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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER AND DANCE

The Annual Dinner and Dance of the Swiss Mercantile Society in London was fixed for 30th January. Due to the death of Sir Winston Churchill, this important social event in the life of the Swiss community in London was postponed to Saturday, 13th March. Again it was held at the Dorchester Hotel in London's Park Lane, and a happy party of about 140 gathered in the Orchid Suite. The guests and members were received by the President of the Society and Mrs. André Jaccard and by the Honorary President, the Swiss Ambassador, and Madame de Fischer.



The reception was followed by an excellent dinner in the ice blue Orchid Room. Speeches were few and short, and a large part of the evening could be given over to dancing. "The Guests and the Ladies" were proposed by the President. He referred to the interest the Ambassador and Madame de Fischer had been taking in the affairs of the Society and the College from the very beginning of their stay in London. First Counsellor of Embassy Monsieur Marcel Heimo and Madame Heimo were welcomed next, followed by Monsieur M. Feller, Counsellor for economic affairs, accompanied by Madame Feller. Vice-Consul Monsieur F. Burgunder and his wife were greeted as old friends of the S.M.S., as was the Chairman of the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies in Great Britain, Mr. Virgil Berti, accompanied by his daughter.

The next guests mentioned by the President were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Westcott, Vice-President of "The Times Football Club". Whether the S.M.S. won or lost the Lints-Smith Challenge Cup competed for annually between the teams of "The Times" and the S.M.S., the longstanding friendship between the S.M.S. and Mr. and Mrs. Westcott would not be affected. Mr. Jaccard welcomed the ministers of the Swiss Church, Herrn Pfr. Dietler and Monsieur and Madame Jacot. One of the four Trustees, Mr. L. W. Krucker, and several Honorary Members were present, i.e. Messrs. W. Burren, R. Chappuis, O. Grob and A. Stauffer, all accompanied by their wives. The President had a special word for Mrs. J. Pfaendler, widow of the late Honorary Member and friend Jack Pfaendler.

Of the successful football team, Mr. R. Bachmann

and the Captain Mr. Neuweiler were welcomed. The President greeted the Vice-Principal of the College and Mrs. Makin and specially thanked Mr. Walter Burren and his two lady assistants for their hard work in the secretarial office all during the year, as well as for their efforts in making the evening a success.

Mr. Jaccard then gave a few figures regarding the College and thanked his colleagues on the Council and various committees for their help and support.

When the President welcomed the Editor of the "Swiss Observer", he said he was never sure in which capacity she was present, as Editor of the Colony's paper or as member in her own right of many years' standing. He left the solution of this little problem to her. It is not difficult for her to decide, in fact, she is surprised that Mr. Jaccard has not thought of this himself. As far as she is concerned, she will always be at the S.M.S. first and foremost as wife of the late Walter Meier, an Honorary Member of the Society. It is very nearly thirty years since he brought her to London and took her to the first possible monthly meeting of the S.M.S. They were given a wedding present and the young bride promised she would never take him away from the Swiss Mercantile Society. He is still there. —

The second speech of the evening was given by the Honorary President of the Society, the Swiss Ambassador. He said:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is traditional for the Swiss Ambassador to propose the toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Swiss Mercantile College at its annual ball. I am happy to carry on this custom, for it gives my wife and me a chance to get to know better the patrons, the teachers, the pupils and the friends of that institution, and to spend some very pleasant hours with this splendid family. Thank you so much for inviting us.

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First of all, I should like to take this opportunity of telling the patrons and the teachers how much I admire their tireless efforts on behalf of our young students. They are seeking to initiate them into the mysteries and the beauties of the English language, to familiarize them with English life and thought, and to acquaint them with the history of this country and its very important role in the world today. These are by no means inconsiderable aims and they entail certain risks. Indeed, it is largely on the teachers that will depend the impression our students form of the United Kingdom — an impression which may remain with them throughout their whole personal, professional or civic life. This is a great responsibility and I congratulate the teachers on not running away from it. They are making a noble and courageous contribution to the education of our younger generation.

