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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

HAROLD WILSON AT THE SWISS CENTRE

Harold Wilson, the most intensely heckled prime minister of modern history, received a Swiss award for his cool handling of obstreperous hecklers during a lap of his election campaign. When the election campaign was at its peak, the former Prime Minister told hecklers not to use their missiles "because they usually miss me and hit the nice photographers . . ."

These remarks were carefully noted down by the Swiss Press Photographers Union, who unanimously decided to elect Mr. Wilson as the winner of their "Smiling Camera Award".

On Friday, December 18th, a delegation of journalists and photographers from Switzerland, representatives of the Swiss press in London and the Embassy, were massed in the Chiesa of the Swiss Centre in expectation of Mr. Wilson.

He arrived unconspicuously, pulling at his pipe and looking with curiosity around him. He approached the prize table, upon which lay his award, a beautiful Jaeger-Le-Coultre ATMOS clock, stared around him in a bemused way, said a few niceties to the decorative Swiss-German lass in peasant costume beside him, and listened good humouredly to Mr. A. Kunz, Manager of the Swiss National Tourist Office, who welcomed his distinguished guest to the Swiss Centre.

Mr. Kunz expressed the gratitude of the Swiss business community in London for the co-operation of the British authorities during the setting-up of the Swiss Centre. He praised the British for their sense of humour and said that Mr. Wilson's share of this quality had fully earned him the prize which he was about to receive.

Mr. Paul Gawrowski, General Secretary of the Union of Swiss Press Photographers, then welcomed the former Prime Minister on behalf of his numerous colleagues. His mellow voice and the din in the background made it difficult for all to understand him, but we could gather that Mr. Gawrowsky was praising the virtues of the public smile. He presented Mr. Wilson with the beautiful golden clock laying before him and unrolled the commemorative chart which proclaimed that Mr. Wilson had received the smiling camera award 1970 for his understanding of the problems of Press photographers.

Mr. A. Kunz had another surprise present in his pocket. He evoked Mr. Wilson's constant liaison with the pipe and quipped that Mr. Wilson might even have a stake in a pipe company. He produced a worked silver Appenzeller pipe of the type that can be smoked upside down. He added a large leather pouch containing Mr. Wilson's favourite tobacco.

Mr. Wilson then rested his ordinary wooden pipe with good grace and lit his new one. He turned it round and pulled a few puffs while the cameras flashed away.

He thanked his hosts for the honour they had conferred on him in awarding these prizes. He evoked his long experiences with press photographers, and particularly with Swiss photographers. These began in Geneva in 1947 when he led a British delegation to the founding conference of GATT. He related a few personal experiences as an amateur photographer in Russia and highly praised the devotion of photographers to their art and their readiness for sacrifice. "A photographer was prepared to wallow with his elbows in the mud to catch his subject with the best angle". Mr. Wilson spoke in his usual easy way for some ten minutes and his address was acknowledged with a cackle of applause.

A short reception followed the presentation. Mr. Wilson sat down and pulled out his pipe. One or two personalities approached him, but most of the London Swiss present in the room apparently preferred to remain among old friends and Mr. Wilson made an inconspicuous exit long before the end of the reception.

MR. WILSON'S PRESENT

The clock given to Mr. Wilson by the Swiss Press Photographers was a remarkable piece of precision workmanship. Mr. Denys Pasche, the young and enterprising new manager of the Jaeger-Le-Coultre and Favre-Leuba agencies in Great Britain, had the commercial presence of mind to leave press hand-outs at the entrance of the Chiesa, the text of which we reproduce:

The "ATMOS" clock, by Jaeger-Le-Coultre of Geneva, is often referred to as "the clock which lives on air". Strictly speaking, it is on the rise and fall of air temperature that the ATMOS clock depends.

At the back of the clock is a sealed chamber, filled with a gas which has, between 50° and 81° Fahrenheit, a particularly high co-efficient of expansion. The gas used is Ethyl Chloride (C₂H₅Cl) — as used by dentists as an anaesthetic! A change in temperature causes the gas to expand or contract. As the chamber is constructed as a bellows, the chamber too will expand or contract. An increase in temperature causes a chain, due to the bellows action of the chamber, to be wound round a pulley. When the temperature falls, the chain unwinds, and this winds the mainspring. A rise, followed by a fall of as little as 2° Fahrenheit, is

enough to give the mainspring a power reserve of 48 hours. Even in air-conditioned rooms, there is a daily variation in temperature of up to 7° Fahrenheit.

The parts of the ATMOS clock are manufactured to such minute tolerances and the mechanism is so delicately balanced, that a fly, sitting on the minute hand, would be enough to stop the clock. The mainspring is kept wound constantly, to its optimum working tension, the gearing has been reduced to a minimum, as also has the friction, so that the ATMOS is capable of running at a high degree of accuracy for years.

As the balance wheel oscillates only twice per minute, it would take an ATMOS clock about 300 years to undergo the same degree of wear that an ordinary wrist watch sustains in just one year.

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