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R. DUPRAZ.
President, City Swiss Club.

CITY SWISS CLUB

85th Annual Banquet and Ball

at the
DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, LONDON, W.1

on

FRIDAY, 24th NOVEMBER, 1950.

In the Chair: THE SWISS MINISTER
Monsieur HENRY DE TORRENTÉ

To report in this paper about the innumerable, Banquets and Balls held, either in London or in the Provinces, becomes increasingly difficult, as everyone of these functions is run on similar lines.

There is the reception, with its customary cocktails and its gay chatter, there are the usual toasts, accompanied by the playing of the respective National Anthems, there are the dinners, which only vary by becoming less substantial every year, there are the speeches, which I am glad to say have become shorter, but unfortunately often less interesting; there are the Ladies, some of whom become, with the years, a little rounder, and yet not less charming, and last of all there is the dancing, which, by introducing some of the latest "hits" has become perhaps more lively but somewhat less attractive.

During the last twenty years I have described hundreds of social functions in these columns, and I must confess, to describe year after year the same thing, has become almost a nightmare to me; and yet, having as a guest accepted an always generous hospitality, I feel in honour bound to write something about it, — after all I have not been invited for the sake of my "beautiful eyes" — if only to keep an up-to-date record of what takes place in the Swiss Colony, for the benefit of a future chronicler, as I sincerely hope, that one day a history of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain will be written.

There is nowadays a tendency, not altogether to be deplored, to break with old traditions, and in accordance with this fact, I have decided to give less space in future in describing purely social functions and allot more room to matters which are of greater interest to many of our readers.

Therefore this year's 85th Annual Banquet and Ball of the City Swiss Club, will be described in less detail than has been done in the past, and I sincerely hope, that by doing so, I shall not be blamed for lack of due respect.

I can, however, say without any reserve, that this year's Banquet and Ball, was an undeniable success, and the 360 members and guests who attended this

festival will, undoubtedly, agree with me, that throughout the evening a happy atmosphere prevailed coupled with a lively spirit of congeniality which created a delightful relief from the present time which is so full of evil forebodings.

The President, Mr. R. Dupraz, very briefly and with great cordiality greeted the company and especially the official guests, who numbered about forty, and included the Swiss Minister and Madame de Torrenté (Honorary President of the Club), and his collaborators at the Legation, prominent British personalities, and friends of our country, Presidents of sister societies with their Ladies, and representatives of the Swiss Churches and the Swiss Press.

The Swiss Minister, in his excellent and short address, referred to the recent agreement between Great Britain and Switzerland to participate in the European Payment Union, which he said does not mean, that all barriers to a commercial paradise have been removed, but that obnoxious discriminations against our country have ceased. "From now on," he said, "we can trade with Great Britain on an equal footing with other European countries."

The Minister remarked, that this would, no doubt, especially interest the Ladies, who will now be able to procure not only their favourite house-hold machines, or dainty Swiss handkerchiefs and undies, but also all the Swiss beauty-cosmetic-and pharmaceutical preparations, which they had to do without for so long.

Turning to the Ladies, Monsieur de Torrenté said, amidst applause "You must use all your charm and influence on your husbands, so that they see to it that Swiss products will enter the British market on the level of competitive prices. As no husband will dare to disobey the orders of his wife, where such essentials are concerned, I feel sure your efforts will be crowned with great success."

He told the Ladies that they can still further render service to our country by inducing their British friends to visit our country, by talking to them about the charms and the attractions of Switzerland.



TOP TABLE WITH OFFICIAL GUESTS.

The Minister's recommendations were heartily approved of by the company and loudly cheered.

He was followed by Captain J. Laurence Pritchard, C.B.E., who was entrusted with the toast "Les Dames et Réponse pour les Invités."

I am afraid, that the compliments which he paid to the Ladies, were not exactly flattering, and did not give them due credit for all the care and devotion they bestow on us men, but I hope, that their sense of humour did not give way to any resentment. Captain Pritchard finished his address by relating a few jokes and by thanking the Club, on behalf of the guests, for their generous hospitality.

The members of the City Swiss Club, have always been generous towards our less fortunate brethren. This year, the toast to "La Charité" was proposed by Mr. M. Rothlisberger, a member of the Committee of

the Swiss Benevolent Society, who made a moving appeal on behalf of all those, who often, through no fault of their own, have fallen on evil days.

This sincere appeal did not fail to get its deserved response, and it was announced that the respectable amount of £125 had been collected.

This concluded the official part of the evening, and dancing started, to the excellent accompaniment of Ernie Smith's Rhythmic Orchestra, in which young and old joined with great gusto.

At 1.30 a.m. this really enjoyable function came to its close, with the singing of:

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And days of auld lang Sine?"

ST.

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