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SWISS CLUB, TORONTO

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

1918 - 1920

"Swiss-Canadian Relations"

*Address delivered at General Meeting
in Toronto, April, 1920*

BY

CARL P. HUEBSCHER, LL.D.

Counsellor of Legation
Consul General of Switzerland in Canada



AT the occasion of the second anniversary of our young Club we take pleasure in giving our Members and friends a short review of the Club's activities during the past two years.

First of all let us remember the day of April 3rd, 1918, when Mr. Charles Faessler, together with some other Swiss in Toronto laid the foundation of this Club with the object to offer to the comparatively small Swiss Colony in Toronto an opportunity for social gatherings and exchange of views in commercial and industrial matters.

We are glad to say that under the enthusiastic leadership of its first president, Mr. E. Zuerrer and his Committee, the Club has fully lived up to its objects and developed splendidly, counting now 37 Members.

Four picnics and three dances, all numerously attended, brought the members and their friends together. The sporting games and prize contests at the picnics led to the discovery that we have some good athletes in our Club, the master of them all, Mr. H. Adam, who recently won high honors in wrestling.

During each winter season a tournament was held among the Bowling Leagues of the Club and there was a pleasant and most exciting struggle among the four teams: "St. Gall," "Zurich," "Berne" and "Geneva" for the championship, which was finally won by "Zurich."

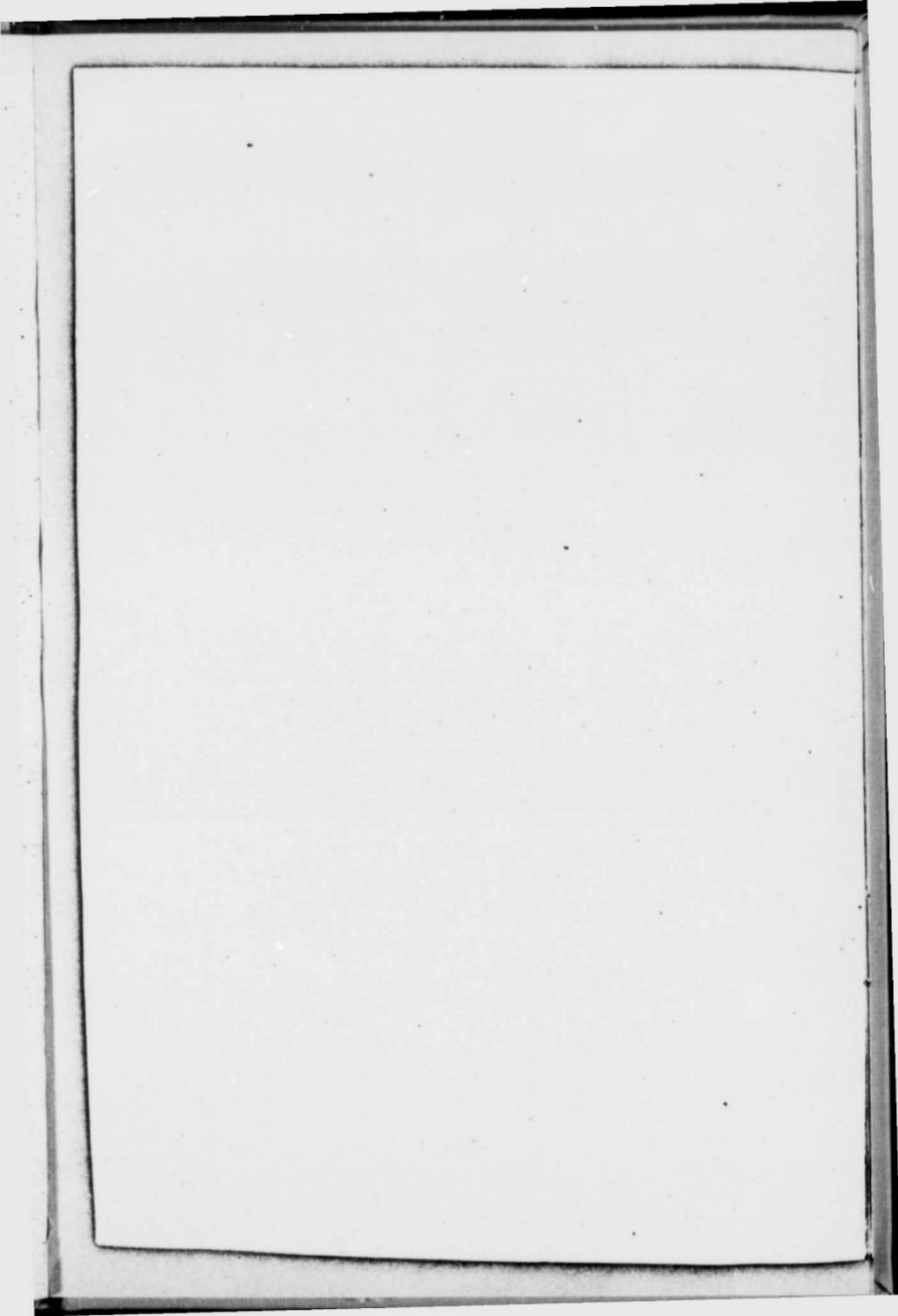
The influenza epidemic which also had a severe grip on Toronto, attacked a great many members, and we are very thankful that they all fully recovered again, especially two of our St. Gall boys, we can almost call it a miracle (or Providence?) that they fought it through. Allow us to thank all the members who, in those dark days stood firmly together and helped out where help and care was needed.

