

Xmas Dinner of the City Swiss Club

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XMAS DINNER OF THE CITY SWISS CLUB.

The traditional Christmas Dinner of the City Swiss Club took place on Thursday, December 18th, 1952, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1., and was attended by about 100 members and guests.

From the very first moment there was a happy and congenial "Stimmung" prevalent, especially as there were quite a number of older members present, who have not been seen for quite a long time. This turning up of the "old guard" added much to the enjoyment of the evening; nothing is more welcome, especially around Christmas time, than to meet old friends.

Previous to the dinner, cocktails were served in one of the ante rooms, which was packed to suffocation.

The dinner served in the gaily decorated Orchid Room commenced shortly after 7 o'clock, and the fare was a seasonable one, the main dishes consisting of Turkey, Christmas Pudding and Mince Pies, and came, as usual, fully up to expectation. Both the Management, and the famous Chef of the Dorchester, — who by the way is a compatriot of ours, — are heartily to be congratulated on their efforts which added greatly to the success of this function.

To remind the company of our dear country, such fine vintages as Neuchâtel, Fendant, Clos du Mont, Dôle, etc. were served, which had a stimulating effect.

Unfortunately, there was no Xmas tree displayed, which was a pity, this was, no doubt, due to the fact, that Christmas had not yet arrived.

After the usual toasts were proposed by the President, and honoured by the gathering, Mr. C. Seinet extended a hearty welcome to the members and guests, expressing his pleasure at seeing such a large attendance. He tendered specially cordial greetings to the members of the Swiss Trade Delegation who were then in London to conclude a new Trade agreement, namely Mr. H. Schaffner, (Head of the Delegation), Mr. Bühler and Dr. Rothenbühler (of the "Vorort"), expressing the hope, that their negotiations would be crowned with success. Mr. Seinet also tendered a sincere welcome to Dr. V. Umbricht, M. R. Keller and M. Miesch, of the Swiss Legation, who accompanied the Delegation.

Mr. Schaffner, on behalf of his colleagues, thanked the President, and the members of the City Swiss Club for the invitation that had been extended to them, saying that it was always a special pleasure to be in the midst of the Club, which plays such a conspicuous rôle in the London Swiss Colony. He referred briefly to the pending negotiations with the Board of Trade, which at the time were still in progress and he was, therefore, unable to announce the final result. He, however, said that some concessions had already been obtained, although not as much as was expected. This announcement was greeted with applause, and I noticed, that some of the members then and there ordered a new supply of wine, and I hope that their exuberance was not premature.

In conclusion, Mr. Schaffner, paid a compliment to our member, Dr. V. Umbricht, Commercial Counsellor at the Swiss Legation, for his valuable collaboration in these negotiations. The short address given by Mr. Schaffner, both in English and "Schwyzerdütsch", was acknowledged with great applause.

The President then mentioned, that amongst the gathering was a member, who was shortly relinquishing

his post as Deputy Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation, London, having reached retiring age, and tendered Mr. E. Luterbacher his, and the Club's best wishes for his future welfare. He also greeted Mr. H. Knoll, a member of the Club, who was present, and who has been appointed successor to Mr. Luterbacher, congratulating him on his promotion.

This announcement too was greeted with hearty applause, and the company, there and then, burst into song, singing "For they are jolly good fellows."

Mr. Luterbacher, in a few words, thanked the gathering for the wishes so kindly expressed to him and his successor, saying that he hoped, in spite of his retirement, to be often in the midst of the members of the City Swiss Club.

Mr. Seinet also referred to the recent 75th birthday anniversary of Mr. Louis Chapuis, a former President of the Club, wishing him many happy returns of the day. This concluded the official part of the evening.

Our member, Mr. A. Gandon then played on his accordeon a number of our well-known Swiss melodies, as well as some Christmas songs, such as "Silent Night, Holy night" and "O Tannenbaum", and everyone heartily and lustily joined in the singing, our French speaking compatriots especially distinguished themselves by their performance.

Meanwhile the time was advancing and Mr. Seinet, before declaring the Meeting closed, wished all members and their families a Happy Xmas, and a prosperous New Year, thanking Mr. Ronus, Manager of the Dorchester Hotel for the arrangements made, and Mr. Gandon for having taken us into the realm of music and songs, and thus ended another enjoyable Christmas Dinner of the City Swiss Club.

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