

The Swiss minister's visit to Liverpool

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THE SWISS MINISTER'S VISIT TO LIVERPOOL.

On April 30th and May 1st, the Minister paid a visit to the Consulate and colony of Liverpool.

M. de Torrenté, who was accompanied by Mme de Torrenté, received on Sunday afternoon at the Adelphi Hotel the Committee Members of the Swiss Club and Members of the Swiss Relief Committee: M. Paul Weber, the President, and Madame Paul Weber, M. Louis Comte, Vice-President, and Madame Comte, M. and Mme. Waldsburger, M. and Mme. Eugen Notter, Mme. Geneviève Davidson, President of the Swiss Relief Committee, M. Hermann Ott and M. and Mme. Clottu. Also present was Mme. L. Macquarie, native of Schaffhouse and wife of the Medical Adviser to the Consulate. The Vice-Consul, M. Schaerer and Mme. Schaerer introduced the compatriots to the Minister and Mme de Torrenté and soon a very happy atmosphere was established where memories of home were exchanged.

The reception was followed by an informal dinner with M. and Mme. Schaerer, Mr. Cave, General Manager of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and Mrs. Cave, Mr. Hutty, President of the Liverpool Branch of the Institute of Export and Mrs. Hutty, Lt.-Colonel Burford, Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and Mrs. Burford.

The following morning a very interesting tour was arranged by the Harbour Board through the docks of Liverpool, which stretch for seven miles along the river Mersey. During two world wars, Liverpool Harbour was the European end of the most important life line across the Atlantic. In spite of bombardments, heavy damage and incredible difficulties, the docks never stopped work and loaded or discharged during the recent war over 5 million troops and 145 million tons of merchandise and war material. The scars are still visible but many new improvements will raise the docks' efficiency to a higher standard than ever before. The tour ended with a visit to the Radar Station at the northern most point of the docks, where through a battery of Radar screens the difficult entry into the Mersey River from the open sea is controlled and directed. Even in densest fog, ships can find their way and, what is more important, pass each other in the narrow channel without any risk of collision.

After the docks, a flying visit was paid to the Swiss Room at the Commercial College of Liverpool, which, at present, has 5,000 pupils. The Principal of the School received M. le Ministre and Mme de Torrenté and conducted them to the class room which was decorated not only with interesting photographs of Swiss life and Swiss industry, but also with gaily coloured posters. The room proved to be a bright and delightful spot in the otherwise "triste" and greyish city.

Then followed a visit to the Consulate.

Thereafter the party drove to the new Cathedral of Liverpool, where Canon Soulbey received M. and Mme de Torrenté, introduced them to the Archbishop, and showed them personally over this impressive monumental building designed by Sir Giles G. Scott.

After a Lunch given by the Minister to Vice-Consuls Schaerer and Huber, the party drove through the industrial districts of Wigan and Bolton to Darwen, where our compatriot, M. R. Weisbrod, is the General

Manager and Director of the Zurrer Silk Mills, a branch of the Weisbrod-Zurrer firm, Hausen a. Albis. On the latest models of Swiss machines, incredibly beautiful patterns are woven, which unfortunately are only rarely seen in London shops. These high class products were of M. Weisbrod's own design and are chiefly destined for export. Some of the operatives from the mill, who are shortly leaving on a week's visit to Hausen a. Albis in order to assist at the 125th Anniversary of the Weisbrod-Zurrer Mills in Switzerland, were then introduced to the Minister, who wished them all a happy journey. Afterwards M. and Mme Weisbrod received the Minister's party at their home, where M. de Torrenté was delighted to see and admire a private show of M. Weisbrod's paintings.

For the evening the Swiss Club had arranged a Dinner in honour of the Minister and Mme de Torrenté in the pleasant Derby Room of the Adelphi Hotel. After the loyal toasts, the President, M. Weber, welcomed the Minister and Mme de Torrenté; this welcome was seconded by Vice-Consul M. Schaerer. M. de Torrenté then rose and thanked those present for the warm welcome accorded to him. After referring to the material benefits of cohesion amongst our colonies and the defense of our spiritual inheritance, which included the conception of Swiss neutrality, he went on to say:—

" Mais notre neutralité est également un exemple que nous donnons au monde. La neutralité en effet n'implique pas que des avantages, elle pré-suppose la renonciation aux ambitions politiques ou territoriales, l'esprit de modération et d'objectivité, un effort constant vers la sagesse.

Parmi les pays qui nous entourent, il n'en est point qui n'ait cherché à un certain moment de son histoire à élargir son espace vital, à subjuguier



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d'autres peuples et à améliorer par là sa situation matérielle. Pour nous rien de pareil, nous ne devons le bien-être, et le standing de vie dont nous jouissons qu'à notre travail. Ce n'est que par le travail et l'exportation de nos produits que nous sommes associés à la prospérité de nos voisins.

Cela mérite d'être signalé à un moment où des agités et des brouillons cherchent à ébranler notre confiance dans notre politique traditionnelle.

Si chaque peuple s'imposait une stricte discipline et renonçait aux ambitions politiques pour ne fonder son économie que sur son travail, tout en supportant d'énormes sacrifices, pour affermir sa volonté de défense, le spectre de la guerre finirait bientôt de troubler les esprits."

The Minister ended his peroration with a special word of greeting to old-Consul Dr. Emil Montag, whom everybody was delighted to see, as well as a word of thanks to the President of the Swiss Club, M. Weber, and the President of the Relief Committee, Mrs. Davidson.

By general acclamation, the Assembly gave a vote of thanks to M. Neuhaus, the Chef of the Adelphi, not only for the exquisite Dinner, but also for his offer to assist the Club with special considerations so that at least once a year such a festive gathering could be held at the Adelphi.

The return journey took place on Tuesday, May 2nd, with a short break to visit the Cathedral and old City of Chester, where M. and Mme de Torrenté took leave from Vice-Consul and Mme Schaerer.

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