The Swiss Club of Toronto also proved its sympathy for those in Switzerland who suffered through the war, and the collection taken up by the Club for the benefit of the "Swiss National Relief Fund" resulted in \$987.05.

The official meetings of the Club each month proved in themselves a good opportunity for our commercial and industrial members to exchange their views on the topics of the day, and many an interesting question was discussed there.

Unfortunately the Club lost some very active members whose occupation forced them to leave Toronto; on the other hand we are glad to have a member who left Toronto and yet takes an active interest in our Club, we herewith wish to extend to him our hearty greetings.

Following this account we give a membership list of our Club, the address by our Consul-General, which was heartily appreciated:—



LIST OF MEMBERS

HONORARY MEMBERS:

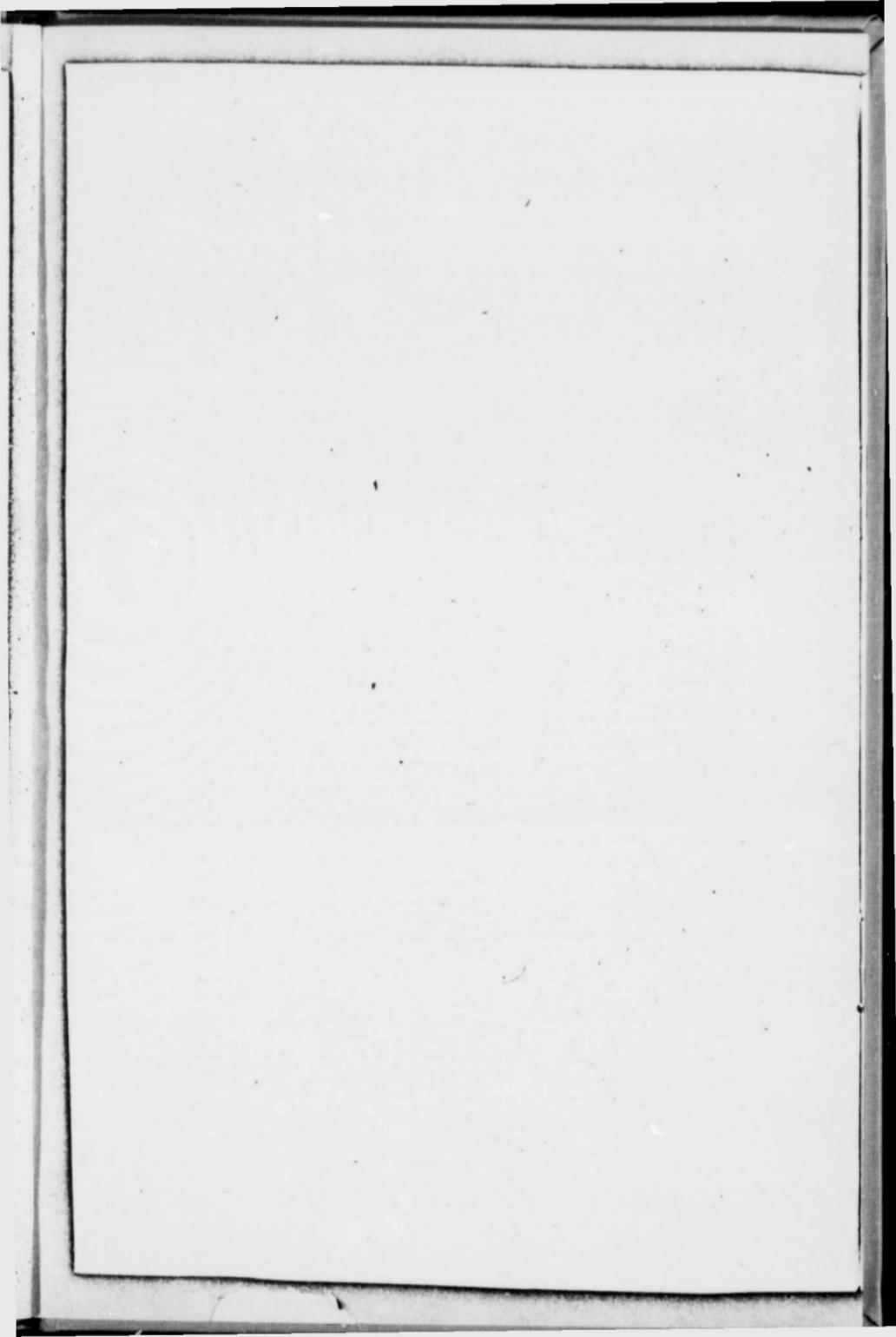
MR. CHARLES FAESSLER, Toronto.
CARL HUEBSCHER, LL.D., Consul-General of Switzerland,
Montreal.

