

News from the colony

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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

CITY SWISS CLUB

99th ANNUAL BANQUET AND BALL

In conjunction with

THE SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL

on Friday, 27th November, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1

In the Chair:

The Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Beat de Fischer-Reichenbach



The President
Mr. M. A. KELLER

That the Annual Banquets and Balls of the City Swiss Club have lost none of their attraction or lustre was proved when on Friday, 27th November, nearly 350 members, guests and friends assembled at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, to celebrate the 99th banquet of its kind. This attendance was most gratifying and a good omen for next year's Centenary Banquet, which undoubtedly will register a still bigger venue. The present number is, of course, still a long way behind the attendances reached before and between the two wars. The writer well remembers the times when some five to six hundred persons sat down to dinner, and when the collections made for Swiss charities reached seldom less than £500. It must, however, be said that in those times the Colony was considerably larger, much younger and perhaps more affluent. Those figures just mentioned will never be reached again.

The demand for tickets for this year's banquet set in early, and the wish to attend was so keen that at least one member with partner — all dressed up — arrived at the Hotel twenty-four hours in advance (Thursday instead of Friday) but happily was seen again on the correct date, none the worse for the "waiting".

Like last year, the Banquet and Ball was again held in conjunction with the Swiss Economic Council of which

over ninety per cent of its members also belong to the City Swiss Club, thus saving expenses. It was noted that quite a considerable number of the younger generation were present, surely a healthy sign for the future of the Club, but the "veterans" also mustered in good strength. One saw with pleasure that three former Presidents of the City Swiss Club were present, namely Messrs. H. Knoll, X. Speckert, and Th. von Speyr with their ladies. Also attending was Mr. Emil Suter, a former President of the Swiss Economic Council, with Mrs. Suter and daughter.

Following tradition, the evening started with a reception by H.E. the Swiss Ambassador, in the capacity of Honorary President of the City Swiss Club, accompanied by Madame de Fischer. The Ambassador was assisted by Mr. M. A. Keller, President of the City Swiss Club, and Mr. J. P. Christen, President of the Swiss Economic Council, with their ladies, who carried beautiful bouquets of flowers, which had been presented to them by the members of the two Societies.

The reception over, cocktails were served in one of the ante-rooms, which became rather crowded and overheated, and the announcement that "dinner was served" came to many as a relief. Whilst the orchestra played a lively tune, the company entered the attractive ballroom

to take their places at their allotted tables which were adorned with flowers and heavy silver candlesticks bearing lighted red candles and the large candelabras, which are such a feature of the room, shed a soft diffused light over the entire hall. Behind the presidential chair the Union Jack and the Swiss emblem were displayed.

The animated conversation suddenly ceased when the Toast-Master announced that the President and the distinguished guests would make their entry, and amidst handclapping they wended their way to the principal top table. Grace was said by the Rev. J. Scherer, and the company sat down to an excellent dinner consisting of *Le Melon Frappé, La Viande de Grison, Le Consommé de Vollaile aux Xères, Le Chausson au Gruyère, La Noisette de Veau à la Crème et Champignons, Les Pommes Gallette, Les Petits Pois Etuves Fermière, Le Soufflé Vanille, La poire dans son Sirop, La Sauce Chocolat, Le Café*. This well chosen *Menu* was prepared under the supervision of the famous Head Chef of the Dorchester Hotel, Mr. E. Kaeufeler, a compatriot of ours, who attended the dinner as a member of the Club. Whilst café was being served the Toasts to H.M. the Queen and "La Suisse" were given by the President, Mr. M. A. Keller; the company being upstanding whilst the respective National Anthems were rendered by the orchestra. I understand that the present Swiss National Anthem, which is still "on trial" may soon be changed, which is a good thing, as hardly anybody seems to know the words, let alone the not very easy tune; anyhow not a sound emerged from the lips of my compatriots. Again the Toast Master went into action by announcing, "Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, you may smoke", and everyone sat back relaxed to listen to the speeches. The first one to "Nos Invités" was given by the President Mr. M. A. Keller who, popular as he is, was loudly cheered on rising.

