

City Swiss Club

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB

After dinner address by Ambassador E. Thalmann

Mr President,
My Lord,
Dear Friends:

On behalf of my wife and myself I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind words and for your generous hospitality.

Diplomacy is not exactly show business but the two professions certainly have many things in common. Diplomats and actors have to change their costumes often and also their faces. They mostly have to play roles which have been scripted by somebody else, and both usually go to bed very late. But there is more: audiences do have their favourites but in general they do not like to see the same actor all the

time. And finally: when actors and diplomats get old they had better disappear before the critics drive them off the stage. For some of them this is quite sad.

Of course, when we retire my wife and I will miss a lot of this fascinating life. We shall miss good friends and glamorous evenings like this one. And we shall miss London and the charm of the British way of life which we have enjoyed so much.

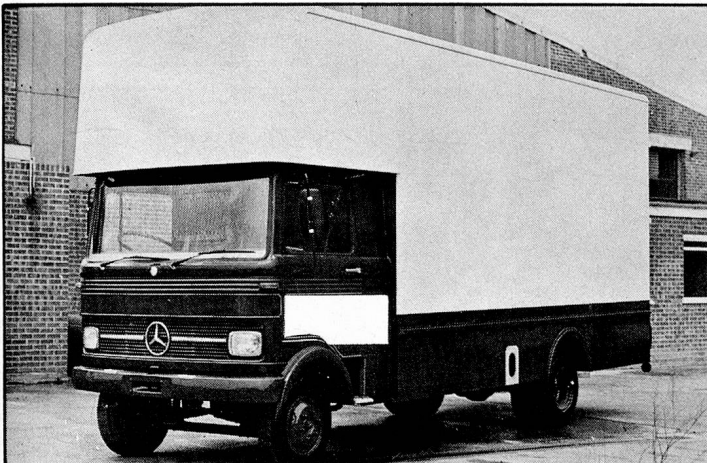
On the other hand, it is good to go home after a long and at times turbulent diplomatic career.

And then there is something which gives us great satisfaction in winding up our last mission. We are leaving London at a moment when British-Swiss relations are so good that it's hard to imagine how they could be improved. Now, this was already the case when I arrived here almost four years ago so you may ask: why, then, do we have to have a British Ambassador in Berne and a Swiss Ambassador in London? Well, the answer is quite simple. Just as individual friendships can only be maintained by continuing contact, so, too, relations between two countries have to be constantly cultivated. But I hasten to add that the Ambassador and his staff could never do their job properly if they were not assisted and supported by a colony, which pumps the real

blood into the arteries of this tissue of friendly relations between nations. In this sense you are all ambassadors. And at the moment when I am preparing for my departure as an honorary cockney—an honour which the Lord Mayor of London bestowed upon me at his last Easter Banquet—I should like to take the opportunity of expressing to all of you my personal gratitude for the great help you have given my wife and me during my term of office here, and to convey to you the sincere thanks of the Swiss Federal Council for your lasting devotion to the common interests and ideals of our two countries.

On leaving London I also have the gratification of knowing that the friendship between the United Kingdom and Switzerland will find its crowning expression in the first official visit of Her Majesty the Queen to our country next spring. My wife and I will then be ordinary Swiss citizens among thousands of others welcoming her and showing her respect and admiration.

In saying goodbye to you I should like to recommend to the City Swiss Club my successor and his charming wife. They are old and dear friends of ours and I am sure that you will be happy with the new actors in this long-running show called Diplomacy.



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