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AN HONOUR REFLECTED



Mr. Oscar Grob awarded a Knighthood

When the news was published that H.H. the Pope had awarded a knighthood to Mr. Oscar Grob of 60 Seafeld Road, London N.11, the Swiss community in this country, Catholics and others, were delighted. For many years he had worked actively in various organisations, especially for the Swiss Roman Catholic Mission, the Catenian Association and the Swiss Mercantile Society. His activities have benefited young Swiss by the hundred, both those of the R.C. community and the many students of the Swiss Mercantile Society College. It was for these services that the Holy Father honoured Mr. Oscar Grob by creating him a Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. It was on Tuesday, 12th July that the

Presentation Dinner

took place at the Dorchester Hotel. It was a gathering of over eighty of Oscar Grob's friends, relations and collaborators, and it was given a special mark by the representatives of the Swiss Embassy, the Churches and organisations in which Oscar Grob had been active and, we are glad to say, still is.

Mr. J. J. Boos, K.S.G., was in the chair. He is an old friend and distinguished Swiss who had for a considerable time been similarly active as Mr. Grob and who is also holder of the same distinction. He welcomed the Right Rev. Patrick Casey, V.G., Bishop of Sofar, the Rev. Father Haughey, Parish Priest of New Southgate, the Rev. Father J. Scherer, and the President and Vice-President of the *Consistoire* of the Swiss Protestant Church (Mr. and Mrs. O. Béguin and Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Sommer).

Unfortunately, the Swiss Ambassador was prevented from attending the dinner owing to indisposition. But the Embassy was represented by the Counsellor for Economic Affairs and Madame M. Feller, Consul and Madame E. Tosio and Monsieur and Madame J. B. Gaechter (member of the Committee). Amongst the many telegrams received was one from Monsieur and Madame A. Daeniker.

The major Swiss societies were represented by their Presidents or other officers, accompanied by their wives, and both Mrs. A. Stauffer, widow of the late Editor of the "Swiss Observer" and the present Editor were amongst the guests. The Swiss Bank Corporation (where Mr. Grob had spent his working life from 1924 until his retirement last year) was represented by the Manager, Mr. Th. von Speyr, and the former Manager Mr. H. Knoll, both accompanied by their ladies.

Mr. Boos welcomed a number of distinguished personalities of the Catenian Association where he had introduced Mr. Grob in 1927 and where Oscar met his wife. Amongst this group of guests were Mr. R. Richards, K.S.G., K.H.S., Past Grand President, Mr. L. Tanner, Grand Secretary, Mr. A. G. Conrad, K.S.G., K.H.S., Secretary of the K.S.G.'s in England, Mr. F. C. Cuss, B.A., F.G.A., and a number of Past Presidents.

Next, Mr. Boos extended a welcome to the members of the Swiss Catholic Committee whose Chairman Oscar Grob has been since 1960. Last but not least is was the family's turn to be acclaimed, above all Kathleen, his wife, and their sons John and Paul and their wives, Mr. Ernest Grob (brother), who had specially travelled from Switzerland for the great occasion, and various members of the Hogan family, especially 88-year-old great-grand uncle of Mrs. Grob's, Mr. L. Hogan.

After Mr. Boos had completed his task of introducing and welcoming the guests, he called on the Lord Bishop to present the

Insignia and Citation

to Mr. Oscar Grob on behalf of His Holiness. This was a great moment in Oscar's life, and the warm applause following Bishop Casey's words of tribute and appreciation testified to the esteem and affection which those present have for Kathleen and Oscar.

Then followed a number of speeches: The Rev. Father Scherer spoke of his association with Oscar Grob, Monsieur Feller expressed thanks on behalf of the guests and brought greetings from the Ambassador and Madame de Fischer. He congratulated Mr. Grob on this honour on his "path of good deeds" and commented on the high reputation he enjoyed as a kind of Ambassador of Switzerland. The next speaker was Mr. A. G. Conrad on behalf of the Knights of St. Gregory in this country. He recalled that the Order was founded in 1831 during a difficult period in the papacy. The secular world had already ways and means of paying tribute to those who served with distinction. The Order was founded to honour men the Pope deems worthy of public esteem, men who "excel in goodness, constancy and good works". There are at present 135 K.S.G.s in this country, and the speaker was sure that Mr. Grob would uphold the honour bestowed on him.