Mr. Keller said that he considered it a pleasure and privilege to welcome, on behalf of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Economic Council such a large and distinguished company to a Banquet and Ball which represents the highlight of the social activities of the Colony. "Whilst I would like to welcome the guests individually" he said, "I am unable to do so owing to the large number. I shall, therefore, only mention the principal ones, starting with the British". The President then introduced Sir Robert and Lady Bellinger, Alderman of the City of London, and last year's Sheriff in which capacity he paid an official visit to the town of Zurich during the British Fortnight. Mr. Keller mentioned that Sir Robert had attended this year's "Sechseläuten" by special invitation from the Mayor of Zurich, Dr. Landolt. "Sir Robert", he continued, "is a keen ice-hockey player and skater visiting Switzerland every year." Mr. Keller further greeted Sir Arnold and Lady Lunn, saying that Sir Arnold is a great friend of Switzerland, and a famous Winter Sport Pioneer, and also a *doctor honoris causa* of the University of Zurich. The President then welcomed the Swiss Ambassador, and Honorary President of the City Swiss Club, Monsieur Beat de Fischer-Reichenbach and Madame de Fischer, expressing his pleasure at seeing them for the first time at a social function of the Club, expressing the hope of welcoming them on many more occasions and wishing His Excellency and Madame de Fischer a pleasant and successful stay in this country. The following official Swiss guests were then mentioned: Mr. A. Stauffer, Honorary Vice-President and Press Reporter of the City Swiss Club and Mrs. Stauffer, Mrs. Mariann Meier, Editor of the "Swiss Observer" and daughter, the Ministers of the Swiss Churches, Rev. Father J. Scherer, Rev. F. Jacot and Madame Jacot, and Rev.

M. Dietler, Mr. V. Berti, Chairman of the Swiss Presidents' Assembly and daughter, and Mr. E. Kaeufeler, Head-Chef of the Dorchester Hotel and Mrs. Kaeufeler.

The President drew the attention to a table of twenty-one occupants at the head of which sat a young man, Mr. Andrew von Speyr, who had just celebrated his twenty-first birthday, wishing him many happy returns of the day (and so say all of us). Mr. Keller, on behalf of all the members, thanked the ladies for having come along — very beautiful and glamorous — bringing colour and charm to the evening's festival, making us forget our problems, worries and troubles, making us see only the sunny side of life. He thanked also Mr. H. Jauslin, Hon. Secretary of the Club for his painstaking work rendered to make the 99th anniversary a success. In conclusion the speaker drew the attention of the company to the coming "Lucky Dip", the prize being a beautiful and genuine Neuchâtel *pendule* obtained with the assistance of Mr. Lucien Jobin, the net proceeds from the sale of tickets to go to the Swiss Benevolent Society. The President after having referred in a humorous manner to some of the activities of the City Swiss Club invited the members to rise and to honour the Toast to "Nos Invités". (*Applause*). The next speaker was H.E. the Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Beat de Fischer-Reichenbach, who was much cheered on rising. He thanked the members of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Economic Council for having given him and Madame de Fischer an opportunity of meeting them for the first time at one of their social gatherings. He referred to his family's connections with the City of London, mentioning that his father, as a banker, had close relations with some of the City's old banking concerns, and to his grandfather's frequent travels to the Metropolis in Victorian times to discuss matters of Tourism with Thomas Cook. The Ambassador mentioned that as a young man he was sent to London for a year to study the British Way of Life. On his return to London as the Head of the Swiss Diplomatic Mission he had already had an opportunity to dine at some of the ancient and famous City Guilds. Touching on Economics, Monsieur de Fischer said that EFTA has for Switzerland not only an economical, but also a political value. He finished his address by raising his glass to drink to the success of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Economic Council. (*Applause*.)

The task to convey the thanks of the guests was entrusted to Sir Robert Bellinger, K.B. In his witty and very humorous address which was interspersed with many anecdotes, he referred to the happy and intimate relations which exist between the two countries, the friendly hospitality he has always received on his many winter and summer visits, especially on his recent stay in Zurich, where he was very well entertained by Dr. Landolt, Mayor of the town. Sir Robert eulogised the ladies present, saying "we bless you and adore you!" Before resuming his seat, he said "I thank you on behalf of the guests for your generous and friendly hospitality." (*Applause*.)

Thus the official part of the evening came to an end, and dancing started without delay to Arthur Salisbury's dance orchestra. One can truthfully say that the first part of the evening was a success, and the second was no less so. In spite of the dance floor getting rather crowded, the merry couples — old and young — managed to find space to "twist and turn". Old time dances, Laendlers, waltzes, and of course the famous Twist, which was mostly "twisted" by the younger generation, with a very few brave "old ones" thrown in, were played. To give the dance orchestra, and the untiring dancers a little rest, the draw for the "Lucky Dip" was made by Madame de

Fischer. I am glad to say that the lovely clock went to a member of the City Swiss Club (an Aargauer) and was charmingly presented to the lucky winner and his lady by Madame de Fischer.

As a cabaret turn the Steel Band Combo and Limbo Dancers made their appearance, playing their haunting West Indian melodies. The dancers gave an exciting and almost nerve racking performance which was deservedly applauded.

