

Swiss Mercantile Society

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50 YEARS SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

by

A. STAUFFER, President S.M.S. 1917/19, Honorary Member.

AMIDST a world crisis of hitherto unheard of dimensions since post war days, an event is taking place in the Swiss Colony which well deserves to be commented upon.

On Monday, September 26th the Swiss Mercantile Society in London, which is a section of the "Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein" in Switzerland, will have existed for 50 years, since their Foundation in 1888.

This Golden Jubilee will be duly celebrated next month. —

There might be here and there an opinion prevalent, that owing to the serious times which we are passing through, no festivities should take place, or at least such celebrations should be postponed to less turbulent times.

I do not agree with the above mentioned point of view, for the following reasons. I admit that the present state of affairs may not be the most favourable one for festivities, but I maintain nevertheless that it is just such times when many a heart is heavy and when the future looks dark and gloomy, that we require some change and diversissement, *pour changer les idées noires*; a good laugh, or to see friendly faces often acts as a tonic.

The arrangements which are in preparation prove to me, that it is planned less to celebrate the actual anniversary than to take the opportunity of bringing together a large number of old and young members, representatives of the Swiss Societies and friends.

It will be at the same time a great re-union of our compatriots; a demonstration of unity, strength and patriotism, and never has there been a better opportunity than at present to come together; nobody knows what the future may have in store for us, it is therefore absolutely necessary to strengthen the ties which bind us together as children of the one and same country.

Let nobody believe that they can stand aloof when the destiny of our very existence is in the balance; 1914-1918 has proved it, let those, who have during the last years slowly drifted away take this note of warning, that, only if we can show a united and strong front, can we expect to face a crisis, which may occur at any moment, with any hope of success. —

A postponement would take much of the glamour away; unfortunately it does not look as if the near future will bring much relief and considerable time might elapse before we again hear the rustling of the wind, caused by the Angel of Peace hovering over a weary and tired world.

A birthday can hardly be celebrated with the same *clan* or enthusiasm a year or two afterwards; if the S.M.S. happened to be a Lady, there might be an excuse for overlooking or letting pass such an anniversary, but no such vanity lingers in the bosom of our birthday child.

I therefore heartily support the Council and Committee of the Society in their endeavours to celebrate the Golden Jubilee, on Friday, October 14th and Saturday the 15th; most of our readers have undoubtedly already heard about the arrangements, but so as to refresh their memory and to approach a still wider circle I will repeat them.

A "Member's Evening" will be held on Friday, October 14th 6.30 for 7 p.m., at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1. To this function people will attend in Town Dress.

This evening will be, I understand, the one where most of the speech-making will be done, and as most of the Ladies do not care for long oratory efforts, they have been "mercifully" spared from attending unless they wish to do so, and I feel sure that but few tears will be shed by them over this decision.

On the same evening the Delegations from abroad will be officially welcomed, and an opportunity will be given to all who attend to have a good heart to heart talk.

Although not all the replies have been received, I am informed that so far two important Delegations one from Zurich and one from



"SWISS HOUSE,"
Headquarters of the Swiss Mercantile Society and College,
34, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

It is hoped that these "veterans" will be in attendance on that memorable evening.

The following day, Saturday, October 15th, the Jubilee Banquet and Ball will take place at the Trocadero, Piccadilly, to which the Ladies are heartily invited; as by then most of the speakers will have exhausted their oratorical efforts only a short time has been earmarked for speaking, there should be therefore plenty of time available for the exclusively social part.

The Appeal made by the Committee to attend the Banquet on Saturday, is extended not only to the members of the Society, but to all compatriots living in this hospitable country.

Entertainments on Sunday and Monday for the various Delegations from abroad are also planned and will be published in due course in this paper.

One reason, and to my mind the principal one, to attend at least one function, is the one, to show the men, — who are entrusted to-day with the management of a Society which numbers nearly 350 members (234 Active, 23 Honorary, 18 Corresponding, 72 Contrib. Members) — appreciation for the faithful and efficient services they have rendered.

