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60th ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

of the

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

on

Saturday, November 6th, 1948, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1

In the Chair: W. MEIER, President

The Swiss Mercantile Society has, on reaching the age of sixty, passed another milestone in its history.

As anniversaries do not happen every day, it is only right and proper that they should be celebrated in a befitting manner. It seems hardly ten years ago that the Society commemorated its Golden Jubilee on Friday and Saturday, 15th and 16th October, 1938, at Pagani's Restaurant and at the Trocadero, and yet so much has happened in that short time. The last war, with its ravages, its miseries and sorrows has also left its scars on this institution, but even in the darkest hour the flag has never been lowered and with an interminable will the work, often under trying circumstances, has been carried on.

This 60th Anniversary celebration was therefore also an acknowledgement of gratitude to all those who so valiantly carried on, whilst the hurricane swept over the four continents of the globe. It was in the real sense of the word a happy family party, devoid of any stiffness and it was good to see, that many of the old members, amongst them three veterans of more than fifty years membership, turned up to participate at the birthday luncheon. It has been my good fortune to attend three conspicuous anniversaries of the Swiss Mercantile Society, namely the 25th, 50th and now the 60th and with "a little bit of luck" I hope to attend a fourth one, but that rests in other hands.—

The Party started with a reception by the President and Mrs. W. Meier in the Foyer of the Dorchester Hotel; amongst the notable guests who shook hands with them, were the Swiss Minister and Madame de Torrenté, the members of the Swiss Delegation of the S.K.V., who had especially travelled to London to wish the birthday child "many happy returns of the day," members of the Legation, and Presidents and representatives of various sister societies and institutions as well as of the Swiss Press. Many an old friendship was renewed with a warm handshake, and many an event of bygone years was recalled with gaiety and laughter.

Having been duly "fortified" by cocktails in a great variety, the company adjourned to the Banqueting Hall which was lavishly decorated with flowers and the Swiss and British emblems, the only missing object was the "birthday cake," but perhaps sixty candles on it might have been too much of a good thing.

After grace had been said by Pastor H. Blum, a very enjoyable and excellent Luncheon consisting of "Le Suprême de Fletan Bonne Femme, Le Faisan en Cocotte au Céleri, La Pomme Macaire, Les Petits Pois à la Française, La Salade de Saison, La Poire du Comice Nelusko, La Génoise and Café," was served.

The customary Toasts to H.M. The King and Swit-

erland were proposed by the President and heartily responded to.

Speeches at a birthday party can hardly be avoided, relations such as uncles and aunts, etc., are anxious to show their affection and express their best wishes, and so it was at this party; the "uncles and aunts" came principally from our own country, and it is understandable that they did not undertake this journey to "sit and watch;" as the speeches were all interesting and not unbearably long, no complaints reached my observant ears.

The first speech was delivered by the President of the Society, Mr. W. Meier, who on rising was warmly applauded.

Before referring to the present event he extended a sincere welcome to the Swiss Minister, and especially to Madame de Torrenté, who was attending for the first time a festive gathering of the Swiss Colony, expressing the wish that she would feel at home in London. (*Applause*.)

Mr. Meier then gave a short resumé of the history of the Swiss Mercantile Society, during the last 60 years, mentioning that it was also the 25th Jubilee of the College.

He said that none of the original founders were present, but mentioned that the following veteran members were still amongst us and present to-day, namely: W. Gattiker (joined in 1895), G. E. De Brunner (joined in 1897) and L. Chapuis (joined in 1898); amongst older members he named Messrs. W. Eichenberger, F. Danmeyer (former President) H. Ungricht (former President), J. Pfaundler and Ch. Chapuis.

"In spite of various setbacks at times," he said, "the Society gained slowly but surely strength, until the first world war in 1914 caused another set-back, as a great number of the members were mobilised and had to return for various periods to Switzerland."

