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Mr. Max Stoffel's 65th birthday

On April 30th, a Swiss flag, flanked by oriflammes in the colours of St. Gall and Appenzell, was flying over Stoffels & Co.'s head-office in St. Gall. It was a holiday for the whole concern, whose 2,050 men and women workers and office staff had been invited to a big banquet, to which Mr. Max Stoffel had also invited 150 representatives of the local and regional authorities, the sales organizations of his firm's abroad, friendly concerns and members of his family, not to mention representatives of the press.

This plenary gathering of the famous St. Gall firm, well-known at home and abroad for its fine cotton fabrics and handkerchiefs, took place on the occasion of the coming 65th birthday of its head, Mr. Max Stoffel. During the excellently served banquet — a fine achievement when it is remembered that the guests numbered over 2,200! — various speakers gave the good wishes of the groups and institutions they represented to Mr. Max Stoffel, after the latter had greeted those present in a warm speech of welcome. This banquet, which was greatly enjoyed by all, was brought to a fitting close

Mr. Leonard Bickwit, lawyer in New York and member of the advisory board, presenting a souvenir gift to Mr. Max Stoffel.



A photograph taken during the fashion show.

by a fashion parade showing some fifty Swiss couture and ready-to-wear models, all made of Stoffels fabrics.

The ancestors of the Stoffel family began manufacturing textiles at Arbon in 1795; the St. Gall firm was founded in 1847, but only dealt in textiles without manufacturing them; at the beginning of this century, the firm purchased some cotton weaving mills, later taking up spinning and finally textile finishing.

In 1919, Max Stoffel joined the management of the firm, which he took over on his own in 1931 when his father retired from business. Today the firm comprises a spinning mill and yarn dyeing works, 5 cloth mills, a finishing and printing establishment, the head-office at St. Gall and branches in New York and Paris.

It was no small matter for Mr. Stoffel to run this big concern from both the technical and commercial points of view. He had in fact taken over the reins just at the time the slump began to make itself felt. A few figures will give some idea of the extent of the difficulties he had to overcome, since if the coefficient of 100 is taken to represent the turnover for 1927, the figure for 1931 was only 57% and for 1935 37%. Thanks to the rationalization undertaken by the dynamic new head of the firm, Stoffels was able to surmount the difficulties of the economic slump and later of the war. The shortage of raw materials during the period of hostilities contributed to one of the firm's most spectacular achievements, for in order to provide sufficient work in spite of the lack of cotton, Max Stoffel concentrated on producing articles requiring mainly manpower. This policy led to the creation of the little Stoffels handkerchiefs, which are now known and appreciated all over the world.

Max Stoffel, who is today the only shareholder with unlimited responsibility in his firm, is a social-minded employer with the interests of his workers at heart, for whose welfare he has created or developed many institutions and schemes. He has played and still plays an important part in many trade and economic associations of the St. Gall region and in the cotton industry.

The editors of "Textiles Suisse" take great pleasure in joining their congratulations to the host of others that were sent to Max Stoffel on his 65th birthday and wish him the best of health and many more years of fruitful activity.

Mr. Max Stoffel presenting his grandson to the members of his firm. Little five months old Felix came specially from Atlanta (Ga) to congratulate him. At left Mrs. Max Stoffel.

Photos Kurt Ammann.

