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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

Visit of Mr. Richard Maier-Neff, General Secretary of the SKV

Although no special arrangements had been made to celebrate the Society's 80th anniversary, it was fitting that the event did not go entirely unnoticed. Among its members, the SMS is fortunate in having many who have supported its activities ever since they first came to these shores before and after the first world war. Six of these, Messrs. O. Gasser, W. Jent, F. Streit, H. Truninger, J. C. Wetter and J.J. Wetter had been awarded a "Wappenscheibe" by the SKV in recognition of 50 years' membership but had been unable to attend the special meetings in Switzerland when these mementos were presented.

To the delight of the members assembled at the Monthly Meeting, held at Swiss House on Friday, 15th November, Mr. R. Maier-Neff, General Secretary of the SKV, here on a short visit following an international conference in Amsterdam, had brought these special awards with him. He was extended a cordial welcome by the Chairman, Mr. A. Jaccard, who also expressed his pleasure at seeing among those present Monsieur R. Gächter, Secretary of Embassy, and many of the "older Brigade" who had come along specially for the occasion.

Unfortunately, for health and other unavoidable reasons, several of the veterans had conveyed their regrets at being unable to receive the "Wappenscheibe" in person. On their behalf, Mr. F. Streit, one of the recipients, expressed thanks to Mr. Maier-Neff and recalled with pleasure some of his early associations with the SKV in his professional education in Switzerland.

Following the official proceedings, Mr. Maier-Neff addressed the meeting on: "Aus der Arbeit des Schweizerischen Kaufmännischen Vereins". In a very interesting talk, he gave members an insight into some of the problems connected particularly with mechanisation, automation, mergers etc., and the difficulties of assisting older employees to adapt themselves to the ever changing business methods and processes.

He said that the many institutions which had been set up by the association over nearly a century for the furtherance of the members' aims and aspirations had served them well. Among them he instanced the College in London which was performing a very useful function in training our young compatriots for the future needs and demands of the Swiss economy and also encouraged many of them to follow courses for higher professional education on their return to Switzerland.

The General Secretary further gave a brief report on the 7th revision of the Swiss Old Age and Dependents' Insurance which is due to come into force on 1st January, 1969. He answered various questions in connection with this scheme and promised to put forward to the appropriate authorities certain suggestions regarding Swiss residing abroad which were made by members present.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Mr. Maier-Neff for a most interesting address, and also for having spared the time earlier in the day to discuss matters of mutual interest with some of the Society's executives.

W.B.

MANCHESTER SWISS CLUB

For many of us here in the North, 9th November 1968 started as an ordinary Saturday, something apart from the hustle and worries of the week, the day when we escape from the ordinary and sometimes dreary routine of our daily occupations, when we can help our wives, if we feel so, when we can do our weekend and at this time of the year, our Christmas shopping, when many of us are looking forward to sports and other hobbies. This particular Saturday was for us Swiss and many of our friends different from others, because it was the day of our Annual Banquet and Ball, by now a tradition dating back more than one hundred years, an occasion no one likes to miss. The keen interest in the event was proved by the fact, that this year many of us had to travel very long distances and gladly took the risk of frozen roads and fog to be present.

As usual, we assembled in the elegant foyer of the Midland Hotel to meet many good old and also young friends. We were all pleased to have the opportunity of meeting our new Ambassador and Madame Keller who in the afternoon had been entertained by the Lord Mayor at a football game, despite atrociously cold and unfriendly weather, and this shows again how our country's representatives abroad do not fear discomfort and ever hardship if it can help to uphold the image of Switzerland. Dr. René Keller, our new Ambassador, is an old friend and his wife's family resided in Manchester in the 1880's. She has been told by her mother about the grime, soot, squalor and poverty she had witnessed in her youth so that both were most agreeably surprised by what this proud City has to offer nowadays. Dr. Keller is well known to our Colony and the writer remembers introducing him to us as long ago as 1951 when he had the pleasure of listening to one of his clear and interesting talks in his then capacity of first assistant to Dr. Umbricht, at that time the Commercial Attaché to our Legation in London.

We were pleased to welcome in our midst the President of the Yorkshire Swiss Club and Madame Inebnit along with some members of the newly formed Liverpool Swiss Club, all helping to consolidate the friendly ties already existing between these neighbouring clubs. For Major Nicholson, well liked by us all, we have great feelings of friendship, knowing how much he has done in creating the Swiss Section of the Manchester Rifle Club, and how closely this important organisation is connected with a similar one in Geneva. Every year, our guests include some executives of the Swiss Chemical Industry, and foremost of all I would like to mention Mr. and Mrs. Banderet who rarely miss any of our functions and social get-together. This year we were also pleased to welcome Mr. J. Rodgers of "Geigy" and Mr. Grant of "Ciba Clayton Limited" and many other British friends who honour us with their support.