COMMITTEE:

MR. L. ZIMMERMAN, President.
MR. WM. LOOSER, Vice-President.
MR. A. MULLER, Secretary.
MR. H. ADAM, Treasurer.
MR. E. REINER, Controller.
MR. E. ZUERHRER, Auditor.
MR. J. OERTLE, Auditor.

MEMBERS:

MR. F. ADAM.....	Toronto
MR. A. J. AEBERLI.....	"
MR. G. BERNER, SR.....	"
MR. W. BERNER, JR.....	"
MR. J. BRISACHER.....	"
MR. E. BRUPBACHER.....	"
MR. C. BURGNER.....	"
MR. J. CARROZ.....	"
MR. A. DORRET.....	"
MR. E. DEUBER.....	"
MR. J. DUBLIS.....	"
MR. A. ETTER.....	"
MR. E. GIMPLE.....	"
MR. A. GIMPLE.....	"
MR. J. F. GEGENSCHATZ.....	"
MR. J. HOSANG.....	"
MR. WM. INHELDER.....	"
MR. L. KREBSER.....	"
MR. W. KRIESI.....	"
MR. P. LAURENT.....	"
MR. P. MOORE.....	"
MR. H. MULLER.....	"
MR. F. PFAENDLER.....	"
MR. E. A. RUDIN.....	"
MR. C. TRACHSLER.....	"
MR. T. WICHT.....	"
MR. J. WEGMAN.....	"
MR. LUDER.....	Winnipeg



FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,

First of all, I should like to express my sincere gratification at meeting you to-night, this being the first gathering of countrymen and friends of Switzerland I have had the honour to meet in Canada since the Swiss Federal Council has entrusted me with its representation for the Dominion of Canada.

I must tell you frankly that I hesitated to follow this call of my Government, not because I did not appreciate the confidence shown me, but because I doubted somewhat whether I would be able to fulfil the rather high expectations which Swiss Commerce and Industry place in a Swiss Consul-General in Canada. What decided me to accept was the hope justified by former experience with Swiss Colonies in Italy, France, Argentine and the United States, that my countrymen in Canada would aid and assist me, and I am very glad to say that up to the present my hopes have been realized.

If I thus permit myself to ask your co-operation, I feel that you, in turn, have a right to know something more of the duties of a representative of the Swiss Government in Canada. I wish, therefore, to place before you a sketch of the program which I intend to follow in carrying out these duties, in other words, a summary of what I understand the activities of a Swiss Consul-General in Canada to be, and to what extent the co-operation of the Swiss colony in Canada is desirable in order to make these activities fruitful.

It seems to me that to lay before you such a program would be in harmony with those modern ideas born out of the war that the functions exercised in the name of a Government should be plainly laid before those whom they concern and who eventually are to be called upon for co-operation.