In fact, your teaching falls on sensibilities which are fresh. In the majority of cases, your pupils are on their first visit abroad. For many of them, it is the first time they have left their families, their customary way of life or their country and are seeing their world from outside. This first serious separation from their usual environment is, in a way, the modern version of the "Grand Tour", which in former days brought well-born youths face to face with the unknown. It was their opportunity to see

themselves in an unaccustomed mirror, to discover themselves, to strengthen their personalities, to enrich their knowledge, to widen their horizons and to acquire polish. It was, in short, the means by which they made the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

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In Switzerland, entry into adult life coincides with entry into active political life, that is to say, into the duties of a citizen directly responsible for the running of the state, the maintenance of its internal order, its external defence, the course taken by its economy, and the conduct of its spiritual life. It is frightening, at first, to contemplate the immensity of the task which, in our direct democracy, weighs so soon upon such youthful shoulders. That clearly presupposes a certain apprenticeship, and the place where our young citizens pass the necessary period of adjustment is very important. It seems to me that those who can spend it in England, like the students of the Swiss Mercantile College in London, are privileged. In effect, they receive here not only an excellent initiation into the commercial life of Britain, but also a practical and easy lesson in comparative British and Swiss politics. They are here in a country which is friendly and yet different. Because we Swiss have much in common with the British, we always feel a little at home in this island. But, at the same time, the differences are so great that they force us to recognize our distinctive characteristics and to understand our own individuality. Moreover, a stay in Britain shows us how important are our relations with her for our own international life. May I be allowed to say a few words, especially about the merits of the Swiss Mercantile College in this respect.

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From the time they arrive here, the young Swiss citizens begin to compare our two peoples. First of all, they discover that we both cling to our independence and are profoundly determined to control our destinies. We are also both deeply dedicated to democracy: in Britain to the parliamentary form of it, in Switzerland, to the direct type. Moreover, the industrial development of the two countries has followed almost the same course, and we are both dependent on the markets of the whole world.



Finally, we are today faced with similar economic problems in relation to a Europe in the process of becoming integrated. It is not surprising, therefore, that we both belong to EFTA which, as you know, is more than an economic organization.

But we are also very different from each other. The United Kingdom is a great maritime power and her political, military, economic and cultural influence is universal. She is a world centre of finance, of trade, of sea transport. Her way of life, which affects all human activities, has spread over all the continents of the earth. Our country, on the other hand, is land-locked, and our people have no political ambitions. We Swiss are not numerous, and we live on a small territory carved out of the Alps. Furthermore, this microcosm, embracing several races, languages and religions, has produced a civilization which is above all political.

After this preliminary examination we wonder on what basis Switzerland and Britain exist together, and how Switzerland's role compares with the role of this influential Britain. The answer is to be found in the very friendly Anglo-Swiss relations of the last 200 years. Each of our two countries has a special mission, determined by its geographical position, the size of its population, its natural resources and its type of civilization.

It is not my function to speak of Britain's role. But I can try to define that of Switzerland. We are a small country, but with a highly developed culture. Our role in the world is that of a neutral, which has renounced all power and whose sole criteria are peace and human progress; a country whose disinterested good offices are available in the disputes of others. Furthermore, because its unique political institutions work well, as was demonstrated so brilliantly on the 28th of February last when the sovereign people had to decide on a very complicated and vital question, our country is able to show that it is possible to create a state where the human personality is at the centre of the political life, and where diversity, willingly permitted and encouraged, is an enrichment.

All this gives Switzerland a solid and precise standing in the world. It is interesting to note that recently the newly created Swiss Cardinal alluded to that role when he explained the reasons why he was made the fourth Swiss prince of the Church. In as far as Britain is concerned, throughout the last 200 years she has shown great understanding for our direct democracy, and has constantly supported our neutrality. It is also a matter for rejoicing that in recent weeks she has tightened her links with EFTA; Switzerland is one of the most active members of that organization, and through it she is trying to contribute to the realization of that new United Europe in which each of our countries hopes to find its true place.

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As you see, contact with the national and international life of the United Kingdom during our young citizens' term of apprenticeship can be of very special value to them. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if our authorities and the friends of the young citizens support these periods of instruction in England.

I should like to congratulate the students of the "Swiss Mercantile College" in London on their good fortune in belonging to an institution which opens so wide a door to the British way of life — that life which so perfectly complements and enriches our Helvetic heritage. I hope that their stay here may be for them the beginning of maturity, both personal and civic.

I give you the Toast of the Swiss Mercantile Society and the Swiss Mercantile College, the President, the committee and the teaching staff.

Monsieur de Fischer's address was greeted with warm applause. It was left to Mr. V. Berti to reply for the guests which he did in his own modest and unassuming way.

A beautiful lady's Chinese evening bag had been generously donated by Mr. L. W. Krucker, and it was raffled, together with a man's wallet. The two lucky winners collected their presents, and that concluded the official part of the evening.

