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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

National Councillor Schmid-Ruedin's Jubilee.

The Schweizerische Kaufmaennische Verein, whose 48,000 members are spread over most parts of the globe, celebrates Mr. Schmid-Ruedin's 25 years of activity as an official at the Central Secretariat in Zurich, not with a festive banquet but with a heartfelt "Well done, Philip, thank you!"

Hailing from Chur, where he had done very well at school and as a young bank employee, keenly interested in the local section's work, Philip Schmid-Ruedin was chosen on February 4th, 1918, from amongst a goodly number of candidates, to fill the newly created post of additional Secretary to the central organisation of the S.K.V. Those of us who remember the upheaval, political and economical, of those days will agree that the acceptance of a post in a professional association making ready to fight for better living conditions for commercial employees needed courage of a very pronounced order. Nothing daunted, Schmid-Ruedin set to work. In the course of time he obtained far-reaching reforms and improvements of the relations between employee and employer; he also smoothed out such differences and difficulties within the ranks of the members as arise in any rapidly growing body. Starting practically from scratch, but with boundless energy and unquenchable enthusiasm, he can now look back on a sum total of work done which leaves the onlooker breathless. Tied to the office chair for most of the week, he gave his weekends to those tasks which needed his personal contact with members throughout Switzerland — conferences, lectures, negotiations, etc. — and he counted himself lucky if in any one year he had three or four undisturbed Sundays with his family.

In 1925 he was elected a member of the National Council, where he has ever since been the torchbearer of the commercial employees. While he is ever vigilant on our behalf, he has never failed to take that wider view of Parliamentary duty which the welfare of the whole country demands. When the necessity arises, he can be forthright, even blunt; but he is at no time unwilling to hear both sides. His view always is, that the employee must be properly remunerated and that in turn he must give the employer the honest and efficient service the latter has the right to expect.

In 1930 Schmid-Ruedin was nominated Secretary-General of the S.K.V. More than ever are our destinies watched over and guided by him; for, according to good old Swiss custom, the President and the members of the various Committees serve the association in honorary capacity.

The members of the S.M.S. London and our friends and wellwishers in the colony have got to know and to appreciate Schmid-Ruedin especially in connection with his efforts on behalf of the S.M.S. College. He is our "friend at court" with the Swiss Authorities, and his work on behalf of Swiss commercial youth is a worthy compliment of his other duties. His interpellations in the National Council finally brought into being the State Purses granted to needy but industrious young employees for a period of studies abroad. That the Federal Official who had to deal with Schmid-Ruedin's "importunities" for subsidies to both students and colleges ultimately became his firm friend, speaks volumes for the tact and the fair-mindedness of our M.P. In this connection it is interesting to recall the remark made to the writer of these lines by a well-

known and progressive Swiss employer after he had listened to Schmid-Ruedin at one of our banquets. He said "My people at home had some trouble with the S.K.V., and I did not particularly want to meet this Schmid-Ruedin. Now I have met him, I don't think him any longer an agitator (Hetzler)."

Philip Schmid-Ruedin was elected an Honorary Member of the S.M.S. London in 1935 in acknowledgment of his great merit as an administrator and friend and counsellor.

Twenty-five years of constant giving, of never sparing himself, and yet still able to smile and enjoy life, that is Schmid-Ruedin. He would be the last to agree, that he does more than his duty; yet he rose from a sickbed once in order to meet our delegates and assist them in their negotiations with a Federal Office in Berne. Surely his example will give us courage and inspiration when we confront the problems of post-war reorganisation. His friendship is a precious gift, and we hope that he may be spared for many years in health and strength to continue his good work, in which he has an understanding helper in his wife. They are an ideally happy couple and hand in hand have gone through the years in undimmed joy in their union.

London also says "Well done, Philip, thank you!"

A.C.S.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Society held its Monthly Meeting at Swiss House on Saturday, March 13th. Mr. J. J. Boos presided and about forty members and friends were present.

The Chairman informed the meeting of the death of a very old friend of the S.M.S., Mr. Rud. Philippi, in Basle. The deceased was President of the Society in 1897 and 1898 and was elected an Honorary Member in February 1899. It was through Mr. Philippi's efforts that the Society first received a subsidy from the Swiss Government towards its Evening Classes, which support it has been receiving ever since. Mr. Philippi remained a lifelong friend of the Society and even when back in Switzerland continued to support the S.M.S. in many different ways. It has just been learnt that Mr. Philippi left in his will a legacy of Frs.500.— for the benefit of the Society's funds. His memory will ever be cherished by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. The meeting rose to pay a last silent tribute to the departed.