Mr. Meier said that in 1917/18 a great opportunity arose to re-start the work which was partly interrupted during the war years; this opportunity was seized by the then President, Mr. A. Stauffer. Owing to new arrivals evening classes in six different places were started, this work was carried on by subsequent Presidents, men with vision and energy. In the early twentie's, the idea of a day school was studied, and after much preparatory work undertaken by the following Presidents: G. E. De Brunner, and A. C. Staehelin, the day school was founded in 1923 with premises at Henrietta Street, three years later (1926) "Swiss House" was taken over, where 300 students were accommodated. In 1931, the Society was turned into a Company "Limited by Guarantee" in order to safeguard the individual members. This work was

carried out by Messrs. A. C. Staehelin and J. J. Boos. From then onwards, both the College and the Society took on an aspect of "quiet development" until a set-back during the economic crisis.

Then the war of 1939 started; the College had to be closed, the staff were given notice, and "Swiss House" was used as a mobilisation and rest centre.

Mr. Meier mentioned that "Swiss House" was twice bombed during the war and on several occasions "visited" by fire bombs, which were promptly dealt with by the caretaker, Mr. Bossert.

A great tribute was paid by the President to his predecessor, Mr. J. J. Boos, who during the war and immediately after was at the Head of the Society, and who in an anxious and distressing time rendered great service to the S.M.S.

He said that in 1946 the College was re-opened, this time only in one building, thanks to the support of the Federal Authorities and generous gifts from the S.K.V. and Contributing Members.

In concluding his very interesting *exposé*, Mr. Meier apologized for having mentioned only a few names, saying that many more deserved to be mentioned. He warmly thanked his colleagues of the Council and the Committee for their devotion and loyal collaboration which was a great encouragement to him.

Loud applause greeted the words of the President.

Mr. Meier then said, that he had the pleasant task of welcoming the many guests who had accepted the Society's invitation, amongst them Mr. K. Strickler, Central President of the S.K.V., National Councillor and Madame Ph. Schmid-Ruedin, General Secretary S.K.V., Monsieur and Madame E. Losey, Secrétaire Générale Suisse Romande, S.K.V., Mr. and Mrs. Meier-Ragg, in charge of Educational matters, S.K.V.

The President said that the Society greatly appreciated their presence, which was taken as a token of respect towards the Society and especially the College.

The President also mentioned that the following guests were present:

Monsieur and Madame E. de Graffenried, Counsellor of Legation, Monsieur and Madame V. Umbrecht, Secretary of Legation, Monsieur and Madame Ch. Weibel, Secretary of Legation, Monsieur and Madame P. Clottu, Labour Counsellor, Messrs. G. E. De Brunner, E. Steiner, Trustees S.M.S., Mr. R. de Cintra, President City Swiss Club; Dr. H. W. Egli, President Nouvelle Sosieté Helvétique and London

Correspondent of the N.Z.Z.; Mr. E. Siegrist, President "Schweizerbund" and Daughter; Miss S. Morosi and Mrs. F. Mc.Kenna, representing the Unione Ticinese; Mme. M. Bolla, President Rütti Club, and Mr. Bolla; Pastor H. Blum, Pasteur C. Reverdin and Madame Reverdin, Father A. Lanfranchi, Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the Swiss Observer, and Mrs. Stauffer; Mr. Gottfried Keller, London Correspondent of the "Basler Nachrichten" and "Schweiz. Depeschen Agentur" and Mrs. Keller.

(The following were unavoidably prevented from accepting the invitation: Dr. A. Escher, Counsellor of Legation, Mr. W. Eichenberger, Trustee, S.M.S.; Dr. P. de Wolff, Chief Manager, Swiss Bank Corporation, and Mrs. de Wolff; Mr. and Mrs. C. Berti, President Unione Ticinese; Frau Pfarrer Blum.)