Dancing went on until midnight with hardly a soul leaving before, a sure sign of the success of the evening. The President was not really well, but not even his indisposition made him leave earlier, a tribute to the guests and the members. It was a happy evening, and if there was one criticism, I am sure it was only that it was not long enough.

Mariann.

LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

The Annual Dinner of the above Society took place at the "Montana" Hotel, Gloucester Road, W., on Friday, 5th March 1965. Despite the fact there were several absences due to illness and to the adverse weather conditions, a happy party of thirty-two, consisting of members, wives and friends, sat down to enjoy the very excellent fare provided. After this was finished toasts were drunk "To the Queen" and "To Switzerland". The President, Mr. W. Burren, made a speech in which he singled out various Officers and Committee Members as deserving the thanks of the Society for their efforts during the past year, and he then called upon Mrs. E. M. Huber (wife of the Vice-President) to present the Challenge Cup to the 1964 winner — Mr. D. W. Langley. As usual, a Tombola was held for the benefit of the Society, for which the majority of the prizes had been very kindly donated by members. Following this an Auction of stamp material (also kindly donated) was held and the proceeds of this were mainly devoted to Charity. As a result of the function the funds of the Society will benefit to the extent of nearly £26 whilst the Swiss Benevolent Society and the Society of Spastics will each receive a cheque for £10. In announcing these results, the President said the Society had every reason to be proud of its record of raising funds for Charity at these annual functions, and he thanked all those who had contributed to its success.

W.R.T.

SWISS DEFENCE ATTACHE

On 19th February, the "Daily Express" announced in an unorthodox manner that the Swiss Military and Air Attaché had now also been accredited to the British Admiralty. This change was made some four months ago, when the name was altered to "Defence Attaché" at the suggestion to the Federal Council of Colonel Koch himself. In the United States of America the representative of the Federal Military Department has been accredited to all fighting forces for some time.

As the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" explained, this means that the Swiss Defence Attaché can contact the British Admiralty direct and confer on questions of naval aviation, naval infantry and various technical problems which are of interest to Switzerland. This change means, too, that the Defence Attaché has not only direct approach to the three armed forces, but also to the Ministry of Defence and the Chief of Defence Staff, which previously was not the case. Thus, the change is of undoubted advantage to Switzerland.

On Thursday, 4th March, the Swiss Defence Attaché and Madame W. Koch gave a reception at the Dorchester Hotel to representatives of the British Defence Ministry,

the Army, Navy and Air Force, Ministry of Aviation, representatives of British Industry, members of the Diplomatic and Military Diplomatic Corps, and last, but not least, members of the Swiss community in Great Britain. This was the first time, Colonel Koch gave this reception in his capacity as Defence Attaché, and it meant that the Navy, too, was represented.

SWISS EMBASSY IN GREAT BRITAIN

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

The Offices of the Swiss Embassy in London, hitherto situated at 18 Montagu Place, W.1, have been transferred to

77-81 GLOUCESTER PLACE, LONDON W.1

on the 20th March 1965

These temporary new premises are adjacent to the present Consular and Visa Section of the Embassy at 1 Montagu Place, W.1.

The Embassy's telephone numbers remain the same

PADddington 0701-0706

The Swiss Ambassador will retain his present residence at 21 Bryanston Square, London W.1, until further notice.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

The Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Club Manchester took place on 20th February. The following Committee was elected:

President — Mr. E. Berner, Vice-President — Dr. A. U. Obrist, Hon. Secretary — Mrs. I. G. Monney, Hon. Treasurer — Mr. J. Scheiwiller, Hon. Assistant Secretary — Miss A. Rietmann, Members — Mrs. L. Themans and Mr. H. Mettler.

The Committee held its first meeting and drew up a provisional programme. Subscriptions for 1965 as fixed by the A.G.M. will be £2 p.a. for gentlemen and £1 for ladies.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY

To mark the centenary of the birth of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, the Anglo-Swiss Society are arranging a dinner for Monday, 5th April, at 7.45 for 8 p.m. at the Orchid Suite of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. Dame Marie Rambert, D.B.E., will be the guest of honour and talk about her memories of the Swiss composer whose ideas on movement and music have influenced her own work.

Members may bring guests. For details please apply to the Hon. Secretary, Anglo-Swiss Society, 77-81 Gloucester Place, London W.1, Telephone: PADddington 0701. (Black tie.)