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M. E. LICHTENSTEIGER,
President, Swiss Club Manchester.

SWISS CLUB MANCHESTER

Annual Banquet & Ball

at the

MIDLAND HOTEL - MANCHESTER

on

SATURDAY, 8th NOVEMBER, 1958

In the Chair : M. E. LICHTENSTEIGER

On Saturday, 8th November 1958, the Swiss Club Manchester celebrated its annual "Grütlifeier" with the traditional Banquet and Ball held in the Derby Suite of the Midland Hotel.

Although the general outline of the proceedings is very much the same each year, there is always something new and some pleasant surprise, making new acquaintances and meeting old friends as well as comparing experiences — quite enough to fill pleasantly the time occupied by the reception and cocktails preceding the dinner. This year a particularly large number of charming Swiss young ladies, many only just past their teens, added freshness and beauty to the gathering.

Our guests of honour were Monsieur J. J. de Tribolet, First Counsellor of Embassy, and Madame de Tribolet.

At 6.45 p.m. precisely, the "Maitre d'Hôtel" announced that dinner was served, and on reaching the Small Ballroom where the dinner was held we were pleasantly surprised by the tasteful display of red and white carnations and small Swiss and British flags decorating the tables. The management of the Midland Hotel has indeed done us proud and must be congratulated. The dinner also was of the most succulent. The Hotel's Chef in charge on this occasion was a Swiss from Payerne and had no doubt put his heart into the work of providing for his compatriots.

With coffee came the toasts, both proposed by our President, first "The Queen, Duke of Lancaster" followed a few minutes later by the toast "Switzerland". Now the moment had come for the customary "Presidential Address". Mr. Lichtensteiger rose amidst applause. He started by relating an incident reported recently in the press about the young Prince of Wales, who, having written to his mother, approached the headmaster of his school and said, "I know that my mother is Queen, but how shall I address the envelope?" He then warmly welcomed our guests, Monsieur J. J. de Tribolet and Madame de Tribolet,

remarking that they need not take seriously the reputation given to Manchester in the usual music hall jokes. In fact Manchester had very much to show that was fine, and in any case the countryside of Cheshire, part of Lancashire, and Yorkshire (I am sure he meant also Derbyshire) had some of the most beautiful scenery in England. "It is a pity", he added, "that your visit cannot be prolonged as we would then have an opportunity of showing it to you." He then welcomed Mr. Max Büchi, our esteemed Consul, and Madame Büchi, expressing our thanks for the interest they have shown in the affairs of our club. A special welcome was also given to Madame E. Bebié and Mr. A. Knapp and regrets were expressed that two of the oldest members could not be with us — Mr. H. Corrodi, who celebrated his eightieth birthday this year, and Mr. J. J. Fischer, who has been a member since 1907. "To our British friends who honour us with their presence to-night we express our thanks," and here he asked us to drink a toast to them.

Mentioning the death during the year of two members, Mr. Fritz Meyer and Mr. Rudolph T. Gschwind, he also alluded to the recent death in Switzerland of one of our greatest statesmen, Dr. Marcus Feldmann.

And now he proceeded to recall some of the events of the year, notably the Musical Evening given in April by Miss Ruth Huggenberg, who gave a piano recital, and Mrs. Mary Rowland, who sang with accompaniment on the Celtic Harp; the lecture given in May by Madame Geneviève Davidson from Liverpool on the subject of the "Vaudois" novelist Ramuz; and last but not least the Film and Slides shown by our friend and Honorary Associate Mr. Sam Hanna last September on the subject of the Black Forest and Switzerland, where he spent his holidays last July. He expressed regret that the two outings at Easter and on the occasion of the National Day celebration were spoilt by inclement weather and added jokingly that we should elect a president who has more control of

the weather. Mention was also made of five Sunday rambles organised by Mr. Monney.

Coming now to the activities of the only subsection of the club, the Rifle Section, he appealed for greater support for a sport that is so very Swiss. He congratulated the winner of the Challenge Cup this year, Mr. John Schweiwiler, who was later presented with this trophy by Madame de Tribolet.

