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# A SWISS PROPOSES A TOAST TO THE BRITISH NAVIES

A few weeks ago, a Swiss had the honour of proposing the Toast to the Royal and Merchant Navies of the British Commonwealth at the Annual Dinner of the Institute of Marine Engineers in London. Mr. Georg Sulzer addressed a large and distinguished gathering at Grosvenor House. He opened his speech by expressing his surprise that he, a Swiss coming from a land-locked country, should have been invited to address the Marine Institute. He was aware not only of the great honour, but also of the responsibility to live up to the ambitious standards of the Institute, of which he was well aware.

"Last year", Mr. Sulzer continued, "two outstanding historical events took place: The first man set foot on the moon, and also for the first time in history, two mine sweepers of the Royal Navy paid an official visit to a Swiss port. In April 1969, H.M.S. Flintham and H.M.S. Dittisham sailed up the Rhine to Basle, and it was a proud moment for my countrymen to watch them anchor in Swiss waters. The Royal Navy has for generations been almost envously admired by old and young in Switzerland as the incorporation of skill, valour and unique tradition. The ten officers and ratings and thirty naval cadets spent a few days visiting places of interest in Switzerland and were also given a cordial welcome in my home town. We hope, now the ice is broken, that similar contacts will follow, and although we shall probably never see an aircraft carrier, some day an advanced hovercraft may cross the Alps".

The speaker referred to the local Swiss wines and Kirsch which the sailors seemed to have enjoyed during their visit, and he hoped they might even be an encouragement for them to go there

again and possibly have proved some compensation for the loss of their rum ration.

*"My country's relations with the Merchant Navy are, however, longer and closer not so much because of the Swiss fleet which, I must remind you, does exist although it never enters a Swiss port, but because of its not unimportant contribution to marine engineering. Engineers all over the world speak the same language. This fact has made it possible for Swiss developments to share a part of the world market in propulsion machinery. It opened the door to the world for Swiss engineers and is also the reason for my having the honour and privilege of being a member of your Institute".*

Mr. Sulzer then compared politicians to engineers who, unlike the former, preferred to speak about matters they knew at least something about. In his case it was marine propulsion. He had not been born with a silver spoon but, metaphorically speaking, with a diesel engine in his mouth. He related how he had served some time on board ship as an assistant engineer, in fact an apprentice. "Join the Navy and see the world" was a tempting slogan for any young man, particularly a Swiss. For Mr. Sulzer it had been a professionally short but unique experience. He regretted that he had been unable to see much of the world apart from the sea itself, for in every port, immediately after stopping the engines, the below decks gang had had to get busy drawing pistons. This was, of course, going back many years and things had no doubt changed, and very likely, such work would soon be done by pressing a button on the bridge or by a computer programme. The speaker continued:

*"The pattern of marine propulsion*

*is undergoing rapid changes in many ways. Whilst in the past the development of propulsion machinery such as steam engines, steam turbines and diesels had a major influence on the size, speed and design of ships, today and in the future, the determining factor in shipbuilding is more and more the overall economy of a transportation system. The needs of world trade set the pattern, and shipbuilders and marine engineers will have to comply with these requirements. There is a vigorous challenge to marine engineering and the beginning of rapid evolutionary and revolutionary developments. It calls for a complete revision of our thinking in many ways and basically new approaches to a new philosophy".*

Mr. Sulzer next referred to the gross tonnage of the world merchant fleet, which was 220 million tons and was expected to double within the next ten years. He was sure there would be room for many ships of conventional types, but there were rapid changes and new sizes and concepts of vessels in the field of tankers, bulk carriers and different types of container ships were being developed. He asked what effect such trends would have on propulsion machinery.

*"The slow speed direct drive diesel referred to as cathedrals by the sophisticated-minded younger generation will no doubt hold its own for many years due to the possibilities it offers with regard to reliability, increased outputs, the capacity to burn heavy fuels and its maximum efficiency as a thermal prime mover. Medium speed diesel installations have gained considerable importance for lower power and especially where the height of the engine room is limited by the ship's design. For high powered ships, the substantial improvements realised with steam turbines will also assure this system's future. However, in the light of the modern tendencies, gas turbines in combination with high-power reversible gears, variable pitch propellers or water jet propulsion are gaining ground for special types of ships. Low-weight and a concentration of power in small dimensions as well as maintenance facilities and immediate availability may easily offset a somewhat higher fuel consumption and higher fuel costs in an overall economy consideration. With time, metallurgical progress and blade cooling devices are also likely to allow the use of higher temperatures and thus improve the efficiency of the gas turbine and make its operation on cheaper fuels possible.*