Mr. O. Béguin said the Swiss Protestant Church in London was proud and happy to be able to share in the honour as a fraternity. He stressed that what united the different denominations was far greater than what separated them, and he expressed appreciation of the work Mr. Grob had done on behalf of the young compatriots. He wondered whether there would not be possibilities in the future to do something positive by way of co-ordination and co-operation to witness this unity between the two denominational groups, some joint action for the benefit of our country. He felt Mr. Grob would be a great partner in this work, and it would be a fine way for him to "make good the honour".

The Grand Secretary of the Catenian Association, Mr. L. Tanner, spoke with pride of the award to Mr. Oscar Grob and of the glory which the papal knighthood brought to the Catenians.

The President of the City Swiss Club, Mr. E. Bonvin, paid tribute to Oscar's wife Kathleen. He was sure that she had much to do with his getting the honour, for lucky is the man who has a good wife, and Kathleen was just that.

Mr. A. Jaccard as President of the Swiss Mercantile Society and colleague of Mr. Grob's at the Swiss Bank Corporation expressed the satisfaction of his society at the honour bestowed on one of his former officers. He outlined Mr. Grob's career within the S.M.S. which he had joined at Romanshorn in 1918. From 1925 he had belonged to the London Section where he held offices as Assistant Honorary Treasurer, as Honorary Treasurer (1928/1938), as member of the Council since its formation in 1931, member of the House Committee from 1939 and its Chairman for a year, and finally, President of the Society and Chairman of the Council from 1958/1960. He was made an Honorary Member of the S.M.S. for his services, and he is also holder of the Gold Badge of Merit of the mother society in Switzerland. Mr. Jaccard also sketched Mr. Grob's career at the Swiss Bank where he worked up to the responsible position of Sub-Manager, which he relinquished on retirement in 1965.

Oscar's brother from Switzerland said a few words in *Schwyzertütsch*, expressing his and the family's pleasure at the award of the knighthood. He was followed by Mrs. Kathleen Grob who has been a loyal partner in marriage and who, in her own right, has earned the respect and affection of a large number of friends and collaborators in many Swiss and British welfare and other organisations. She expressed thanks to friends and relations and said that this golden evening would not fade from their memories. As dinner secretary she thanked the Dorchester Hotel (its head chef Mr. E. Kaeufeler was present as member of the Swiss Catholic Committee) for the excellent dinner.

The Chairman asked the gathering to drink to the health of Oscar Grob, K.S.G., and the latter then spoke in his enthusiastic and endearing way about his pleasure at having so many share in the great honour, singling out the various speakers, the chairman and his beloved wife Kathleen.

This brought to a close a very happy and congenial evening. The numerous friends of Oscar and Kathleen Grob's are unanimous that the honour is well deserved and will spur on the happy couple to yet more work in the interest of many. But the great distinction of one of our compatriots is also an honour reflected on the whole of the Swiss community.

MM

FRENCH HOSPITAL IN LONDON

Readers may remember an article in the "Swiss Observer" in April 1964, which dealt with the French Hospital in Shaftesbury Avenue, London, an institution which has always been of interest to the Swiss in this country. The French Hospital was founded in 1867 and is therefore nearing the completion of its century. Unfortunately, it looks now as if this were not going to be possible owing to an ever worsening financial position. From the President's report for 1965 we gather that the number of beds available is not used to the full, and although 616 sick people spent nearly 10,000 days in the hospital last year, the expense in upkeep is out of all proportion to the use made of the accommodation. It has therefore been regretfully decided to close the hospital for in-patients. The *Dispensaire* (out-patients department) will, however, remain open, and by eliminating the expenses of the hospital, available resources can be concentrated on the out-patients department. This will be run with all the energy and care so long a hallmark of the French Hospital in London.

LODGINGS FOR STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY CITIES IN SWITZERLAND

A new Publication by the Swiss National Tourist Office

An interesting booklet has just been published by S.N.T.O. with information regarding the conditions of housing students at Swiss universities. The booklet is in three languages (German, English and French) and contains much valuable and useful data and addresses in the various university towns. It may be obtained free of charge from S.N.T.O., 458 Strand, London W.C.2.

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