

# The new home of the Swiss legation

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### The New Home of the Swiss Legation

Early this year the Swiss Legation moved from their former and quite inadequate quarters at Queen Anne Street, into their new home No. 21, Bryanston Square, and No. 18, Montagu Place. (The latter forms the corner of Bryanston Square.)

About the end of March, 1932, the transfer of the property was completed. Preparations of the plans for the various alterations required in order to adapt the said premises for the purpose they were intended to serve, were entrusted to our compatriot, Mr. Théophile Schaerer, a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Association of Structural Engineers.

The Confederation made a happy choice in commissioning Mr. Schaerer with this task, to which he was eminently qualified; he has carried out a good deal of work in the City of London and in the principal Cities of Europe, such as Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg, as well as in South Africa. Amongst the many distinctions which he has obtained we wish to mention but a few, namely: Bronze Medal, Academy of Fine Arts, Milan. Honourable Mention Exposition Universelle Paris, 1900 Arts Section for Switzerland. Nominated Officier d'Académie Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1909. In 1927 he was awarded the 1st prize, out of 350 competitors in the "Daily Mail" competition for a small Dwelling House to cost £850. Having never acquired British nationality, he has the distinction of being the **only** foreign Fellow of the R.I.B.A. and A.I. Struct. E.

With regard to the Legation it was essential to embody, as far as possible, the wishes of all parties concerned, particularly those of our esteemed Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, as well as those of the Federal Authorities at home. Therefore M. Jungo, the Director of the Federal Public Works Department in Berne, came to London, early in April, 1932, specially to discuss the new sketch plans prepared by Mr. Schaerer, and to finally approve or modify same.

At various interviews with the Minister, M. Jungo and Mr. Schaerer the whole scheme was fully discussed and formally approved during the first week of April, 1932. After M. Jungo's departure the final plans, working details, and specifications were prepared, and approximately six weeks afterwards, the tenders for the work to be carried out were submitted to the Minister for approval. The work was started in the last week of May, 1932.

It was found practically impossible, or at least very inconvenient to carry out the work in No. 21, the house which had been the residence of the Minister, and his private property since 1920, and therefore he had temporarily to leave his abode and hand over the premises, not to the house breakers, as it should have been, but to the various building trades, and finally to the decorators.

The whole site and buildings consist of three houses on the north-east corner of Bryanston Square. This site has been ceded, exceptionally as a freehold by the Portman Estate to the Swiss Confederation. The two big houses forming the

**Les Suisses** résidant à l'étranger choisissent de préférence des titres de père de famille. L'éloignement où ils se trouvent les empêche de surveiller leurs titres de façon permanente et de prendre de rapides dispositions. Aussi la sûreté de leur patrimoine est-elle le premier de leurs soucis. Depuis 20 ans, notre Banque est agréée par le Conseil d'Etat du Canton de Zurich pour la conservation de biens de tutelle. Adressez-vous à nous quand vous aurez à faire des placements de tout repos.



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front towards the Square and the corner towards Montagu Place have been transformed into one house and contain the Minister's residence and the Legation offices. The third house of the freehold, situated in Montagu Place and adjoining the wing holding the Chancery offices, remains for the present let on lease for another twenty-five years or so. Of course, the Confederation can at any time buy that lease and make use of this third house for enlarging the Legation, but it is not likely that for the next years such necessity should arise.

The former offices of the Legation in Queen Anne Street had to be vacated by the 22nd of August, and therefore the time allotted to the work of transformation of the building in Bryanston Square was extremely short, and no doubt inadequate, but as no extension could be obtained the Legation had to be moved to the new premises at the date stated.

This, as well as some other difficulties were overcome by part of No. 21, Bryanston Square, being temporarily adapted and occupied for the offices of the Legation, and those of our compatriots who had business there during that time must have been under the impression that all was in perfect order, so well did the staff of the Legation deal with current affairs under trying circumstances.