The work entailed during the last few years has increased by leaps and bounds, and has made great demands on all the members of the various committees; such work has been rendered willingly, nay enthusiastically, but I am ashamed to confess that often their efforts have received but little appreciation or encouragement.

Meetings are more than often poorly attended and a regrettable slackness, principally by older members has given rise to much comment.

Here then is one great opportunity to atone for such negligence, we owe it to the Society to prove on this occasion by our presence, that we appreciate their incessant endeavours, and that we are grateful to them and their predecessors for a work, which is the least said of national importance.

Our government authorities at home have appreciated this fact long ago, hence the granting of large subsidies towards the educational work of the Society; can we, who are able to witness on the spot the work executed with such ceaseless energy, afford to lag behind with our acknowledgement?

It would be hard to believe, that some little sacrifice could not be made on such an occasion, to present in person the thanks for all the work which has been rendered for many fruitful years.

Therefore I would like to make a fervent and sincere appeal, especially to the older generation, to honour the Society by their presence as the members entrusted with the management of the London Section fully deserve it, especially the President of the Society, Mr. A. Steinmann, who has for the last five years so ably guided the destiny of the S.M.S. and a large attendance will be appreciated by them, and will act as a fresh impetus for the future.

Would it not have been, that a special "Festschrift" will shortly be available, in which the work and achievements of the last 50 years will be enumerated, and which will be made available to all the members, I might have enlarged in my Appeal on the manifold services rendered by the Society in their many spheres, especially for the young Swiss who have so greatly benefitted by this institution.

All over the globe there will be compatriots of ours who have at one time or another reaped some benefit; and many have been the testimonies received during all those years from members and pupils, who have reached key positions in their profession.

For those who might not be able to peruse the history of the Swiss Mercantile, I will give a very short resumé.

The Society, was, as already mentioned previously founded on September 26th, 1888, at the Café Martin Doerr, Angel (Islington), the Founders numbered 13, of which two, Messrs.

Berne, will attend. The names of the former Delegation includes the following:

- M. Alfred Gubser, Zentral-Präsident des Schweiz. Kaufm. Verein.
- M. Carl Weigl, Vice-Präsident.
- Nat. Councillor Ph. Schmid-Ruedin, General-Sekretär des Kaufm. Verein.
- M. Adolf Galliker, Zentral-Sekretär und Redaktor des Zentral Blattes.
- M. Emil Losey, Zentral-Sekretär und Redaktor des Zentral Blattes.

The latter Delegation will be from the "Eidg. Volkswirtschafts Dept.", so far the names of this Delegation have not been made public. It is, of course, a great honour to the Society that the Swiss Government deemed it important enough to be officially represented on the 50th Anniversary of the London section of the Société Suisse des Commerçants.

It is expected that sister sections in Switzerland will also be represented.

I have been informed by the President of a really *beau geste*; namely that all members who count more than 25 years membership will receive, on that evening, a token of appreciation for their loyalty from the Society, here they are:

Rudolf Philipp	Member since 1895
Emil Gattiker	" " 1895
Hans Buser	" " 1895
G. E. DeBrunner	" " 1897
L. Chapuis	" " 1898
P. F. Boehringer	" " 1899
E. Wepf	" " 1900
W. Eichenberger	" " 1900
F. Dannmeier	" " 1902
F. Kibiger	" " 1902
H. Ungricht	" " 1903
E. Sommer	" " 1904
J. J. Pfaendler	" " 1904
S. Jeker	" " 1906
J. Truminger	" " 1907
A. Bucher	" " 1908
W. Zuppinger	" " 1909
Ch. Chapuis	" " 1909
M. Paschoud	" " 1910
J. H. Speich	" " 1910
E. Elha	" " 1910
W. Gamper	" " 1910
G. Gerber	" " 1910
J. J. Wetter	" " 1911
H. Truminger	" " 1911
L. Duffey	" " 1911
E. A. Gotz	" " 1912
E. Schneider	" " 1912
P. Haffter	" " 1912
M. Gerig	" " 1912
J. C. Nussle	" " 1912
M. Grether	" " 1913
Rob. Schweizer	" " 1913

Etterlin (first President) and Amsler are happily still amongst us. They both live in Switzerland.