In order to limit our discussion and to give you, at the same time, a more or less concise idea of the manifold functions of an official Swiss representation in Canada, we can, by way of summary, divide these functions into the following four groups:

1. Commercial Interests.
2. Intellectual intercourse.

3. Protection of individual Swiss citizens and of their property.
4. Swiss Colony in Canada.

1. *Commercial Interests.*

Before going into the details of this subject, I will have to give you, as a background, a short sketch of the economic situation in Switzerland. There, as everywhere else, the end of the war was unfortunately not followed by the expected economic relief and reduction in prices of the most necessary foodstuffs and commodities. On the contrary, a general increase in price combined with a depreciation of exchange took place and reached its climax about the end of the year of 1919. Life has never been so expensive in Switzerland as at the end of last year. One could have expected that the rather high rate of exchange of the Swiss franc would have helped us, but unfortunately, the rate of exchange is low in just those countries where we have to buy our foodstuffs, among others, United States, Canada and Argentine. The salaried people and the workmen suffered most under these conditions, and the consequence has been the social unrest from which Switzerland could not keep itself free. Capital and Labor organized, and the resulting strikes succeeded in partly paralyzing certain industries. In addition to these troubles, the shortage of coal weighed heavily upon our industries, and we owe it to the United States and England that we could, to some extent at least, supply our most urgent needs in this regard, enabling our industries to continue and to keep our home fires burning.

Switzerland is only a small wheel in the big international movement and it cannot, unaided, find a definite solution for the high cost of living and the social unrest. But we plainly recognize, as everyone does now, that an *increase of production* is one of the best remedies for these problems. But such an increase is not quite easy to obtain, in view of the successful request of Labor for a world-wide introduction of the eight-hour day, which necessarily must affect production.

We have the eight-hour day in Switzerland, but we also

realize that we must work and work very hard in order to live. Swiss agriculture, industry and commerce will have to make a supreme effort in the years to come. We must not only produce for our own needs, but for the world which is facing a shortage of manufactured goods. In this relation Switzerland is only a branch factory of the European industrial centre. We have to export in order to prove that we are a useful wheel in the world's economic life, and in order to guarantee our people such living conditions and comfort as one can reasonably demand nowadays. The Swiss Government is fully aware of this fact and its duties towards both Capital and Labor in doing what it can to help the development of Swiss export.

As it is not possible for every manufacturer and exporter to send a representative abroad to investigate foreign markets, the Swiss Government desires to render assistance by the better organized *Consular and Diplomatic representation* abroad. A new Consular Reglement which came into force in March 1920, is a great step forward. It establishes, in principle, a closer relation between all Consulates and the home authorities with a view to centralizing commercial information. It requires among other things that Consuls shall send to the newly created Consular Service of the Political Department, regular reports on the economic conditions in their districts. These reports are to be submitted to the Department of Public Economy as well as to interested Swiss firms. To this end the Consular service of the Political Department will publish a Consular Bulletin. Commercial experts may be attached to the more important Consular posts, among which Montreal may certainly be considered as one of the foremost. The creation of Swiss Boards of Trade in foreign countries will be closely followed up by the Swiss authorities.

Finally, Art. 85 of the Reglement provides that Consuls are authorized to appoint among competent Swiss citizens of their district some four or more correspondents who will form a *Commercial Advisory Committee*, attached to the Consulate. This Committee shall meet regularly and discuss such questions as the Consul may lay before it.

I am very glad to have an occasion, to-night, to call

particular attention to this "*Commercial Advisory Committee*" and to say that I would be glad to find in Toronto some countrymen who would be willing to accept such an honorary appointment to a temporary "*Advisory Committee*" attached to the Swiss Consulate-General in Montreal, at least, until the Swiss Federal Council has appointed a new Consul in Toronto. Such a Committee, if carefully selected, may be of the greatest help in giving correct information and calling the attention of the official representative to opportunities for the marketing of Swiss goods.

I shall not go into more detail on the subject to-night. Some data from statistics may, however, show you convincingly, that as far as *SWISS CANADIAN TRADE* is concerned, an efficient information service under the direction of the Swiss Consulate-General in Montreal, assisted by the other Consulates and by such Advisory Committees could do very much for the development of the Swiss Canadian commercial relations.

I may say in passing that statistics of foreign trade during the war do not give a correct idea of the importance of trade relations largely on account of the advance in prices. I will, however, try my best to illustrate my point from available material.