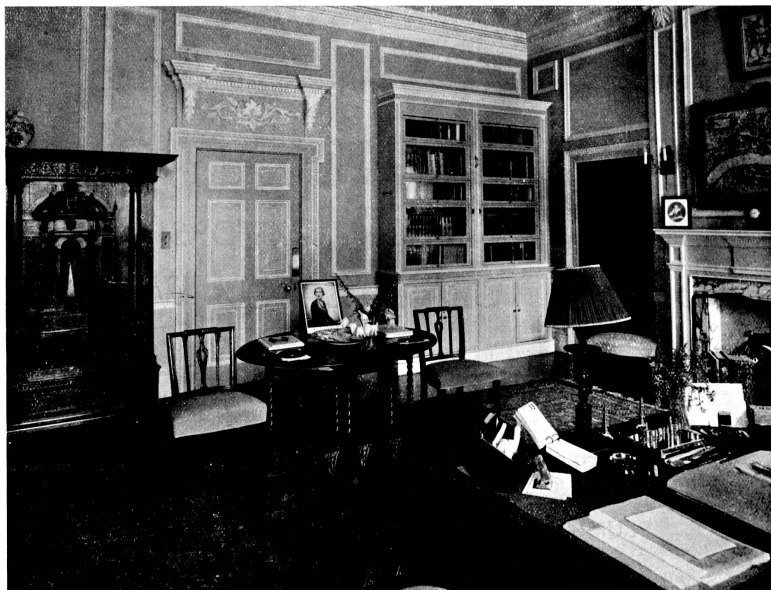
The best course would have been to pull down the whole of the existing property, and rebuild the premises in a way to suit modern and up to date requirements. This unfortunately was not possible, on account of the cost it would have entailed—the more so as economy, started at home (Switzerland), had to be strictly enforced also abroad. If our readers consider, that the whole of the property as it stands now including all alterations, additions and transformations, and other incidental expenses including the freehold, brings the whole cost of the property to only 750,000 Swiss francs, all those who have any idea of the cost of West End property, will have to admit that the Swiss Government has secured a real bargain. This of course has only been possible on account of the general depression, whilst both cost of property, and building were practically at the lowest ebb. Lucky are those, who have taken advantage of the position, and the Federal Council has to be congratulated on having followed the advice of those who submitted the proposition to them.

The Chief Architect of the Swiss Confederation, M. Jungo, no doubt had a good deal to do with the approval of the matter, and he is to be congratulated on having added a real first class property to the possession of the Confederation.

Now our readers wish no doubt to hear something about the disposition of the various departments of our new Legation.

No. 21, Bryanston Square, remains as heretofore, the residence of the Minister. Those who have had the privilege of being the guests of the Minister at some of the various functions he and Madame Paravicini have given to the members of the Swiss Colony during the last ten years, know the disposition of the reception rooms. They have been little changed, however a few improvements have been made. It is a great pity that funds at the disposal did not allow to take out the wall between the two front drawing rooms, thereby throwing the two rooms into one and making a fine reception room with five large windows facing Bryanston Square.

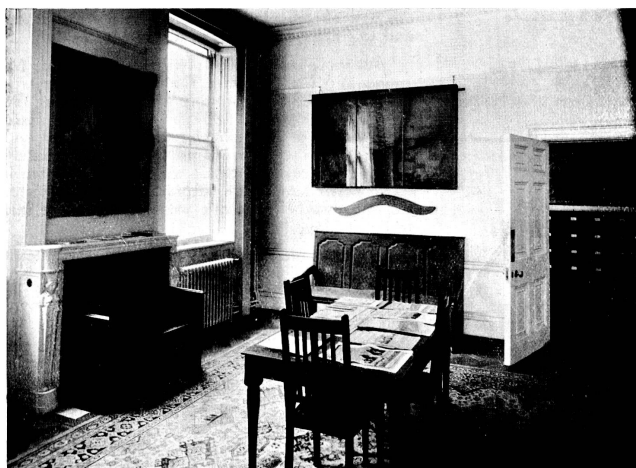
The wall decorations of one larger and two smaller Panneaux of the Basle painter, Joh. H. Keller, are favourably shown off in company with



