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DO NOT MISS THE FÊTE SUISSE NEXT THURSDAY, CENTRAL HALL

UNIONE TICINESE. Tea Dance.

Since I attended the 75th Anniversary Banquet and Ball of the Unione Ticinese, which was held on 23rd October, 1949, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, in the presence of the then Federal Councillor, Dr. E. Celio, I have been present at no less than ten tea dances of this Society, which are usually held on Sundays. Whilst I accept with some reluctance invitations on Sundays — being sufficiently occupied during the week — I, time after time have made an exception for the simple reason that these informal gatherings, devoid of any pomp and circumstance, are most enjoyable.

The tea dance which took place at the Dorchester Hotel on Sunday, March 17th, was no exception. On this occasion the Society has broken every record as to attendance, nearly 700 persons being present. It is, however, only fair to say that amongst this large gathering the "ticinesi" were in the minority; this extraordinary number is made up by their large circle of friends both from other parts of our country and by their many English friends.

Dancing began soon after 4 o'clock with about an hour's break during which tea was served and a cabaret show was presented. Tea parties do not call for speeches, but we Swiss somehow cannot go along without them, so the President, Mr. P. Jacomelli, very briefly welcomed the large gathering, and especially the official guests, Monsieur A. Albertini and Madame Albertini, Mr. A. Stauffer, Editor of the "Swiss Observer", and Mrs. Stauffer, and Mr. A. Gandon, President of the Secours Mutuels, and Mrs. Gandon. Mr. Jacomelli related that he was happy to see amongst the company no less than four former Presidents of the Society, namely Messrs. W. Notari, Ferrari, J. Eusebio and C. Berti. He also voiced sincere regrets of the approaching departure of Monsieur Albertini, a great friend of the Unione Ticinese, wishing him Godspeed.

Monsieur Albertini, in Italian, then addressed the gathering, saying that he considered it a great honour to speak in their own language. "In our own part of Switzerland", he said, "we meet on Sundays in the various albergos and grottos to play boccia, to sing and drink wine, and I only wish I could invite all our many English friends present this afternoon to accompany me to these happy haunts". He concluded his address by transmitting sincere greetings from H.E. the Swiss Minister and Madame Daeniker. The oration of the Swiss Minister's representative was loudly cheered.

Four banjo players then went into action, followed by Mr. Frederic Williams, tenor, who sang various arias from Puccini and Bizet operas, concluding with a Neapolitan folk song. This young

artist, who I presume hails from Wales, has a very pleasing voice and his performance was greatly cheered.

A function of the Unione Ticinese without their famous "Corale" is unthinkable, and their appearance met with universal applause. Whilst for the past few years this choir has been through difficult times, their star seems to be in the ascendant; not only have they been able to increase their number, but owing to the efforts of the committee have gone to considerable expense in fitting the lady members with new authentic and traditional costumes of the Ticino. Looking thus very smart and rejuvenated, they sang better than ever, and the vociferous applause which greeted each item was proof enough how much their lusty singing was appreciated.

Dancing was then resumed during which Master Gandon, accompanied by his father, gave one or two yodel solos which were very much enjoyed.

This happy gathering of our cari ticinesi came to a close about 10 p.m., and everyone left the Dorchester Hotel with the feeling of having spent a few happy hours in congenial company.

ST.

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