The total value of the Swiss-Canadian trade exchange was in 1913, before the war, about fifty million francs; it decreased steadily during the war and shows in 1918 a total value of only fifteen million francs. According to the official statistics, which, as we shall see later on, are not correct, the trade balance was always in favour of Switzerland as the following table indicates:

1913 (in million frs.)	..... 20	31
1914	..... 15	29
1915	..... 0.3	26
1916	..... 1	39
1917	..... 1.8	23
1918	..... 0.4	14

The sudden increase of exports in 1916 which appears from this list is due entirely to textiles and watches.

Switzerland is *importing from Canada* foodstuffs, such as cereals, canned fish and flour. Furthermore, hides, furs, asbestos, mica and finally, small quantities of chemical

products such as phosphorus, baume and resin are also imported.

The above indicated figures of imports from Canada are far from being correct, because since 1914 Switzerland has received from Canada large shipments of cereals which do not appear in the Statistics as Imports from Canada because they were shipped via the United States and are, therefore, included in the heavy shipments of cereals we received from that country.

I have obtained correct figures for these Canadian shipments from August, 1914, to March, 1918. They amount to 8,910,167 bushels of wheat, which represent at an approximate value of \$2.20 a bushel, \$19,602,367,

or \$1 at Frs. 505.....Frs. 98,991,533

and about 1,300,000 bushels of oats at

75 cents a bushel, equal to \$975,000, or..Frs. 4,923,750

Total grain export.....Frs. 103,915,283

If we confront these figures of the value of Grain export alone, from Canada to Switzerland, for not even four years, to a value of about 104 million francs—with the total value of the Swiss export in the full four years, 1915 to 1918, inclusive, of about 102 million francs—we find that the trade balance which is, according to the official figures, in favour of Switzerland, is changed into a trade balance in favour of Canada, without even taking in consideration the value of other exported articles from Canada during the same period.

These figures will show us that in the past years Switzerland was a very heavy buyer in Canada, and at the same time they serve to remind us how grateful we should be to the Government and people of the Dominion for having helped us to feed our people during the war. We shall not forget!

As far as *Swiss Export to Canada* is concerned *textiles* are of first importance. In 1915, of a total export of 26 millions, textiles claim 23 million francs. These figures jumped in 1916 to 34 millions (of a total export of 39 millions) and decreased again to 10 millions in 1918 (of a total export of 14 millions). The main articles are:

Articles de soie à la piece.
Broderies garnitures et sur tulle
Rubans
Rideaux
Bonneterie
Tissus de laine, etc.

It is interesting to note that straw braidings are the only articles listed under "textiles" that show a continuous increase in their export value to Canada despite the war; although the total amount of the export is still very small (300,000 frs.), there are very encouraging indications that this export article will find a much wider "debouché" in Canada.

The many requests made by Canadian agents and buyers of the Swiss Consulate-General in Montreal for obtaining representation of Swiss textile manufactures is very encouraging for the future. There seems to be very considerable market for silks of all kinds, certain kinds of embroideries for ladies' wear, silk ribbons, and also, in a more restricted way for knitted goods.

Watches are second in importance among export articles to Canada. The war has certainly proven a benefit to this trade as the total of the export of watches has increased from 1.4 million francs in 1915 to 4 millions in 1916 and has since then remained stationary.

"Finished movements" represent a value of 2.9 millions out of the four millions in 1918; nickel watches are second in importance; they undoubtedly include the wrist watches. The Swiss watch manufacturer and exporter seems very keen to capture the Canadian market, and as we have a number of countrymen in this trade in Canada, I hope they will help to canvass the market and extend these relations. Steps should be taken to avoid the contingency that Swiss manufacturers entrust their representation to agents, commission agents, who do not act in the interest of the Swiss watch industry by selling goods in Canada at any price, thus creating a sort of dumping ground.

Chemical products are third in importance as far as export articles to Canada are concerned. This export is increasing slowly. It was only 0.7 million francs in 1918, but from figures which have been given to me by importers in

Montreal, the export of drugs to Canada has quite considerably increased in 1919, one importer alone having bought in 1919, from a single house in Basel drugs, the value of which exceeds the total export value of chemical products in 1918. I am also informed by a representative in New York of another chemical plant in Basel that considerable shipments of dyestuffs from Basel, destined for Canada, are made to New York and then re-exported to Canada. Their values are as follows:—

Year 1916	about	Dollars	111,000
“ 1917	“	“	74,000
“ 1918	“	“	100,000
“ 1919	“	“	129,000
Jan. 1920	“	“	17,000
Feb. 1920	“	“	12,000
Mar. 1920	“	“	25,000

The greatest part of these dyestuffs is coming from Switzerland, while some of them were mixed with goods of American manufacture. These shipments are of course included among United States exports to Canada, and do not appear in statistics as being of Swiss origin.