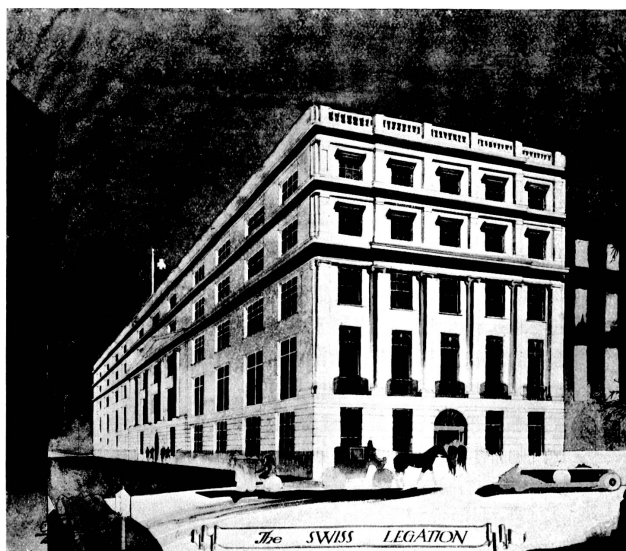
The Minister's Cabinet de Travail.



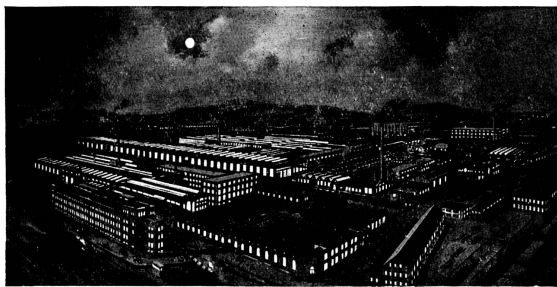
One of the Reception Rooms.



Waiting Room.



How the architect visualizes the Legation when completed.



The Oerlikon Works.

This illustration represents the Works which have made the name of the village of Oerlikon known all over the world.

From a small firm of makers of machine-tools, established a little over half a century ago, the Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon has grown into a large organisation, with associated companies in several countries, capable of producing electric plant and steam turbines up to the largest outputs, as well as traction equipments for the most powerful locomotives.

The pioneer work carried out by the M.F.O. forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of electrical engineering and has won for it a leading place in that branch of engineering, which it has held ever since.

The association of the M.F.O. with Great Britain is an old one, and its British customers have long appreciated the high quality of its products. Several of the power stations of the early electric supply companies (Kensington & Notting Hill Electric Lighting Co., Central Electric Supply Co., St. James & Pall Mall Electric Lighting Co., London Electric Supply Corp., etc.) were equipped with Oerlikon plant, while there are a considerable number of Oerlikon turbo-

sets, installed in recent years, in London and in other parts of the country, and even as far north as Aberdeen, without mentioning those in Dublin.

With regard to traction, the first 76 motor coaches to be put into service on the Watford and Richmond suburban lines of the former London & North Western Railway, when these sections were converted to electric traction, were fitted with Oerlikon equipments. The traction material, Oerlikon system, is now being built over here, under licence, by the General Electric Co. Ltd., of Witton, and large numbers of railway and tramway equipments, manufactured under this agreement, including some 1,500 traction motors for the London Underground Railways alone, have been put into operation during recent years.

Visitors to the busy manufacturing areas of the Midlands or to the mining districts of South Wales, too, may come across, on machines, the name of "Oerlikon," which has upheld, here as well as in other parts, the high reputation of the Swiss Engineering Industry.

In this country, the M.F.O. is represented by its associated company, **Messrs. Oerlikon Ltd. of Victoria House, Southampton Row, W.C.1.**

paintings by Masters of the Dutch and French Schools of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. All the builders' and painters' work was done by the General Contractors, Messrs. W. S. Barton & Co., 43, Chancery Lane, W.C.2, and according to what we are told at the Legation, the execution under difficult circumstances of the scheme has been carried out with recommendable efficiency. Important details of the interior decoration, as well as the orders concerning furniture, etc., had been entrusted to Messrs. Druce & Co., Ltd., Baker Street, W.1; this firm seems to have made special arrangements in order to make their work in the new building a striking success, and we admit that this has been achieved.

The private rooms of the Minister contain a number of famous paintings by Swiss painters, such as Freudenberger, Aeberli, etc. One of the sitting rooms harbours an exquisite collection of aquarelles from Maria Sibylla Merian, the well-known Basle artiste, which creates a unique impression. The Minister's private study and the various bed and bath rooms are artistically furnished and fitted, partly carried out by Messrs. Druce. The electrical work has been done by the Berkeley Electrical Engineering Co., Ltd., of Vincent Square.