*"Nuclear power, I believe, is not an immediate competitor for the merchant navy of the next decade, but in view of the growing acceleration in technological developments, it would be dangerous to rely on any so-called expert forecast in this respect".*

The speaker next referred to the many excellent and comprehensive papers which had recently been written on the subject which he had not

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been able to go into deeply; he realised that he had not even mentioned remote control, computer control and other new trends. The challenge was world-wide and the scope for ingenuity in marine engineering unlimited. Technical developments, he said, were, like the ships on the sea, serving all nations, and they were not limited by national boundaries. International co-operation was an essential prerequisite for progress. Mr. Sulzer ended his speech as follows:

*The rationalisation and concentration process in shipbuilding and Marine Engineering is taking place in all industrial countries, and the thinking behind the Geddes report has an universal validity. As a consequence, the growth of monolithic structures encourages a greater measure of central government intervention leading ultimately to control and we must be prepared to face the challenge to private enterprise. I am thoroughly convinced that private enterprise cannot be replaced by any more efficient and stimulating system for the achievement of genuine progress, and we who are impelled by the nature of our profession to think on a world-wide scale, have a responsibility to ensure its continuation.*

*Much of what I have said in regard to new developments and new materials applies to warships as well as to the merchant ships, but one factor which does not change is the quality and loyalty—and sometimes even the sacrifice—of those men who man the ships in good times and bad and without whom we should find ourselves exposed to dangers and a shortage of those things we need to maintain our living standards. In this respect, the Royal and Merchant Navies of the British Commonwealth have an outstanding record and admirable tradition.*

Mr. Sulzer then proposed the toast.

\* \* \*

In the recent seminar on the "Image of Switzerland in the World" held at Castle Lenzburg, the duty and responsibility of the individual Swiss abroad was stressed by several speakers. Examples were given of Swiss personalities on visit to foreign countries,

who did little good to the image of Switzerland abroad, often due to their ignorance of local character, such as in this country the dislike of boasting, the inclination to understate and the typical brand of humour.

Mr. Sulzer's knowledge of language and people do him credit, and his speech is an admirable example of how a Swiss on visit abroad may do his country proud and thus further international relations. He knew what to say and how to say it.

(MM)

## GONZAGUE DE REYNOLD

Gonzague de Reynold, the famous author and historian who died in Fribourg last April at the age of 89, can be considered as the champion of the greatness of Swiss history. He revealed with his vast poetical, historical and political work our expanding national history. A part which had been traditionally disdained in favour of the histories of Switzerland's bigger neighbours but which, under his pen, appeared with renewed colour. Gonzague de Reynold was also an indefatigable champion of federalism, which he understood as "diversity in unity".

He was born on 15th July 1880 in Fribourg, the son of Baron Reynold of Cressier and Nathalie-Victorine of Techtermann. He was educated by a French tutor and went to school at Saint-Michel, in Fribourg. He then studied literature at the university of Paris, at the Institut Catholique of Paris, at Fribourg in Brisgau and Florence.

In 1904, at the age of 24 and eager to start a literary career, he founded *La Voie Latine* with C. F. Ramuz and many others, a movement which was to bring about a renaissance of French-Swiss literature. The next year he married Countess Marie-Louise of Reding-Biberegg. Between 1909 and 1912 he wrote his first great work: *Histoire littéraire de la Suisse au 19me siècle*.

He held the chair of "Swiss Civilisation", a chair which he had founded himself, at Geneva University since 1910, and it was during that period he began to publish his *Cités et Pays Suisses*. With Alexis François, a colleague at Geneva University, he founded the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in 1912. In 1918 he was entrusted with his first diplomatic mission, which led him to England. The following year he founded the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad. Throughout the first World War he had been in charge of public relations between the Army and the civilian population. The Council of the League of Nations elected him as member of the international commission for intellectual co-operation of which he eventually became Vice-President. He was among the promoters and founders of many national and international bodies, such as the Catholic Union for International Studies, the International Institute for Educational Cinema, the *Institut Fribourgeois* and, more recently, *Una Voce Helvetica*.

He was buried in the family vault. It lies under the porch of the church of Cressier sur Morat, near to the castle in which he had lived for so many years. Gonzague de Reynold was the most distinguished Swiss diplomat and man of letters of his time. A typically Swiss patrician and an aristocrat as well.

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