It seems rather astonishing that the Canadian market has not been worked more intensively by our industries in Basel.

Previous to the war and also during the first three years of the war, we exported some foodstuffs to Canada (0.8 million francs in 1915, 0.5 in 1916, 0.2 in 1917), mainly “farine alimentaire” for children, and chocolate. The export had, of course, to be stopped entirely later on, but it will undoubtedly again be taken up. I have received a number of applications from Canadian agents for representation of Swiss chocolate firms.

The exportation of *machinery* to Canada seems to be very sporadic, and thus far has been of very small value (0.1 million francs in 1915, 0.2 in 1916). We have exported some hydraulic machinery, and latterly embroidery and knitting machinery. The Canadian market was entirely abandoned as a consequence of the war.

Under the heading “*Autres articles*” are classified some timid endeavors to export articles such as phonographs,

musical instruments, both of which did nicely in 1917 and 1918, and promise to gain a good foothold in this country.

It is rather surprising that the Swiss *graphic arts* have not made a serious effort in Canada. Before the war such products were imported here mainly from Germany. Our industry being well equipped in this line I think a thorough investigation of the market, especially in Toronto, with a view to increasing their export, would be justified.

The *official commercial relations* between Switzerland and Canada are governed by the Clause of the Most Favourable Nation, contained in Articles IX. and X. of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Reciprocal Establishment, concluded between Switzerland and Great Britain on September 6, 1855, and by the additional Treaty of March 20th, 1914.

Thus, Swiss goods are entitled to the rates of duty provided under all commercial conventions made between Canada and other nations, especially to the intermediate tariff as extended to France, Belgium, Netherlands and Italy. The Franco-Canadian Treaty ceases to be in force after June 19th, 1920. The future development of the commercial relations between Switzerland and Canada will depend greatly on the way in which the proposed tariff reform is carried out in Canada, but we sincerely hope that the very friendly dispositions which the Canadian Government shows towards Switzerland will be reflected in any future arrangements which could be made in regard to the entrance of Swiss goods into Canada.

I hope this exposition has not been too long and too prosaic, but the statistical analysis will show better than any explanation the direction in which we have to work, what we have to do and how our countrymen and friends can co-operate. All Swiss Consulates in Canada will be glad to receive suggestions from countrymen and persons interested, with a view to supplying Canada's special needs from Swiss sources. It cannot be expected that the official representations do the business themselves, but we can help in bringing interested parties together. We can guide those who are coming from Switzerland to sell, and those who are going there to buy. We can centralize and forward the useful information which will be given to us by those

who are in direct touch with affairs and who will consent to assist us.

I should like to relate a touching experience, as an illustration of the sympathy prevalent here: a straightforward looking Canadian business man entered my office the other day telling me that he had been a prisoner of war in Germany, heavily wounded, and later on released to be interned in Switzerland, where he regained his health. He found Swiss ways sympathetic and wanted now to represent certain Swiss firms, being happy, he told me to help us in our export to Canada as a sign of gratitude for what our country had so gladly offered him.

2. *Intellectual Intercourse.*

Although we all fully realize the necessity and great importance of development of reciprocal trade, you will certainly agree with me that commercial ends do not fill a man's life and can eventually not prove an absolute and lasting tie between two friendly nations. The trade, if understood in a fair way and without overstepping the rules of legitimate competition, should work hand-in-hand with an intellectual intercourse, by which I mean a thorough understanding of the political institutions of each country, of the aspirations and ideals of its people, a study of the conduct of education and of the expressions of science, literature and art. There is certainly a moral obligation for two nations, who are members of the League of Nations (in Switzerland we wait only for the expression of the popular vote which will, I hope sincerely, ratify the decision of the Federal Parliament to join the League) to know each other.