The general impression of the whole building gives—both from outside and inside—an excellent aspect; it is perhaps not as luxuriously furnished as some of the foreign Embassies in this great Metropolis, but it is well in keeping with the unassuming traditions of our native country. One has to bear in mind that most of the official residences of foreign diplomatic representatives are furnished by their respective Governments with some famous masterpieces from renowned picture galleries and museums, and one could but wish that our authorities would follow the example of some of these foreign governments, instead of saddling our diplomats with the heavy expenditure of furnishing their official residences. Our museums and galleries at home contain a number of articles most suitable for adorning our Legations abroad, and which are at present stored in some of the lumber rooms of their respective buildings for lack of space to exhibit them, surely better use could be made of them, this idea would have the further advantage of a permanent home for the Ministers and diplomatic representatives, and in case of changes would not entail any extra expenses.

The part of the building containing the Chancery and the offices bears the address of 18, Montagu Place, and the entrance is from that street and not from Bryanston Square. Please note this, so as to avoid you making the mistake and go and ring the wrong bell.

The vestibule entered from 18, Montagu Place, is large and spacious with a telephone switchboard, counter for Huissier (Weibel), Porter and other attendants. A large and well-lighted waiting room adjoins the vestibule with a table and comfortable chairs, so that those who have business at the Legation can sit down and study the various news and illustrated papers, etc., provided, in case the pressure of business on the staff is so great, that some of the callers are kept unavoidably waiting.

The Minister's large private office is directly accessible from the vestibule, and also communicates with the entrance hall of No. 21, an arrangement which is very convenient, particularly for distinguished callers.

The "Militär-Kanzlei" and Passport Office directly communicate with the waiting rooms, and as most of our compatriots have to do with these two offices, the minimum of "Va et Vient" and circulation has been secured. Those having dealings with these departments will no doubt (at least we hope) appreciate that everything has been made as easy and comfortable for them as possible, with the limited means at the disposal.

A large and easy staircase, which was constructed by one of our able compatriots (Mr. Schaub of the Chiswick Guild) leads those visitors who like to walk, and therefore do not take the lift, up to the upper floors. If one considers that in the whole of the Government offices in Berne, there are no lifts, and that only just very recently a lift has been installed in the Palais Fédéral in Berne, for the exclusive use of our aged "Landesväter" you will, we hope, fully realise how generous the authorities have been with the Legation in providing both the staff, and the visitors with a lift, particularly under the strict measures of economy that had to be enforced.

The first floor of the Legation is occupied by the Chancellerie where Mr. Hilfiker, the Chancellor, presides, ably assisted by Mr. Pernet. The second floor provides accommodation for the Councillor of Legation, M. Ch. de Jenner, and M. W. Rüfenacht, 1st Secretary of Legation and Attaché Commercial, and Mr. Schneider, the latter's efficient assistant, as well as for the Legation Library.

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The third floor is occupied by M. W. de Bourg, 1st Secretary of Legation, and last but not least by the staff of fair and beautiful ladies, who adorn the whole of the premises, and provide the various heads of departments with their daily ration of letters to sign.

On the top floor a telephone exchange is installed, which is provided with a unique automatic telephone installation, both internal and external on the same apparatus. This floor further contains a laundry (would you believe it!), as well as the very comfortable flat of the Huissier, which is one of the gems of the whole building, and really worth having. The flat roof could almost be used as a swimming pool in the summer, but unfortunately the money at disposal did not allow it being fitted out as such.

The heating installation was put in by the famous firm of Sulzer Bros. The lift in the Minister's house is a Swiss lift installed by Messrs. Schindler, of Lucerne; the motors were supplied by the well-known concern, the Oerlikon, Ltd. The steel work of both buildings, which provided the architect and engineers with some very tricky problems, was supplied and erected by Messrs. Power's & Deane, Ransome's, Ltd., of 45, Tower Hill, and their Manager, Mr. McDowell, no doubt had a few anxious moments until the heavy steel girders were in position. Messrs. Hilburn & Co., of Cardington Street, supplied and fitted all the blinds.