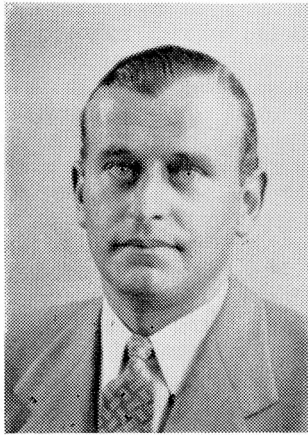
Then on went the dancing until 2 a.m. when Auld Lang Syne was played. One sure proof that the evening was an enjoyable one was that almost everybody stayed right to the end.

Let us hope that next year's Centenary Banquet and Ball will be equally successful and enjoyable, and that we all meet again at the Dorchester Hotel "as young as ever".

ST.

Press Reporter, City Swiss Club.

SWISS ECONOMIC COUNCIL MEETING AND DINNER



J. P. CHRISTEN
Chairman, S.E.C.

The Autumn Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council took place on Thursday, 26th November 1964, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1. Mr. J. P. Christen was in the Chair, and there were about forty members present, including Messieurs Heimo, Feller and Gallusser from the Swiss Embassy.

The Chairman on opening the Meeting extended a cordial welcome to the members, and especially to the Guest Speaker, Mr. Charles Redhead, M.P., Minister of State (Overseas), who at the last moment replaced Mr. Figgures of EFTA, who was unable to come to London owing to "pressure of work".

Before calling on Mr. Redhead to address the company on "Recent British Economic Measures and the effect on Anglo-Swiss Trade and EFTA", Mr. Christen gave a few biographical notes regarding the speaker, saying that Mr. Redhead entered the Civil Service in 1917. He had held various honorary offices in the Civil Service Clerical Association, and Society of Civil Servants, of which he was General Secretary from 1948 to 1956. Mr. Redhead was elected a member of the Walthamstow Borough Council in 1929 and appointed Alderman in 1945. He served as Mayor in 1949/50 and again in 1961/62. In 1956 he was elected Labour Member of Parliament for Walthamstow West.

Owing to lack of space in the present Christmas Number, the full text of the Guest-Speaker's address cannot be given. He amplified the statements made by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Minister emphasized that the Government was confronted with a large balance of payment deficit, and a 16% rise in imports, which called for immediate action. He said that the Government was determined to maintain the strength of sterling and would not return to the "stop go" policy which he said "has hampered the United Kingdom economy in recent years. Against this background the Government considered that a temporary restraint on imports was essential.

With regard to the 15% import charge and EFTA, Mr. Redhead said: "We regretted deeply that it was not possible to consult our EFTA partners beforehand. The need to act immediately did not permit extensive prior consultations. We recognise that this action has been unwelcome and restrictive of trade. The charge must therefore be removed as quickly as possible, and will be reduced and removed just as soon as the balance of payments permits."

Referring to the recent budget, the speaker said that the Government wanted to make quite certain that the measures to close the trade gap would not encourage inflationary tendencies at home.

After having referred to other measures announced in the budget, the Minister concluded by saying that he recognised the anxiety the members of the Economic Council feel about the import tax. "We want", he said, "to see Anglo-Swiss trade increase in both directions; but no one would benefit in the longer run from an expansion of British imports we could not pay for. Remedial measures now, unwelcome though they must be, should enable us soon to resume the expansion of imports from EFTA countries on a far sounder and steadier basis."

On the speaker resuming his seat he received applause for having brought before the company the British Government's case in a dignified manner, although it was of little comfort to the members of the Swiss Economic Council. The Chairman, on behalf of the members, thanked the Minister for having accepted the Council's invitation at such short notice expressing the hope that the wounds caused to Swiss Industry and Trade would soon be healed. Dr. H. B. Knuchel proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker. A discussion followed, which, however, was declared as "off the record" and thus cannot be reported.

An excellent *Choucroute Garnie* dinner followed, after which the Chairman informed the members of the continued efforts made by the Council's committee concerning the Trade Promotion Centre in London (which can be compared with a Chamber of Commerce and should not be mistaken for a Swiss Social Centre) saying that unfortunately the steps undertaken have so far been disappointing, and that a last effort will be made in Berne for a more responsive attitude of both government and trade authorities.

Before closing the Meeting, Mr. Christen thanked Mr. G. A. Ronus for the excellent dinner provided and for the cigar "thrown in", and thus another Autumn Meeting of the Swiss Economic Council came to its conclusion under the always efficient and sympathetic leadership of its Chairman.

ST.