He wished them all an enjoyable afternoon, and concluded with a reference to the 75th Anniversary of the S.K.V. which took place in Lucerne early this year, when a strong delegation from London attended, "It was a great patriotic occasion," he said, "and we all felt proud to belong to an association which had done so much for commercial education and in a wider sense for Switzerland." He continued by saying: "May I express the wish on our own anniversary, that all the friends of the S.M.S. present here will continue to show their interest in our affairs, and that we members shall never withdraw our devotion and loyalty from it, if we do so, then surely the Swiss Mercantile Society will continue to prosper as it has done in the past. (Loud applause.)

A telegram of congratulations from Mr. Rothlisberger, a former President of the Education Committee, was read out.

The next speaker was the Swiss Minister, who was greeted with acclamation, he said:

"Je vous remercie de m'avoir donné l'occasion de célébrer aujourd'hui avec vous le 60ème anniversaire de la Swiss Mercantile Society.

60 ans, c'est pour les hommes le seuil de la vieillesse, pour votre Société c'est l'âge mûr, le plein épanouissement de votre activité. Ce n'est pas sans fierté que vous pouvez, en jettant un regard en arrière, considérer le chemin parcouru au cours de ces six décennies, dont plusieurs années de guerre durant lesquelles, avec persévérence et courage — deux vertus typiquement suisse — vous avez poursuivi inlassablement votre activité. Et encore les tâches que vous avez si brillamment remplies, ne constituent-elles pour

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vous qu'un engagement pour l'avenir. Plus à une jamais votre rôle d'éducateur correspond à une nécessité. Les temps sont difficiles, l'avenir est lourd de menace, notre petite patrie sera demain comme elle est aujourd'hui dépendante et solidaire des pays qui accueillent ses ressortissants et ses produits. Nos jeunes commerçants doivent être dotés d'une solide formation professionnelle et prendre contact avec l'étranger pour se familiariser avec d'autres langues et d'autres méthodes de travail. Votre Société peut être fière d'initier, si je puis dire, dans ce grand pays ami, la jeunesse suisse. A ce propos je constate avec un plaisir tout particulier que vos enseignements ne sont pas d'ordre exclusivement technique ou professionnel, mais que grâce aux excellentes relations dont vous jouissez dans tous les milieux, vous vous efforcez d'élargir l'horizon de nos jeunes sur le plan de la culture générale, afin de leur apprendre à mieux aimer le peuple admirable qui nous donne l'hospitalité, ses traditions séculaires, les trésors artistiques et littéraires de la Grande Bretagne.

Car "l'homme ne vit pas que de pain" et une compréhension mutuelle des nations n'est complète que si les âmes atteignent les cimes de diamant de l'esprit et de la civilisation.

Au cours de mon allocution du 14 juillet, j'ai fait l'éloge de votre Collège. Je me bornerai donc aujourd'hui à vous faire part des doléances dont la Légation reçoit la confidence. Ces doléances sont du reste fort flatteuses puisqu'elles traduisent le regret de nombre de jeunes gens de ne pouvoir, faute de place, accéder aux cours du Collège.

En revanche, permettez-moi d'avoir une pensée toute particulière pour votre office de placement que dirige avec tant de dévouement et de compétence M. Pfändler dont nous célébrons cette année les quarante ans d'activité à Londres. Au cours de sa belle carrière, M. Pfändler a placé plus de 20,000 personnes! Les Suisses de Londres et même nos autorités ont contracté à son égard une lourde dette de reconnaissance et je suis heureux de l'occasion qui m'est donnée de remercier M. Pfändler des services rendus au pays.

Enfin j'aurais garde d'oublier, last but not least, que la mission de la Swiss Mercantile Society est dans une large mesure fonction de l'appui constant qu'elle reçoit de M. Strickler, Président central, et de M. le Conseiller National Schmid-Ruedin, Secrétaire général de la Société suisse des Commerçants, qui sont aujourd'hui vos hôtes d'honneur. Qu'ils soient remerciés de leur bienveillance à l'égard de la Swiss Mercantile Society et de l'intérêt qu'ils prennent à la colonie suisse de Londres.

