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UNION HELVETIA

Golden Jubilee Dinner & Dance

At

1, GERRARD PLACE, W.I.

President : Mr. P. LEHRIAN.



In spite of devaluation and departing from Gold standards, — Gold —, and whatever is connected with it, still seems to have a lustre attached to it.

This was proved last Friday, November 13th, when the Union Helvetic celebrated the Golden Jubilee of their Mother Society in Lucerne. Those people, who are of a superstitious disposition might have gravely shaken their heads, that such a festival should take place on a Friday (it is said that no real sailor will venture on a sea voyage on a Friday) and then remember, it was the 13th of November too.

But as the Swiss are not a seafaring people, the Friday proved to be no obstacle, and those who frown at the figure 13, must have been converted for all times, because Friday the 13th of November, 1936 was undoubtedly one of the most successful ones in the history of the Union Helvetic. —

Nearly 200 members and guests assembled in the gaily decorated Hall at 1, Gerrard Place, W.I., to spend a few happy hours in congenial company. I understand that the attendance nearly proved to be a record.

A reception was held previous to the dinner, which gave everyone a chance to re-new old acquaintances; it was a happy idea of the committee to allow the participants to have a "chin-wag" together, especially as so many members and friends from the Provinces turned up.

Long before the revellers sat down to dinner, great animation reigned throughout the various reception rooms, and promised well for what was to follow.

The dinner started punctually at 9.30 p.m., and the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, who honoured the gathering by presiding over it, received a very hearty and cordial reception on taking the Chair. —

Although perhaps not in the best of taste, it is nevertheless true to say, that one of the most important factors at a dinner, is the food, and I have not the slightest hesitation in declaring that part of the programme as successful as the other. Mr. and Mrs. Wymann, the stewards of the Club fully deserved the compliments which were later passed on to them by the President.

During the dinner, a small and efficient orchestra played some agreeable music, and let it be said to their credit, not too forcibly: unfortunately of late, some of the orchestra's who supply the necessary musical fare during dinners, have played as if they were engaged to summon the diners to their last judgment. —

The toast to H.M. the King and to Switzerland were given by the Swiss Minister; both toasts were accompanied by the respective National Anthems. A friend of mine, in the vicinity sang the Swiss Anthem with such fervour and patriotic inspiration, that I was in deadly fear lest his shirt studs would fly out, causing havoc to his vis-à-vis. —

The speech for the Union Helvetic was given by Mr. Lehrian, the President of the Society. Before, I give a *résumé* of his excellent oration, I would say, how disappointed I was, and a disappointment which was undoubtedly shared by all, that my old friend Mr. A. Indermaur, was, owing to illness, prevented from presiding over this festival. Those who know with what zeal and enthusiasm Mr. Indermaur works and has worked for the Society, can well imagine the disappointment he must have felt to be absent on such a conspicuous occasion; but it might be of some consolation to him to hear, that the whole company enthusiastically acknowledged the services he had so faithfully rendered to the Society for over quarter of a century. —

Mr. Lehrian, after having thanked the Swiss Minister for his presence, gave a short *résumé* of the history of the Union Helvetic from which could be gathered that the Union Helvetic was founded in 1886 in Lucerne, and the London section one year later (1887) by the late Mr. Senn. He reiterated that at the beginning, the Hotel staff was considered to be far from skilled and that their social standard was somehow not much higher than the servant class. It was only after Mr. Aschwanden, the Founder of the Society,

started his by now famous hotel school in Lucerne, that the hotel profession started on their upward journey.

The speaker mentioned some figures, which were highly significant; f.i., in the year 1890 a sum of 1,600 frs. was distributed from the sick Fund amongst the members, in 1935 the distribution reached the amount of nearly 200,000 frs. To-day the Pension Fund, stands at the remarkable total of 3,068,000 frs. The total membership of the Union Helvetic family exceeds 6,000 members.

Mr. Lehrian then mentioned, amongst applause, that the London section has been foremost in having the pensions for old members of the Society increased.

"It is to be regretted" Mr. Lehrian said, "that the membership of the London Section has rather decreased than increased during the last few years, which is to be attributed to the still very stringent immigration policy of the British authorities."

He thanked the Minister on behalf of the Society, for the efforts he has made to get the authorities to agree to the interchanging of Swiss and English Hotel employees, which is the only way for young Swiss Hotel employees to make a stay here.

On terminating his speech, Mr. Lehrian warmly thanked his committee members, past Presidents and veterans for the work they are rendering and have rendered to the Union Helvetic, singling out Mr. A. Indermaur who has presided over the "Landesverwaltung" for more than ten years. He also paid a compliment to the steward, stewardess and staff of the Clubhouse. Various telegrams of good wishes from members in England and abroad were read out. Mr. Lehrian was heartily cheered when he resumed his seat.

