

Swiss parliamentary delegates visit the Swiss Mercantile Society's College

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SWISS PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATES VISIT THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY'S COLLEGE.

There was an atmosphere of expectancy at Swiss House on the afternoon of May 11th. The balconies were draped with the Swiss Flag and the Union Jack, which made a brave attempt to hide the drab facade of the building, still showing the scars of bomb damage. On the other hand, the trees and the lawn and the flowers in Fitzroy Square looked their very best in the spring sunshine.

Soon after 3 p.m. a large black limousine, flying the Swiss standard — an unmistakable sign that an official mission was here travelling — pulled up and M. Joseph Escher — President of the National Council, M. Frederic Wahlen — member of the States Council, M. Aymon de Senarclens and M. Alcardo Pini — National Councillors, emerged, accompanied by Dr. V. Umbricht — Commercial Attaché and M. H. Baehler — Vice-Consul, both of the Swiss Legation.

They were welcomed by Mr. W. Meier — President of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. L. W. Krucker — Chairman of the House Committee, Mr. E. A. Hueni — Chairman of the Education Committee, Mr. H. Marfurt — Chef de Cours, and other members of the Society. The visitors were then conducted over Swiss House, beginning with the latest class room on the third floor and ending in the students' canteen in the basement, where the teachers of the College were introduced to the delegation.

After taking light refreshments the party went to the first floor, where the students, nearly 140 in number, had assembled. — An address of welcome was made by Mr. Marfurt speaking in English, then in German, continuing in French and ending in Italian. — M. Escher then rose to express the greetings of the Swiss Parliament. He encouraged the students to make the best of their stay at the College, which was well known in Switzerland for the excellence of the training it provides for commercial students. — He was followed by M. de Senarclens, speaking in French, who expressed his pleasure of seeing the College repaired and the classes full to capacity with eager students. — M. Pini then addressed the company in Italian. He was delighted to find three Ticinesi students present and like his predecessors he would speak with pride — when back in Switzerland — of this hive of enterprise and learning. — The fourth visitor, M. Wahlen, surprised

the meeting by his fluent and faultless English. He urged the students to go out into the wide world, like their fathers had done, and there put into practice what they had learnt. All these speakers were rewarded with warm applause.

Mr. E. A. Hueni, Chairman of the Education Committee thanked the visitors for sparing the time to come to the College. He said the Swiss Mercantile Society appreciated the financial help its school received from the Federal Authorities in Berne, which made it possible to keep the fees at an extremely modest figure. At the same time the Society would be only too pleased to provide more comfortable equipment and more spacious premises if funds would be allowed for this purpose. The members of the S.M.S. London were proud to have established this school, as long ago as 1923, for the benefit of Swiss Commercial youth, a unique institution for any foreign country even in this huge metropolis. He paid tribute to Mr. G. E. De Brunner, at present on holiday in Switzerland, and other members of the Society, whose vision and energy had made this understanding possible, and he pledged the present members' determination to preserve it, not only as a seat of learning, but also as a means to better understanding among nations, which would only be brought about if they learnt to speak each other's language.

This brought a memorable event in the history of the S.M.S. College to its conclusion.

W.M.



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