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M. le Président et Messieurs, c'est à la prospérité de la Swiss Mercantile Society, c'est à une collaboration toujours plus étroite et plus féconde de votre Société avec nos autorités et plus particulièrement avec la Légation que je porte mon toast."

The applause which the Minister's oration evoked had hardly died down, when it was announced that Mr. K. Strickler, the Central President of the S.K.V., would address the company.

Mr. Strickler, who spoke in "Züridütsch" received a hearty ovation, he delivered the greetings and congratulations of the Central Committee, saying that by their presence they wished to testify their admiration for the London section, and also to tighten the friendly relations which had existed in the past. He gave a short *exposé* of the aims and achievements of the S.K.V. "Your College," he said, "enjoys a great reputation at home, your section has achieved great things, we are proud of you and wish to thank you most sincerely for what you have achieved."

In concluding his address Mr. Strickler said that the Central Committee had been pleased to present the following members of the London section with the "Golden Pin" for great and loyal services rendered namely: Messrs. G. Jenne, Max Heilinger and F. Streit. Amidst great cheering, he presented to them this much coveted distinction. As a further proof of their esteem he handed to the President a lovely little oil painting suitably engraved. Hearty applause greeted this "beau geste" of the Central Administration.

The next speaker was National Councillor Schmid-Ruedin, who thanked the members for the hearty reception which the Delegation had received, he also thanked all those, who in the past have rendered services to the Society, mentioning especially Mr. J. Boos. He said, that the S.K.V. is rightly proud of their London section and the College, the latter not only being a concern of the section, but an institution which has rendered no mean services to the "Schweizerische Volkswirtschaft." "Not only captains of industry and commerce," he continued, "have gained knowledge at your College but also diplomats." Mr. Schmid-Ruedin terminated his address by giving a short account of the conditions prevailing in Switzerland. Groans could be heard, when he mentioned that the "Food situation" at home was still very satisfactory. This speaker's address was also received with great applause.

The last speaker was M. Emile Losey, Secrétaire

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Général de la Suisse Romande of the S.K.V., who in French addressed the gathering.

He voiced his thanks for the opportunity given to him to be with the S.M.S. on that memorable day and to meet so many old friends whom he had had the pleasure of greeting at the Golden Jubilee, ten years ago, and in Switzerland on many former occasions. He continued by saying, " Bien que ne possédant pas, hélas! la langue de Shakespeare, je sens mon cœur battre à l'unisson du vôtre."

He too paid a warm tribute to the College, which he termed a " Foyer de Culture," saying that the work it has achieved is not yet sufficiently realised in Switzerland. M. Losey terminated his oration with the best wishes from the " commerçants de Suisse romande." This address was acknowledged with enthusiasm.

The official part of the function then came to an end, and after a short interval dancing started. Tea was served at 4 o'clock, during which two cabaret acts were introduced. The first number consisted of two Gentlemen throwing a young Lady " all over the place," I must admit it was not a very elevating performance, and could have been left out without loss, it was certainly not a compliment to the intelligence of the audience. The second turn was a card conjurer, a clean and enjoyable act.

More dancing followed, which was greatly enjoyed especially by the younger generation. At six o'clock punctually the 60th Anniversary Celebration came to its close, it was, in every way, a success and all those who took part in it will wish the Swiss Mercantile Society

Many more Happy Returns of the Day!
ST.

IMPORTS OF SWISS GOODS INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM DURING 1948.

(Communicated by Swiss Legation.)

Further to the amendments of the February list, as announced in the " Swiss Observer " of October 15th, 1948, provision has since been made for U.K. import quotas for elastic net (Gummitüll), shoulder pads and wool wadding (Achsepolster & Wollwatteline), as well as under certain stipulations for viscose sponges (Viscoseschwämme) and wool carpets (Wollteppiche).

Also, an increase in the quotas for rayon ribbons (Kunstseidenbänder) and hobnails (Bergschuhnägel) has been arranged.

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