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THE SWISS CLUBS BALLOCH & DUNFERMLINE.

1st August Celebrations — 1950.

Over 70 compatriots from the above Swiss Clubs met on Sunday afternoon, 30th July, at Balmaha, a beauty spot on the South-west shores of Loch Lomond to celebrate our National day.

For some time past, such a meeting has been the aim of both clubs. When the time for the 1st August celebrations drew near, this desire was again put before the Presidents of both communities by our Consular agent, Mr. Ernst Hofstetter.

During the early afternoon, those from the East Coast arrived by bus and car, while Balloch members came by steamer to the arranged meeting place. Unfortunately, such combined gatherings did not take place during or after the war, and many of us had not met for some time. With a hearty handshake we were able to renew old acquaintances and exchange a few words with our friends. Since the foundation of the two clubs some 15 years ago, there has always been a close relationship between them. Members of the one party have always been well represented at the functions of the other. Although we live far from our homeland, the "compatriots of the North" are united and rise to our national motto:— "One for all, all for one."

The organizer of "to-day's outing" gave us a pleasant surprise when he asked us to take our seats in Balmaha Tea Rooms to enjoy a delicious High Tea. We wish to thank Mr. Berli on behalf of all participants for his untiring work to make our outing such a success.

Mr. Berli, the president of the Swiss Club, Balloch, then rose to welcome us all for this year's 1st August celebrations. A special welcome was accorded to all the guests from East and West. We have come together to-day to express our feelings for and our thanks to our homeland, said Mr. Berli. "We may consider ourselves lucky to be allowed to stay in a country where we enjoy similar privileges to those which prevail in our homeland." Before introducing the speaker of the day, Mr. Berli wished everyone a happy afternoon and asked our Consular agent to address the community.

In well chosen words, Mr. Hofstetter expressed his gratitude in seeing so many of his compatriots from both clubs at to-day's celebrations. He said:— "Whilst we are not living in a happy world at present, we must be united and work together as a true Swiss always desires. Let us never forget the sturdy sons of our homeland who vowed to stand steadfast together in distress and danger, in joy or sorrow. Let us uphold the Swiss tradition in this country by first-class craftsmanship. By doing so, we shall enhance the prestige of our country. It is our duty to our country to accept all the obligations entailed by it (including prompt payment of military tax!). As the state is responsible for the individual, we dare not forget our duties towards it." Mr. Hofstetter then went on to tell us more about to-day's affairs in our country. We were amazed to learn how little difference there is in strength between left and right as you may call it in our "National Rat" in the years between 1919 and 1947. He explained how in our constitution the minority has a chance to be heard. The speaker then

sent a message of unswerving attachment to our native land and asked Mr. Frick to kindly read the "Bundesbrief" to us.

Mr. Hofstetter's address was received with great applause and he was thanked by Mr. Berli on behalf of all those present.

The President of the Swiss Club, Dunfermline, Mr. Frick, then addressed the English-speaking members and guests. He thanked the Swiss Club, Balloch, for the kind invitation to meet them in Balmaha for this year's National Day celebrations. On this day, we all feel there is a special bond with our homeland. We remember to-day, the many hills and mountains, the picturesque lakes and rivers and above all, our native towns. It is gratifying to note that the Swiss people in Scotland have upheld the Swiss spirit so well. He expressed the wish to see further such meetings between the two clubs, to which we are looking forward.

Mr. Berli then thanked Mr. Frick for his kind words. He conveyed a message of greeting by telegram from Mr. Gurtner, which was received earlier in the day. "FOR THE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS, WISHING ALL A VERY HAPPY GATHERING AND THE BEST OF LUCK. GURTNER."

Further greetings were read from a postcard received from Davos and signed by Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Schwarzenbach and Mr. Fritz Wirz and his brother. He closed the official part of our celebration with "Rufst Du Mein Vaterland."

Only too soon came the time for parting. A few photographs taken on the shores of Loch Lomond will register the happy hours we spent together at Balmaha.

"Au revoir."

B.



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