Right from the beginning the Education part of the Society received special attention, and all available Funds were earmarked for this purpose.

More than once during the ensuing years the Society encountered financial difficulties owing to the fact that the educational part swallowed up the slender resources.

At one time the S.M.S. seriously considered an amalgamation with the City Swiss Club, the reasons for such a proposal was, of course, obvious, and our sister Society, who I am glad to say is still going strong in her 82nd year, was asked "to carry the baby?" although such proposals were from time to time repeated, nothing came of them; an initiative of several members to liquidate the Society also met with no success.

The great efforts, so consistently made by all the leaders and co-workers of the Society found in time its reward, and support became available from the Swiss Government and contributing members and firms, so that at least the last twenty-five years have been free of pecuniary worries. Hand in hand marched for all those years the Employment Dept. although with separate administration.

The greatest strides in the Educational sphere of the Society were made in the year 1922, when a commission was appointed to study the question of opening a Day school. It might be mentioned here that already eleven years previous (1911) the same question was debated. After long and careful study the Day school came into being in the Spring of 1923 at Henrietta Street and proved an immediate success so that already three years after, the need for larger premises was felt. With the acquisition of "Swiss House" the S.M.S. College came also into being. The opening ceremony of Swiss House in 1926 proved to be a mile-stone in the history of the S.M.S.

In running the College, the Society took over great responsibilities especially as to Finance, and in spite of the crisis years, this great work could be carried on without incurring losses, thanks to the foresight and efficiency of the various committees; and to-day the College of the S.M.S. and the Evening Classes enjoy a fine reputation not only at home but in English Educational circles.

What work, what energy and enthusiasm was necessary to establish such a name, only those who worked together in those past years can ever really know; but with pride they can to-day look back on an edifice which honours both them and the Society.

During the fifty years of its existence, the Swiss Mercantile Society has played a conspicuous part in the social life of the Swiss Colony and their collaboration at many important events has been eagerly sought.

On their fiftieth birthday the Swiss Mercantile Society enjoys the reputation of being one of the pillars of the Colony.

From near and far the S.M.S. will receive congratulations and good wishes for their Golden Jubilee, but none will be heartier than the one from the writer, who has during twenty-six years, followed with admiration the work of the Society.

THE SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION, ZURICH 1939.

Special Shows.

In one of our former articles we gave a general survey of the Swiss National Exhibition in 1939. In the following lines we should like to give a few short notes concerning special shows that are to take place during the exhibition. It is one of the first principles of modern exhibitions that as little unemployed material as possible should be exhibited. Displays of this kind have been superseded by shows which portray social and economic life, general traffic and travel. Shows of this kind form an integral part of every exhibition from the modern point of view. Artistic and social events are an essential feature of exhibitions intended to show the progress of modern culture and civilisation.

Special mention must here be made of the Model Hotel which is run as a part of the exhibition in the department named "Switzerland, the World's Holiday Country." In this hotel, which will be fitted with all the latest improvements, both the expert and the uninitiated outsider will gain insight into this important part of Swiss political economy. The hotel comprises a large restaurant and a lecture hall. There is a well-equipped reading room and a writing room, but the special attraction will be the hotel kitchen which may be seen in full working order. The

restaurant, which covers an area of 270 sq.m., is not very large, but is fitted with every modern convenience. A hotel bar will also be shown. The bedrooms are exceedingly comfortable and will give even experts many new ideas.