With the postal facilities from Switzerland partly restored, the President was able to give interesting news of the activities of the association in Switzerland. He first read a letter from National Councillor Schmid-Ruedin, General Secretary of the S.K.V., informing him that the total membership of the S.K.V. had surpassed the remarkable figure of 43,000. The writer congratulated the S.M.S. on having so actively assisted the campaign for increased membership.

In this connection, the President informed the members that Mr. Schmid-Ruedin had recently celebrated his 25th anniversary as Secretary of the S.K.V. All those who had come into contact with him, the President said, knew of the tremendous efforts which Mr. Schmid-Ruedin had put into his work during those 25 years. A telegram had been sent by the S.M.S. to mark the occasion.

At long last, details were also to hand of the deliberations of the last Delegates' Meeting at Baden.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the admission of lady members into the association, a jubilee meeting is being held at Basle on March 27th and 28th and in the name of the twelve lady members of the London Section, a telegram of good wishes is being sent.

The fourth course at the English Centre of the S.K.V. at Frohburg began on March 8th. These courses are a war-time substitute for the S.M.S. College in London and the good attendance which they enjoy proves how eager our young compatriots are to learn the English language and business methods. They are, of course, looking forward to the time when they can again come to this country.

The President had been informed that through the courtesy of the Swiss Legation a number of the leading Swiss daily papers would be placed at the disposal of the Colony. These papers will be available in the Members' Room at Swiss House for all those who are interested in reading the latest news from Switzerland.

On account of longer evenings approaching and to enable members and friends to attend to their gardens and allotments, it was decided that during the summer months, i.e., April to September, the meetings be again held on Wednesday evenings. The next meeting was fixed for April 14th (6.15 p.m.) when Mr. E. v. Graffenried, First Secretary of Legation, will address the members on "To-days' Economic Position of Switzerland and Future Plans." The Committee hopes that a large number of members and friends will take the opportunity of meeting Mr. v. Graffenried, who has but recently joined the staff of the Legation, in charge of commercial affairs. The lecturer, with his expert knowledge of a subject which closely affects most members, will no doubt be able to tell a great deal from his personal experience. Please, therefore, do not fail to book April 14th for the S.M.S.

This concluded the official part of the meeting, which was followed by a talk by Mr. Gottfried Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association and London Correspondent of the "Basler Nachrichten" and the "Agence Télégraphique." The lecturer began by saying that the title of his lecture, "Views on the News," might equally well have been "News behinds the Headlines." Mr. Keller once again gave proof of his outstanding qualities as a lecturer. The audience listened with rapt attention as he unfolded chapter after chapter of the drama now being enacted on the international stage. When reading the news piecemeal and without the discerning eye of a journalist, it is often difficult, nay impossible, to obtain a clear picture of what is actually happening and to see things in their proper perspective. Mr. Keller, step by step developed his theme and unravelled one entanglement after another until gradually a clearer pattern emerged. Events which had been viewed from a narrow angle could now be seen in their broader aspects. He did, however, not confine himself to topics of international importance but also gave a good deal of home news, for which all present were truly grateful.

On concluding his most interesting address, the lecturer was accorded a very hearty ovation. Mr. W. Deutsch, in proposing a vote of thanks, paid an eloquent tribute to Mr. Keller's qualities as a lecturer, to which the President added his personal thanks. Thus came to a close another interesting and enjoyable afternoon at Swiss House.

WB.

NEWS FROM THE LIVERPOOL CONSULATE.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Geologists' Association in London on Saturday afternoon, 6th March, the President, Prof. H. H. Read, F.R.S., addressed the Recipient of the Foulerton Award for 1943 as follows:—

Mr. Montag — An Ambassador has been defined as a man who lies abroad for his country's good and I suppose the same definition applies to Consuls. For some 50 years now you have lain abroad. Whatever may be the opinion of your country as to the good it has derived by this, we are certain here that it has been to ours, for from your personality, energy and enthusiasm, generations of geologists have received lasting benefits. You have acted as Excursion Secretary for the Association on six occasions, you have contributed to the knowledge of the geology of our country by your publications, and you have made available to us in your admirable translations the classics of your Swiss master, Heim. On all these counts and others you have deserved well of geologists and, in handing you the Foulerton Award, I express the appreciation and gratitude of this Association. I desire to add my personal thanks for your many kindnesses when I found myself unexpectedly transferred to the Liverpool district.

Mr. Montag replied as follows:—

Mr. President, Fellow Members, You, Sir, have given one definition of a diplomat, I will give you another. A diplomat is a man so skilful that he can persuade his own wife that the neighbour's wife looks



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