General contractors for the alterations were the old-established firm of Messrs. W. S. Barton & Co., of 43, Chancery Lane, W.C.2, and they deserve every credit of having carried out the work in such a short time under sometimes trying circumstances.

The Swiss Colony in Great Britain has every reason to be proud of its new Legation, and we wish specially to congratulate the architect, Mr. Th. Schaerer, and the general contractors, Messrs. Barton & Co., for having solved an intricate problem in such a creditable manner, and may we add the wish that our esteemed Minister, and the Staff of the Legation will be happy in their new surroundings.



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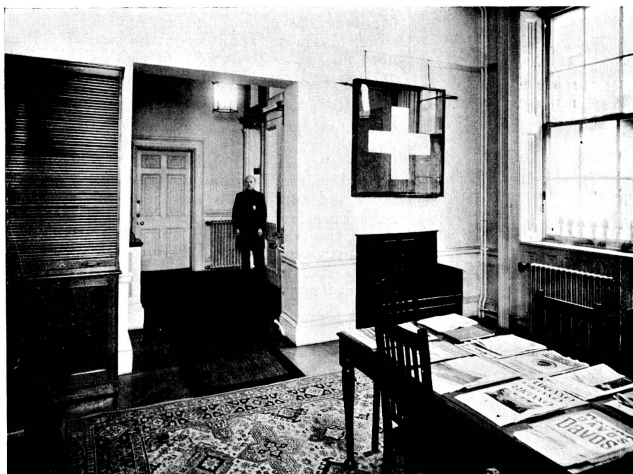
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carried his instrument, which in so many of us awakened sweet memories of yesteryear, from the stage, amongst long and loud applause.

The first part of the programme finished with two songs (Espoir et Bonheur by Silcher and A la montagne by Bischoff-Ghiliouma) under the efficient conductorship of Mme Weber.

An interval of an hour was then announced in order to allow the artists, and their audience to look after their material requirements.

In the "Foyer" a number of stalls were set up containing the most tempting delicacies, such as strawberries and cream, delicious pastries, ices, sandwiches, coffee bar, and last but by no means least, a kitchen where most appetizing hot sausages were cooked and handed out, the latter stall seemed to me to be the principal attraction. As in former years the catering was entrusted to Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid from the Glendower Hotel, and I am sure, everybody will agree, that no better choice could have been made; the refreshments supplied were excellent, and the service most efficient; it is not an easy undertaking to cater for nearly a thousand people in the bare space of an hour.

During the interval the Swiss Orchestral Society regaled the audience with some popular Swiss tunes, in which, on the invitation of the conductor, everyone joined in singing.

The second part of the programme was started by the "William Tell" Overture from Rossini, and the Orchestra, and its popular conductor Mr. P. Dick, are to be congratulated on their fine performance. The Colony can indeed be proud to possess an orchestra of such fine quality.

Mlle. F. Keller, with her "Vandoiserie" and Mr. E. Wirz in "Jung und Alt" Fabel earned much applause on their excellent performances.

A Swiss concert without some yodeling is almost unthinkable, and the organisers were lucky in having been able to supply this want in the person of Mr. F. von Bergen, whom many might have heard previously, either at some of the Swiss functions, or over the wireless. Mr. v. Bergen is a fine singer, and the three songs which he sang were greatly appreciated.

The Swiss Choral Society, under its sympathetic conductor Mr. E. A. Seymour, sang two songs; they are not a large choir, but what they lack in numbers, they make up in the quality of their singing. The "Abendglocken" by Franz Abt was sung with great feeling, sincerity and earned much applause. Mr. M. E. Seymour, then played Lemmens "Marche Triomphale" on the organ, and I hardly need mention, that he gave an excellent rendering of this fine composition.

In summing up, I wish specially to direct the attention of our readers to the wood-cut on the programme, and on the postcards, which is the work of our compatriot M. Pierre Savoie, it is a fine piece of work, and does great credit to the artist.

It is the privilege of the Press to criticize, but there is in fact very little criticism to be done, I for one greatly missed the performance of the Sunday School children, which in former years, used to be such a splendid and much appreciated

turn, perhaps next year we shall once again see our "little ones" on the platform.