After the *apéritifs* we adjourned to the banqueting-hall to partake of an excellent meal well supported by good vintage wine, the enjoyment of which was greatly enhanced by the presence of our ladies who usually add a special charm and elegance. Our President, Dr. Jaggi, said grace and the dinner over, invited us to drink the loyal toast, after which our good friend Mr. Fattorini rose to give the one to Switzerland. This he did in a very

humorous, witty and unexpected way and it was a real delight to listen to him. Our applause must have been a great satisfaction to him and the many other British Friends sitting amongst us and whose company we so greatly enjoy.

The President then rose to welcome the Ambassador and Madame Keller and in doing so explained the meaning and purpose of our annual function which gives our members and friends the opportunity of knowing each other better and in this way to form a little Swiss Community outside our own country. He expressed the hope, that contrary to what happened in the case of Monsieur Long, we may have many more opportunities to say to the Ambassador and his wife: "A most cordial welcome in Manchester".

He found also some very warm and friendly words for the representatives of the Swiss Chemical Industry and how we felt all honoured and pleased to see them with us tonight, not just for the understanding and encouragements they give to our Club, but also for their friendly feelings towards us and the country we represent.

He then expressed pleasure in having again a fair number of friends with us from the two neighbouring Swiss Clubs, the one from across the Pennines and the one from Merseyside. In particular, he pointed out Prof. Inebnit a well-known personality not only amongst the Swiss living in the North of England, but also amongst the Swiss organisations in the U.K. taking an active interest in matters concerning the Swiss living abroad and indeed also in problems of wider aspects of Swiss politics.

It was his sad duty to inform us of the early departure of our Consul and Madame Brunner, in order to take over more important responsibilities in Rhodesia. It was our good fortune to have known both of them, also their son and daughter, for a good many years and we appreciate greatly the way in which he helped us along by active and understanding work. We shall miss his counsel very much. For this he thanked him also in our name and presented him with a silver ashtray engraved: "Swiss Club Manchester". — His wife received flowers.

After presenting Madame Keller with a lovely bouquet he invited the Ambassador to address us. This he did, and it was a real pleasure to us all to listen to him. He read a passage from his predecessor's address when he told the audience that he would return to Manchester and visit Scotland. He gave the reasons why, after the election of Monsieur Long as Director-General of GATT, he came to succeed him, with the result that the Manchester Swiss had three different Ambassadors in quick succession. The third point he made was his wife's family connections with Manchester and how this has created additional interest for both of them in this year's visit. Our Ambassador and Madame Keller were very touched by the warm welcome they had received by the Lord Mayor and the high esteem in which the Swiss community and Consul Brunner are held. In point of fact, Switzerland is the only country to maintain a "career consulate" in Manchester, which furthermore is the only one we have outside London. He concluded explaining some aspects of present trends in Switzerland, our hopes and fears. His impromptu address, almost a fireside chat, was very well received and warmly applauded, and many of us most surely look forward to see him and his charming wife again soon.

It was very much regretted that our Hon. Secretary Mr. Simon could not be amongst us because of illness. Everybody present sent him best wishes, and at the time

of writing, I have heard that he is progressing very nicely and that we shall see him soon again in our midst.

The official part thus concluded, we could devote our attention to the tombola, also this year rich and interesting, and in a very short time all the tickets were sold and almost everyone had the satisfaction of some winning numbers. The very active organisers and helpers can look back upon work well done. By then the tunes of our excellent band lured more and more of us away from the tombola, by now exhausted, and the never ending flow of the bar products, and the evening now rolled on into the small hours, old and young enjoying themselves in this brilliant atmosphere of carefree and sincere friendliness.

During one of the many, but only brief interruptions, the Swiss Rifle Section came to its own when results were announced and prizes presented. Again, as for many years in the past, our member Mr. John Scheiwiler could take with him one of the major prizes, and he is to be complimented for his untiring efforts in keeping up the traditions of Wilhelm Tell.

Regretfully we left for our homes, but how much shorter was this journey, filled as we were with happy memories of a most enjoyable and interesting evening and already looking forward to the next one! Certainly all of us will say: Well done, Swiss Club Manchester, and thanks must be expressed to our Committee and some of its younger members, for their devotion and hard work.

E. Berner.



SWISS AMBASSADOR AT MANCHESTER WORKS

While in Manchester on Thursday, 7th November, Monsieur René Keller, Swiss Ambassador, visited the works of The Clayton Aniline Company Limited. Monsieur G. Brunner, Swiss Consul in Manchester, was in the party. C.A.C., one of the largest dyestuffs manufacturers in the U.K., is owned by three big Swiss chemical concerns, CIBA, the majority shareholder, and J. R. Geigy S.A. and Sandoz Limited.

The Ambassador was received by Sir Arthur Vere Harvey, C.B.E., M.P., the company's Chairman, who is also a member of the Board of CIBA Basle and Chairman of the CIBA companies in the U.K., Mr. E. P. Banderet, Managing Director of C.A.C., and other representatives of shareholders and management.

During the visit there was a tour of the C.A.C. works, which is one of the most modern in the dyestuffs industry.

(See last issue — Manchester Swiss Club visit to C.A.C.)