In order to provide ample room for all the other shows and entertainments, a banqueting hall is to be built on the right shore of the lake, in which there will be a stage measuring 18 by 28 metres. There will be seats for 5,500 spectators and standingroom for a large number, so that there will be accommodation for 10,000 persons. The roof will be so constructed as to permit of the shows taking place in the open air in fine weather, while the whole building will be covered in bad weather.

Theatrical performances will take place in the banqueting hall or in the exhibition theatre, and there will also be a special theatre for marionettes. Concerts and other musical entertainments will be given in the banqueting hall. There will be cinemas with pictures of every kind, both entertaining and instructive. A gala performance in the shape of a pageant will give visitors from other countries the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Swiss national characteristics and culture. A fair share of the programme is, as is but natural, devoted to games and sports, a special list of events being arranged by the different clubs and societies. Tennis, swimming, gymnastics, aviation and indoor sports and games will all be included in this list. In the Traffic Department certain vehicles will be in operation, while models will be exhibited of other means of conveyance, such as canal and river boats, shipping on the Rhine, the Rhine port at Basle, etc. At the Exhibition Station the Federal Railways will show fast trains of a light build, engines of an older type and the newest large engine for express trains in Switzerland. There will be models of new railway buildings, such as the new station at Berne and the Lorraine Bridge.

A model Post Office will contain all the latest conveniences and improvements. It will be ready to transact all the usual business, and will be fitted with new apparatus of various kinds.

Road traffic will not be confined to small sections. A road 200 metres long, ascending and descending in spirals, with Swiss scenery in the background, will be built in the pavilion.

The exhibition is not merely intended for grown-ups, — it is to provide pleasure and amusement for young and old. A true "Children's Paradise" is being arranged in an old park. Children can be left there and will be looked after by fully qualified kindergarten teachers. A receipt will be handed out to the parents, by means of which it will be quite easy to find their children when it is time to go home.

The buildings in the "Children's Paradise" awaken memories of fairy-tales. A stroll through the toy exhibition prepares the little visitors for the joys to come. A magic tea-room lies near the witches' house. There is a Punch and Judy show, and small prizes may be won on the playground. The size of the houses is adapted to children, none of them being of a normal size. Boys can fish in a pond where water lilies grow, while there is a flower-room for girls only near by. Its walls are made of glass, and there is a long table in the centre on which coloured papers are scattered. Two of the teachers show the children how to make pretty paper flowers.

One of the greatest attractions is a motor workshop, where boys learn to put a small car together. The parts are given to them by the foreman, and as soon as the car is ready, they can take part in a motor race. The course they traverse is about 100 metres long with ascents and descents of about 20 metres. All these attractions will surely make many a grown-up long to be able to return to a "Children's Paradise!"

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Thursday, September 29th, at 8.30 p.m., Unione Ticinese — "Danza Familiare," at 74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Tuesday, October 4th (Dinner 7.15 sharp) City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting, at Pagani's, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Friday, October 14th, at 6.30 for 7 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Members Evening — at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1. (See announcement.)

Saturday, October 15th, at 6.30 for 7 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Jubilee Banquet and Ball — at the Trocadero, Piccadilly Circus, W.1. (See advertisement.)

Tuesday, November 29th — Unione Ticinese — Concert and Ball in aid of the Fonds de Secours, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

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Dimanche, 25 septembre 1938 :

11h — Culte.

6h.30 — Culte.

SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 25. September 1938.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntagsschule.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

8 Uhr, Chorphobe.

TRAUUNG.

Am 16. September wurden getraut :

Noel Robert Charles COSBY von London und Margrit May Kellersberger von Baden (Aargau).

BESTATTUNGEN.

Am 13. September wurde bestattet :

Arnold Theodor BODMER von Zollikon; geb. am 17.2.1869 — gest. am 10. September.

Am 14. September wurde bestattet :

Hans Andrea MARUGG von Wiesen (Graubünden); geb. 4.9.1893 — gest. am 7. September.