I might perhaps mention one little occurrence which somehow irritated me.— The spacious platform, which, as it ought to be, is in full view of the audience, contains two doors, one on the left and one on the right hand side, these doors were frequently used, by gentlemen going in, and it so happened, no doubt by coincidence, that when one entered by one door, another one emerged by the other, which struck me as rather amusing; then a number of frantic signals were issued from the corners of the platform, which reminded me of my army days, when we were signalling to distant bodies of troops, some movements of the enemy; these physical exertions might have been necessary, I do not know, but it certainly distracted the attention of the audience from the performing artistes, and thus proved to be rather irritating. To avoid these, in a way small disturbances, I suggest that they should be in future embodied in the programme as a special turn. The "going in and coming out" might be billed as "The Simplon Express" and to render it more attractive, the orchestra should play Honnegger's "Pacific No. 231." The "signalling" might appear under the following heading: "Lost mountaineer trying to attract the attention of rescue party" whilst the orchestra plays the well-known melody "Von ferne sei herzlich gegrüsst," this, I am sure would be an improvement. —

Otherwise it was a most successful entertainment, and I am glad to hear that the financial result is quite satisfactory.

The Committee certainly deserves the thanks of all those, who through their efforts, were privileged to spend a few happy and carefree hours amongst their compatriots. It has been said so often that many of our countrymen, are turning up to this annual event, whom one never sees at any other functions, and I sincerely hope that the atmosphere of homeliness which prevailed, will induce at least some of them to give their support also to some other functions in the Colony as it is now, more than ever necessary, that we Swiss stick together, to face with a united front, and with one purpose, some of the knotty problems, which are of vital interest to all foreign residents in this hospitable country.

In concluding I wish to say that the 64th Fête Suisse was once again a great success.

ST.

## STRAY THOUGHTS.

By Kyburg.

Now that the Great Conference is sitting in London, now that Representatives of very nearly all the Nations of the Earth are meeting in order to discuss the ways out of the terrible crisis which is afflicting us all, it is, perhaps, open to a Swiss to dream of the wonderful future in store for mankind, provided this World Conference acts in the spirit of the old mottoes which have, to its lasting benefit, ruled the Swiss people.

would seem that the expenditure was in vain. Yet there is a little country of rich and poor, of people of different races and languages who are governed by the one thought of being Swiss, whether they are at home or as a little group somewhere out in the world. Everybody is nationalistic to-day, and patriotic to-morrow, of course, — but with the Swiss it is a quiet, mutual understanding — even, if they do not seem to like each other very much, occasionally.

\* \* \*

Just because the American delegates got a bit messed up with the English language should by no means give birth to an all around pessimism, as some news papers try to make believe already, with regard to the success of the World Economic Conference. After all is said and done, it surely is America's privilege to follow her own course in respect to currency inflation and other matters about which the nations of the world are conferring in the "Zoological" Museum in Kensington. Besides, there is always a chance that two "view-points" may meet sooner or later at a crossroad. It is with politics just as it is in family life. Any son, if he happens to be strong and "fundamentally" healthy, wants to have his own way against father's advice. Sometimes these youngsters agree with their parents, when they need medical assistance for swollen eyes and broken noses — but still they will always know better.

\* \* \*

On the other hand, however, those of us who pride themselves on being graduates of the school of hard knocks, who still cling to the idea of being thoroughly practical, may well ponder the words of Dr. Robert Hutchins "as has been amply demonstrated in recent years," he says, "practical men are those who practice the errors of their

## One for All and All for One.

This Swiss motto has been further explained by the great poet Schiller in his "William Tell" where he makes one of the three confederates say: "Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern, in keiner Not uns trennen und Gefahr."

And this, I think, would be my text, had I been invited to address the Delegates of the Nations of the Earth.

The last decade has shown us that, economically, the Nations of the Earth are interdependent. There are some, it is true, who even to-day, close their eyes wilfully to the obvious facts, but they, riding hobby horses of their own, like children, and playing Struwwelpeter in the World's Kindergarten, need not be taken seriously, except when their mischievous antics become a real danger to the public peace. I am referring to the Empire-mongers, not here alone, but in various countries, to those scribes whose pens have been bought by vested interests and whose opinions, penned with such poisoned weapons, are demonstrably wrong and very often contradictory.