The Swiss Minister, who was the next speaker, received a very hearty reception, and the congenial atmosphere which was such a feature during the evening must have infected him, because I noticed that he entirely dispensed with his notes, (which have often considerably lightened my task), and spoke in that easy witty after-dinner vein of which he is such a past master.

Monsieur Paravicini mentioned that, although he was supposed to represent our country at another function that very evening, he was successful in making such arrangements, which enabled him to be present at this most important festival.

Having at some length referred to the Jubilee festivities which took place last month at Lucerne, and on which occasion he had addressed a letter to the Swiss Administration, he said that the relations between the Legation and the Union Helvetic during the last fifty years, have remained uninterrupted and fruitful. The Minister then said, amongst much applause "the head and the staff of the official Swiss representation will continue to do their best to maintain this common work. I have come here tonight to confirm these friendly and, I hope, helpful intentions, and it would gratify me to know that we shall always find the same dispositions on the part of the leaders and members of this Society."

Monsieur Paravicini then paid a high tribute to Mr. Indermaur's work and also to the services which Mr. Lehrian, the President of the London Section, is so ably rendering.

The speech of the Minister, which was interwoven with many witty repartées was long and heartily cheered by the entire company.

Mr. A. Boog, extended a very hearty welcome to the many veterans present, and voiced his regret that unfortunately not all were present to receive their diploma and medal for 25 years membership.

The speaker especially mentioned Mr. J. Sermier, a former President of the Union Helvetic, who entered that evening the distinguished band of veterans. He said that many have in the past felt the sting of his criticism, but there was never any doubt that Mr. Sermier was heart and soul in his work to make the

Society what it is to-day. He thanked all the veterans on behalf of the U.H. for their services and faithful membership. —

Perhaps I am allowed to sympathise with all those, who have at one time or other "felt the sting" of Mr. Sermier's critical mind, because I have been "stung" too some years ago, but although it was rather unpleasant while the pain lasted, I have long ago forgotten it, because I knew that he had at all times the interest, and the welfare of his beloved Union Helvetic at heart, and even amongst best friends temporary misunderstandings can occur.

As one, who has known the newly fledged veteran for over twenty years, I was glad of having had an opportunity to be present on the occasion, when the long standing merits of friend Sermier received such a fine tribute and sincere acknowledgement. —

Mr. Sermier, greatly moved by the honour bestowed on him, thanked the company in a few words, he also expressed his appreciation to the Society on behalf of his fellow veterans for the invitation extended to them.

The Minister then presented the diplomas and medals to nearly ten new veterans, most of them looking far from what one expects a veteran to look like. The last toast was reserved for the official and unofficial guests and the Ladies.

Mr. Juriens who, I am glad to say, has recovered from his long illness, was once again entrusted with this task, a task which he as usual, accomplished with great efficiency. He mentioned that amongst the official guests were present, that the Swiss Minister:

Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme;
Pastor C. Th. Hahn and Mrs. Hahn;
The Chairman of the Food and Cookery Association;
Mr. A. Stauffer and Mrs. Stauffer, Swiss Observer;
Mr. Hediger, President Swiss Club (Schweizerbund);
Mr. P. Brun, President Swiss Club Birmingham;
Mr. G. De Brunner, Hon. President Swiss Culinary Society;
Mr. and Mrs. Kummer, President Swiss Culinary Society.

Mr. Juriens also paid some flattering remarks to the Ladies present. Thus the first part of the evening concluded just as the clock struck midnight. The dancing then started, unfortunately, having had previously some late nights in the service of the Swiss Observer, I was unable to stay, but I have not the slightest doubt, that the 2nd part of the evening was as successful as the first.

The Union Helvetic has every reason to look back on this memorable evening with pride and satisfaction, it was a fine evening, which once more proved that the spirit of comradeship remains as cordial as it always has been, and now a hearty "Glückauf" for the

75th Jubilee.

ST.

CARMEN HAGMANN.

On Thursday last week the London public and the Swiss Colony had an opportunity of making the acquaintance of a talented and promising Swiss singer, Madame Carmen Hagmann, at the Grosvenor Hall. It is a pleasure to hail this newcomer, of whom nothing was known here before this concert, as a serious and ambitious artist. Her programme, with which she introduced herself in London, was in fact rather too ambitious for a young singer whose qualities cannot, in the nature of things, have had opportunity and experience enough to develop fully in every direction as required by the choice of her songs. But her recital was none-the-less an encouraging all-round performance with many high lights very pleasing to the audience and also appreciated by the few English critics who were present.

Madame Hagmann's interesting selection of songs comprised a delightful Scarlatti, two song groups by Schubert and Alban Berg, a song each