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## Welcome to the Guests of the Progesterone Symposium

W. LÖFFLER,

Vice-president of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences

The Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences bids a warm welcome to the participants of the present Symposium and particularly to all the visitors coming from so many different countries. We are happy to thank Hoffmann-La Roche for having organized this symposium to discuss progesterone problems in this town. The town of Basle squeezed between France and Germany is a kind of Mini-Manhattan inhibited in its horizontal expansion. So the town was more and more obliged to develop in an upward direction. This may be understood not only physically. Research work in the field of biological chemistry began at this town's university, when, a century ago, MIESCHER discovered the protamine and the all-pervading nucleic acids. It was also Basle that created the first teaching department in physiological chemistry, as this section was called in 1885. Later, an important part of research work in this field shifted to the scientific laboratories of the industry, a development that contributed greatly to a mutual understanding for practical medical needs and scientifically created medicaments. Urgent questions starting at the patient's bedside are transmitted to the laboratory, undergo experimental studies. The results are tested and adapted to the patient's need and the medicaments are provided in forms which can be easily managed. Once upon a time we submitted a request for help in research concerning coagulation of the blood to the Emil Borell-Foundation of Hoffmann-La Roche. When exposing our plans we emphasized that we could not guarantee the practical importance of the results. We got the answer: "That concerns just the kind of problems our foundation is created for." On the other hand HUFELAND, 150 years ago, said: "Nisi utile est quod agimus vana est gloria nostra." Unconditional research being the aim of modern science we do not believe that lack of usefulness may always be a criterion for the high scientific value of a paper. The purpose of symposia is to coordinate methods, experiences, theory and practice by creating personal contacts between scientific workers, giving new suggestions and thus economizing experiences and time. The house we are in was actually desig-

nated for this purpose but also for social contact after lectures and discussions. That was in the 1790s, in an epoch which Talleyrand glorified emphatically with the following words: "Qui n'a pas vécu dans les années voisines de 1789 ne sait pas ce que c'est que le plaisir de vivre." May a glance of this vitality touch our Symposium.