembered that in the former instance a freight train ran away on the gradient descending to Giornico, causing great damage and a considerable fire in line-side buildings before the locomotive was finally halted by a collision with another train. The causes of the runaway, which took place on July 29th, were apparently inexplicable. It is scarcely possible for even a heavy train to run away with one of the standard Swiss Federal electric locomotives as did a French troop train in the very disastrous accident near Modane in the last war. The French train, it may be remembered, was headed by an old steam locomotive lacking the tremendous brake power of the modern electric, and its own brakes failed as it gained momentum.

The original causes of the accident to a goods train on the old Jura-Simplon line between Lausanne and Brigue on September 25th are likewise obscure, but there are outward features of the occurrence resembling those of two cases in Belgium before the German invasion, when mines placed for defensive purposes were accidentally exploded, one by lightning and the other by a straying cow. No information as definite as this is forthcoming from Switzerland, save that the line in question was mined. The published facts are these: On the date in question; at 4.29 p.m., mines placed under the roadbed exploded in front of goods train No. 5415 as it was passing ordinary passenger train No. 1430 on the curve by Castle Chillon on the shores of Lake Geneva. The passenger train had left the small station of Veytoux-Chillon a minute previously.

The explosion produced a huge crater, into which the freight train, proceeding westwards, plunged headlong. It was found that Driver Oppelguier, who was driving this train, had made a full application of the brakes on the instant of the explosion. He died of his injuries shortly afterwards. Damage to permanent way and equipment was very severe; rails and overhead contact equipment were festooned over adjoining trees and retaining walls, and the crater completely engulfed the large 2-D-1 (4-8-2) electric locomotive No. 10894 and the wreckage of 15 wagons, the latter having been completely destroyed. Some of the wreckage of this train was thrown into the adjacent lake.

Passenger train No. 1430 escaped destruction by a matter of seconds, as the mines exploded behind its last vehicle. Guard Plancherel was killed by falling debris, which, together with blast, caused additional serious damage within a radius of some 80 yds. The station-master was blown out on to the platform from his office, which immediately after was penetrated by a