Warm and prolonged applause was given as Mr. Lichtensteiger sat down.

After a moment Mr. de Tribolet rose and said:

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I should like to begin by bringing you greetings from our Ambassador. Mr. and Mrs. Daeniker are extremely sorry that other engagements prevent them from being with you tonight. I have been asked to convey to you their very best wishes for the success of this evening. My wife and I are delighted and honoured to represent the Ambassador and his wife at this dinner and we thank you for your kind invitation. We are particularly honoured by the kind way we were welcomed this afternoon by your President.

"You might think that London, with its numerous attractions and active Swiss colony, would make us forget about our compatriots living in the North. Actually, this is far from being the case. Since arriving in this country two years ago our minds have been very much concerned with the Swiss in Manchester and we have often wondered what they are like. We knew that they had a strong claim to be considered the élite of the Swiss in the United Kingdom; the figures furnished by our Consular records support that claim, for they disclose that whereas in London only 14 per cent of the Swiss are liable for active military service, in Manchester the percentage is as high as 20.

"Quite a handful for an old lieutenant! The Swiss in Manchester constitute an élite in another sense too. Without forgetting the splendid service rendered to our country by our traders and financiers, everybody is aware that Switzerland owes most of its economic prosperity to the industrialists whom I see represented here in larger numbers than in London. The success of Swiss industry being largely due to the initiative, inventiveness and perseverance of its leaders it is only right that I should associate these qualities with the name of Manchester.

"Indeed, our industrial leaders would never have succeeded to the same extent, had not Manchester vigorously supported the doctrine of liberalism. Anyone with a smattering of law and economics has heard of the Manchester School. Few countries owe as much as Switzerland to the spread of liberal principles. If we Swiss of to-day were brought back to where we started one hundred years ago, I doubt very much if we should be able to build up our prosperity as successfully as we have been able to do. I am convinced that there has been no weakening of our initiative, inventiveness and perseverance, but these qualities have been put to harder test as a result of the introduction during the past few decades of all kinds of economic and political restrictions. However, Manchester is one of the few places in the world where the Swiss have little cause to mourn the passing of the good old days. In an entirely and genuinely liberal Europe, the firms which you represent in this country

would be under no obligation to establish branches over here for manufacturing purposes. Your job would be merely to sell what was produced at home. I suppose that some of you have lived long enough in this country to remember such better and easier times. They may be inclined, therefore, to take rather a gloomy view of present-day circumstances.

"My wife and I, who have lived in a part of the world where numerous and highly prosperous Swiss colonies have been crushed and rendered destitute by the forces that are diametrically opposed to liberalism, find it extremely heartening that the Swiss are still doing so well here in England. If modern trends have stemmed the tide of liberalism in Manchester, they fortunately have not in the least weakened the people's belief in political liberalism. In that respect I can think of no other country which has shared with Switzerland so long and so consistently the same ideals of freedom and humanity. Although following different paths, our two countries have reached in a relatively short time similar conclusions regarding the political institutions under which men can live most happily. Neither country has ever doubted the value of its conclusions. Although it has been of late relatively easier for Switzerland than for England to adhere to the Manchester conception of liberalism, we owe a great deal to this country for having shown us what sacrifices are worth making in order to defend the principles of political liberalism.

"I raise my glass to the continued prosperity and happiness of your colony with a strong feeling of gratitude for everything you and our country as a whole owe to the United Kingdom."

Long and loud applause followed the address of M. de Tribolet.

It was now almost 9 o'clock and the room was cleared for dancing until midnight. Tables were laid at one end of the room so that we could take our refreshments in the ballroom instead of adjourning to another room as had been the case before. This was a great improvement, although it naturally reduced the space left for dancing. We also had this year an efficient Master of Ceremonies in Dr. H. Knuchel, our Vice-President, and a few prizes were given for some outstanding feats, mostly of a humorous nature. All this added to the liveliness of the evening, which was a real success. Midnight came much too soon, and, after the National Anthem and Auld Lang Syne, we went home filled with a feeling of gratitude for an evening well spent.

H.M.

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