But, on the whole, the world knows to-day that if one member of the human family suffers, the others are likely to suffer too, and that the well-being of the one rests on the well-being of all.

The World Conference has the task of furthering the well-being of all. In attempting this task, it will have to ascertain the ills besetting its individual members, because the elimination of these individual ills, will lead to the well-being of the whole community.

Platitudes! Perhaps. But platitudes are necessary when you want to make progress. Unless you can teach the World to visualise the future, its future, you won't get far, and to force the World to take such long views it is necessary to use platitudes.

Had I a say in these matters, I would force the attention of the Delegates to this World Conference on the above cited motto. I would hammer it into their heads that they are not in London as delegates of their own countries only, but as Delegates of the Human Family and that, as such, they have a responsibility graver than many a King has ever had.

These Delegates can save the World. They can only do so if they subordinate the claims of their individual countries to the major claims of the World as a whole.

That requires the ability to look ahead, the wisdom of trained experience, the courage of a man strong enough to abide by the dictates of his conscience and fortified by his faith in the destiny of mankind.

One single people of brethren. That is the vision that must inspire the Delegates.

Utopia is a nice word. So convenient to quieten the dreamer who sees vision, so easy a word to flatten him out in conversation and to score over him and make him the laughing stock of the company. But the Utopia of to-day is the reality of to-morrow, and if it had not been for the dreamers, where would the World be to-day?

The man who is ashamed of speaking his thoughts, because they might be called Utopian by his fellow-men is never a leader, never a wise

forefathers. The man, who is sometimes right, studies the practices of practical men. If he wishes to stay right, he does not practice them!" — There is sound meat for us all in these remarks. Few are able to put aside personal ambitions or desires sufficiently to give themselves a true picture of any problem in their line. And now is the time we need true pictures and unbiased suggestions. With all deference to the wisdom of our forefathers, we must remember that we are facing problems far different from theirs in many ways. — The way to be really practical to-day is to refuse to be hampered by practices of the past.

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But what the world and every human being needs most of all — is constructive optimism. We do not mean that optimism that makes people sit down, looking at the far blue hills, dreaming of that motorear, that rise in salary or that new dress. This kind of optimism is as cheap as the pessimism that tries, unintentionally maybe, to drip the poison of defeat into the roots of all beginning. — When religion is no longer taught for the purpose only to make people unafraid of death, but unafraid of life instead, when faith and hope are not merely conceived as beautiful words, and pluck and perseverance cease to be understood only as things of the war — then we shall become constructive optimists. And we shall no longer look at monetary problems, over-production and under-consumption as a crowd of Messrs. "Cannots" Ltd. — badly in need of Eno's Fruit Salt.

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And after all these beautiful things which incidentally everybody knows, were said once more, the world-improvers, very much pleased with themselves arose from their seats, shook hands — and had another drink before they left.

Mops.

## LONDON GOSSIP.

— ANOTHER WEEK —

Young and old is quite willing to bring home a real "pain in the neck" from Hendon's Annual Air Pageant. — The smoke screen display was not offered this year, since the sky itself was a screen of smoky grey. But it would seem that not even a nasty rain could keep an "air-minded" crowd away. The roaring of those flying birds, no doubt, is music and the secret power in those wings, is mystery. — We accept so easily that man has conquered the air, that we are Kings of the ether, but do we actually conceive the wonder — as the Greeks saw their Gods disappear in the skys towards Olympus. It must have been a desire, for ever in human souls, to reach the stars. — And no matter how high the unobtainable, there is still another excelsior beyond.

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And from the air we came back to the sea again. The Naval Pageant in Greenwich is another living book, telling of the spirit of man to conquer the unknown. Adventures and accomplishments are shown in a spectacular procession through the ages. And we did not forget either to think of the Swiss navy of long ago, fighting battles on our beautiful lakes!

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And that brings us to the 64me Soiree annuelle Suisse de Londres in the Central Hall in Westminster. It was not a "spectacular" show of pomp and glitter, phrases and toasts, but a quiet trooping of the colours under the one flag of ours. And the achievement that lies beyond this emblem is as great as any accomplishment of man. — The world has sacrificed 10 million lives in one great war, for democracy — and often it