

# Swiss Mercantile Society

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the Finance Commission, the conclusion is inescapable that here is work well done.

The Swiss Minister summed up all this in a short address at the end when, for himself personally as well as for the Swiss Government officially, he expressed thanks to all who do so much, whether on committees or as contributors, for our fellow citizens here in need of a helping hand.

Once again a special, well deserved tribute to Mr. Ritter's most efficient services and unflinching devotion was paid by the President and fully endorsed by the hearty applause of all present.

Mr. Bon kindly consented to preside over the Society's affairs also during 1942 and the various committees were re-elected too for a further year.

After the formal proceedings were over, the company stayed on and were most kindly entertained to tea by their President and perfect host. For an hour or so, the homely atmosphere at Brown's Hotel became a babel of lively conversation in groups of three, four or more. This opportunity for informal talks with all and sundry was seized upon no less by the Swiss Minister and by Madame Thurnheer in that good old democratic Swiss fashion, with which they have from their very start in London entered into the life of the Colony.

J.Z.

### SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Saturday, March 14th. Mr. J. J. Boos presided.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the lease of Swiss House expires on Lady Day (March 25th) and that the Society would then vacate building No. 34. Negotiations for retaining building No. 35, the original Swiss House, for a further period were not as yet concluded and the President mentioned that he would report more fully at the next meeting.

The usual agenda, including the admission of a new member, Mr. Alfred Hugentobler, was promptly dealt with. In the discussion which followed, the question of this year's First of August celebration was raised. The Committee was instructed to approach the other Swiss Societies with a view to ascertaining their opinion in the matter. As our national day this time falls on a Saturday, it was thought to be particularly opportune for arranging a modest function in keeping with the seriousness of the times through which we are passing.

In view of the lengthening hours of daylight, it was decided to revert to the old practice of holding the Monthly Meetings on the evening of the second Wednesday of the month. The next meeting, therefore, will be held on Wednesday, April 8th, at 6 p.m., at Swiss House.

This concluded the official part of the meeting and the members then adjourned to the Members' Room, where refreshments were served. Although the Society is only giving up part of Swiss House, the loss of the cosy Members' Room which had become endeared to so many members after a tenure of 15 years, was nevertheless keenly felt. To mark the occasion, members then exchanged reminiscences of Swiss House. Mr. Boos briefly recalled many outstanding events which took place in this room, such as the visits of the late Swiss

Presidents, Federal Councillors Motta and Schulthess, as well as those of the Delegates from our Headquarters in Zurich to the 50th anniversary of the Society. Messrs. Stahelin, Deutsch, Meier, Rothlisberger, Schneider and Burren also related many humorous as well as serious incidents from their own experience and it was a most happy hour for all present to hear something of the inner history of the S.M.S., with particular reference to the Members' Room.

Although the old Members' Room will no longer be available, a room in No. 34 will be suitably arranged to replace it and members will, therefore, find every opportunity for meeting in a congenial atmosphere.

W.B.

### AN EPISODE OF THE WAR OF NO MILITARY CONSEQUENCE.

A Major from Liverpool in charge of a Camp in the South of England has in his care a company of A.T.S. Amongst these girls is a Swiss girl who appeared to be somewhat lonely with few friends in this country. She wanted a fortnight's holiday rather badly, so the Major wrote to the Consulate asking if we could arrange this for her. We consulted Mrs. Cheetham who lives at Meliden, part of Prestatyn, whose native town is Bâle. She agreed to give her this holiday and the Consulate was able to inform the Major that this Swiss girl would receive the invitation he had requested from Mrs. Cheetham. In the ordinary way the cost of the journey would have been prohibitive but the Army provided a free pass. The young lady has had her holiday and Mrs. Cheetham and Mrs. Steffen, her mother (82) but still lively and in good spirits, liked her so well that she will probably be invited again. So the story ends with smiles all round. Mrs. Cheetham deserves the greatest credit. She illustrates, like Mrs. Macquarie and Mme. Davidson who are still doing excellent work for our girls, that these ladies who have to change their name and nationality on marrying still retain the highest form of patriotism, the patriotism of service to the people from whom they sprang. But the Major too deserves credit for the kindly interest he has in one of his subordinates and for his confidence that the Consulate would assist him if it possibly could.

In this case it was an advantage that the Consulate, driven from Liverpool last May, has now a temporary home in such an attractive holiday resort as Prestatyn.

E. MONTAG.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, April 8th, at 6 o'clock p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — Monthly Meeting, at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, April 11th, at 1 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Annual General Meeting, at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W. (See Advert.).

Saturday, April 18th, at 2.15 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting, at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1, followed by Mr. G. Keller's "Comment on Current Events."