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“GRUETLI” CELEBRATION SWISS CLUB

Manchester

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER, 14th 1936.

AT THE MIDLAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

The Swiss Club Manchester held their annual Banquet and Ball at the Midland Hotel on the 14th of this month. A good many Swiss, residing in the surrounding districts as far apart as Leeds and Liverpool make a point of never missing this joyous annual event. Also, it should be mentioned here that the Swiss Club Manchester is one of great distinction in that a considerable proportion of their membership of between 50 and 60 are scientists of high repute, mainly chemists connected with the dyestuffs industry. Grace and lustre was added to the function by the presence of the Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini.

After the disposal of a splendid menu and the silent toast to the anonymous donor of the wines and liqueurs, the President, Mr. E. Kübler, delivered his speech from the chair:—

He welcomed the guests in the name of the Swiss Club Manchester and was particularly proud, he said, to be able to welcome our Minister, together with his consort, because, in greeting them, we were greeting our homeland, and their presence would add grace and importance to the fête which was named Grutlfeier in honour of the birth of Switzerland. He greeted Consul and Mrs. Schedler, the laird of the colony, as well as Consul and Mrs. Montag, of Liverpool (which town he described as the outer port of Manchester). Lancashire, the President held, must be at least as important as London, seeing that the county has two Swiss consuls stationed within 50 miles of each other. There were delegates from the sister colonies in London, Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds and Liverpool to welcome, and the President did it all in such a homely yet impressive way, mentioning in particular the Rev. and Mrs. Hahn, who had come north on the yearly visit to the colony. Mr. Kübler congratulated an honorary member of the club, Mr. Ulrich Hagenbuch, upon the attainment of his seventieth year, and the club wished him many happy returns. He then gave a special welcome to the ladies of the party, bidding them be patient while he would conclude his report of the club's activity during the past year.

Monthly meetings and Jass Hocks had been well attended; there were fewer social events, but greater success in them; a Christmas tree party and a new Year's lunch, then a dance in April and an outing on Good Friday, the rally with the Swiss Club Birmingham—all and sundry items of enjoyment and merriment and a credit to their social life, but the Bundesfeier had to be cancelled owing to the absence of so many Swiss out of town. The President then referred to the magnificent response of the Swiss in the Manchester district to the appeal for funds in favour of the distressed Swiss in Spain which enabled him to forward to the SWISS OBSERVER a sum of no less than £67 8s. He ended his speech with the two verses:—

CULTURAL PROPAGANDA FOR SWITZERLAND.

An N.S.H. Discussion.

A very lively and most interesting discussion on the topic of Swiss cultural propaganda abroad was initiated by Dr. Kessler, the London correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, at the last monthly meeting of the New Helvetic Society. The starting-point of Dr. Kessler's exposé was a letter written by the Central President of the “Nouvelle Société Helvétique,” Dr. Zschokke, to Monsieur Motta a few months ago. In this letter, published in the Bulletin of the N.S.H., the need for more effective and organised propaganda for our country in its higher values was stressed and the formation of a central organisation for this purpose was suggested.

Dr. Kessler found it, unfortunately, only too easy to prove the fact that the ignorance in foreign countries about the very important contributions to the arts, science, industry and social and political thought Switzerland has made, as well as about the present conditions prevailing in our beloved home-country can be truly described as amazing. The need for a well-planned and steadily pursued propaganda to overcome this ignorance and to help those well disposed to us to understand us better, appeared at the present time particularly urgent, declared the speaker, to combat the effect of so

Wenn auch trübe Tage heute,
Ernst und Sorgen uns bemühn,
Kommet vorwärts, lasst die Sorgen,
Feiert mit beim Alpenglühn.

Feuer leuchtet auf den Bergen
Weit ins dunkle Tal hinaus;
Und der Schweizer still' Gedanken
Kehren heim zum Vaterhaus.

The Minister then rose to the loud acclamation of the company. He explained how it was that seven years had elapsed since he had been with them last, for which the Manchester weather was not alone to blame, and how Madame Paravicini had not enjoyed this pleasure for even 15 years. He congratulated the club upon their patriotic vitality, the felicity of their choice of President, and their warm-hearted welcome.