It should be very interesting for Canadians to study the political institutions of Switzerland, the oldest Republic and Democracy in the world, where political expression is the result of the will of the people crystallized through hundreds of years. To my mind there is nothing more interesting for us than to acquire a knowledge of the wonderful political structure in which Canada found its strength and an assertion of itself as a young and self-confident nation giving its subjects real democratic freedom, but still

remaining a part of the powerful and wise organization of the British Empire.

Such mutual study should be encouraged and each one of us can help in his own way in the circle of his acquaintances. I consider it to be one of my most pleasant duties to promote such mutual understanding, provided it does not take the form of propoganda which we all dislike, as well on this side of the ocean as over there in our Home country.

We will help and encourage Canadians to find their way to Switzerland where they will be most welcome guests.

Many Canadian students are now going to France to study in its great universities. It would be an interesting side trip for them to complete and develop their knowledge in one of the Swiss universities, Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchatel, Fribourg, Basel, Berne, Zurich or at the Polytechnical Institute in Zurich. They will find in all faculties, professors who are well known as specialists in their branch of science. We can all do our bit to encourage Canadian students to take advantage of their stay in Europe, by a visit to Switzerland, and we shall hope that, in turn, they will encourage some Swiss students to come over here.

3. Protection of Swiss Citizens and their Property.

The experiences during the war have shown that only an efficient representation abroad is able to protect successfully the rights of individual Swiss and their property. To accomplish this end great efforts have been made by the Swiss Government. Credits have been opened for protection of Swiss citizens which surpass anything done before in that direction. The personnel of Legations and Consulates has been greatly increased. For instance, our Legation in Washington during the war at times counted a personnel of seventy-six. As a result, I do not hesitate to say that to-day the rights of the Swiss citizens and the respect due them and their property is now greater abroad than it was before the war.

But we have also found that there were among our countrymen, people who, claiming dual nationality, used that peculiar provision of the Swiss citizenship law in such a way, that they would at the same time evade their duties

to both countries, the old and the new. Furthermore, we found a number of people sailing under the Swiss flag to which they are not entitled. Such situations are a discredit to those who honestly do their duty.

In future, according to the new Consular Reglement, a Swiss citizen who desires to obtain the protection of the Swiss official representation abroad, has to prove that he is registered in some Swiss Consulate or Legation. Such a registration has effect for one year and must be renewed yearly. The Swiss Consulate-General will shortly issue details regarding this question. A small fee is attached to this registration, namely \$2 for the first year and \$1 for the yearly renewal thereafter.

This very small contribution towards keeping up the maintenance of representation abroad is to be considered as a voluntary tax of the Swiss in foreign countries who find in their representation, I do not hesitate to say, a more efficient and cheaper help in hundreds of cases for which, if at home, they would have to help themselves or to address themselves to a lawyer whose fees, I dare say we all agree, would be considerably higher. Each Swiss who registers will receive the Consular Bulletin, which will thus serve as a tie between the Swiss abroad and those at home.

I will pledge here publicly and in full knowledge of the far-reaching importance of this promise, that each registered Swiss, whoever he may be, of whatever standing, will find, if his request is justified, full protection when addressing himself to the Swiss Consulate-General in Canada. The Swiss Government has sent me here to help them, to assist them, and I will do my very best to fulfil these duties conscientiously.

4. *Swiss Colony in Canada.*

I do not need to tell you much about the relation between the representatives of the Swiss Government in Canada and the Swiss Colony, because, first of all, we all understand what has to be done, and second, because most of what can be told I have already touched upon.

I will, however, not fail to tell you explicitly that I consider the reappointment of a Swiss Consul in Toronto as

one of the first matters to be taken up, and in fact, I am **already** in communication with our authorities regarding **this** question. My very presence here to-night should convince you that I am well aware of one of your most sincere wishes and I hope to be able to soon bring a definite decision of the Swiss Government to your knowledge. The future will show whether it would not be advisable, in the interest of the Swiss Colony and the Swiss trade also to appoint **Consuls** in other places in Canada, besides Winnipeg and **Vancouver**.

Whether being a Swiss citizen or whether having found a new home in this country, we can still all reunite under the flag of our Old Country which has lent its emblem and its colors to the most glorious achievement of Humanity: *the Red Cross*.

Our actual or former allegiance to Switzerland can best be expressed by our being law-abiding inhabitants of Canada and by our fitting in as useful members, helping to build up a great Nation, and finally, *by standing together wherever we speak and think of our dear Switzerland*.