In speaking about Switzerland, he drew a comparison between the bad old times of the depression and the present time, full of hope and many signs of recovery. In his happy style of enunciating fitting and homely observations, the Minister forgot to give the speech he had brought with him, and he entertained the company mightily by professing that Madame had packed the wrong one and he was now in the soup. (One day we hope to print that speech.) Then he raised his glass to the toast of the Father of the Colony, Dr. E. Schedler, the Consul of Manchester, and paid him a very sincere compliment as colleague and collaborator in keeping the Swiss in Great Britain in order. By the unending applause there can be no doubt that the Manchester colony was very well pleased with their Minister.

It was now the turn of Dr. E. Schedler, the Consul of the colony, to rise and thank the Minister for his eulogy and toast. This banquet, he said, would be an outstanding function in the life of the Swiss Club Manchester by the honour conferred upon it by the presence of the Representative of our country at H.M. Court. The presence of Madame Paravicini in particular was a very gracious act and he wished her to know that Manchester would appreciate this special kindness, overburdened as she must be with the many duties of her high office and at the height of the social season. For personal reasons, also, said Dr. Schedler, was he grateful to the Minister, as he now had come to relieve him of that annual speech about Switzerland and her economic position. And good fortune would have it that the Minister could draw to-day a much happier picture of things in general than it had been possible for him for some years past. The speaker then included his colleague, Consul Montag, in some remarks about the official duties

much propaganda of another sort emanating from other quarters.

These views were unreservedly endorsed by a succession of other speakers, who welcomed the suggestions propounded by the Central President of the N.S.H. to the Swiss Government, and ventilated some of their own experiences and ideas in the matter. In agreement with the first speaker the general sense of the meeting was a conviction that much more could be done by ourselves, the members of the colony, to further the interests of our country. If every one of us determined to utilise every opportunity to spread the right information about Switzerland in private discussion as well as with short or longer lectures a great deal could be achieved, declared Mr. Suter, on the strength of much experience of his own. But there might also be a collective effort. The establishment of a kind of watching committee to correct misstatements in the British Press about Switzerland was suggested. Dr. Egli submitted the proposal of forming an Anglo-Swiss Association for the purpose of fostering good relations and mutual understanding between our two countries. This idea seemed to meet with much approval and we will probably hear more about it in the near future.

of a consul, regretting that Mr. Hoffstetter, Consular Agent in Scotland, had been prevented from attending the banquet. He stated that the time had gone when the consulates were looked upon as isolated outposts, as self-supporting units. A new issue of the greatest importance had arisen. A consul now had to assist his country in the economic struggle; he now had to be a carrier of good will, a finder of markets, a pioneer of commerce. A very difficult task, especially in a country like England, with vast and competitive industries, highly organised and complex, but he maintained that the conditions could be met by an organisation equally effective on the basis of close co-operation between headquarters and agencies. Dr. Schedler thanked the Minister for his kind words; loud applause greeted his statement that in about six months' time he would retire from his business activity and then be able to devote more time still to the welfare of his colony.

Two speeches were delivered on behalf of the guests; one by Mr. A. F. Suter, Nouvelle Société Helvétique, London Group, who gave a brief account of the Auslandschweizertag in Montreux in September last, and who expressed the patriotic greetings of that assembly to all Swiss abroad. He referred to the strength of the London deputation, being half afraid that they had come up to Manchester to get “something for nothing,” perhaps the secret of the club's unity, perhaps that of the singular quality to arrange a more perfect Grutlfeier each year. In expressing the thanks of the guests for the invitations, he assured the company that the memory of this happy evening might last only to the second Saturday in November, 1937, but that their great and truly Swiss fellowship was a thing to remember for ever.

Professor Inebnit, Lecturer in French at the University of Leeds, made a final speech in French, describing humorously little character traits of the English in England, as they struck him in his daily life. We should have been glad if he told us something of his own work in connection with the exchange of youth and the working of holiday camps in many countries, for which his name is known far and wide. But he gave us a splendid speech none the less, and finished with a toast to “The absent Swiss in Foreign Lands.”

The time was late, the band had been waiting for an hour or so, and they struck up with accumulated vigour. Round and round went the gay company, while some of us lounged in the three big bays, renewing old friendships and acquaintances, or making new ones, thoroughly happy and care-free. Midnight struck hours too soon; musical honours to “Vaterland and gracious King” and once more au revoir to all and sundry of the Swiss Club Manchester, not many in number but stout and true of heart and mind, each and every one of them.

A.F.S.

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