

City Swiss Club

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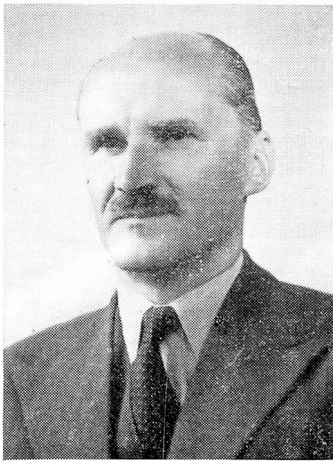
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H. KNOLL.
President, City Swiss Club.

CITY SWISS CLUB

93rd Annual Banquet and Ball

at the
DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, LONDON, W.1
on
FRIDAY, 14th NOVEMBER, 1958

In the Chair:

THE SWISS AMBASSADOR, MONSIEUR ARMIN DAENIKER

Had it not been for the two wars and a period afterwards, the banquet of the City Swiss Club which was held on 14th November, at the Dorchester Hotel, would have been the 102nd, the Club having been founded in 1856. There is, therefore, in seven years' time yet another Centenary to be expected, providing no further major troubles occur.

Of the ninety-three annual festivals, the writer — in the capacity of editor of this paper, and Press Reporter of the Club — has attended no less than thirty.

Looking back on these past years, little has been changed as to the programme. There is the reception, the dinner, the speeches and the dancing, and it becomes exceedingly difficult, as time progresses, to bring some variety into the reporting.

The banquets of this venerable Club have always been a distinguished feature in the life of the Colony. It has been the tradition on these occasions not only to include the members of the Society and their friends, but to invite also a number of well-known and distinguished English personalities, who have been at some time, and in one way or another, connected with our country.

Thus a galaxy of famous statesmen, diplomats, politicians, soldiers, leaders of industry and commerce, and representatives of the arts and culture have invariably adorned the top table at these functions.

It has always been felt that at least once a year our English friends should be made aware of the existence of a Swiss Colony in this country, its life, work, traditions and ambitions. No better means could have been chosen to attain this object than to ask them to be the guests of the City Swiss Club, a Society which represents members of the Colony in all walks of life.

At this year's festival, therefore — as will be seen shortly — peers of the realm, diplomats, soldiers, and famous sportsmen honoured the Club with their presence.

A gratifying feature of the Club's annual dinner was the presence — amongst the nearly 250 visitors — of quite a considerable number of the younger generation of the Colony. They no doubt attended principally to enjoy the dancing which followed the more formal part of the programme — an enjoyment which owing to the length of some of the speeches,

was somewhat curtailed. In order to encourage them to come along on a future occasion, it would perhaps not be amiss to shorten the time allowed for speech-making, but as the various orations were interesting, entertaining and on a high level, they will, no doubt, have not been too disappointed.

* * *

As customary, the evening started with the reception held by the Swiss Ambassador, in his capacity as Honorary President of the Club, and Madame Daeniker, and Mr. H. Knoll, President, and Mrs. Knoll. The two ladies carried lovely bouquets which were presented to them on behalf of the members of the Club.

In order to promote and kindle a congenial "Stimmung" cocktails were served in the two ante-rooms, which became somewhat overcrowded, and little opportunity presented itself to admire the smart dresses of the ladies.

In due course the red-coated Toast-Master announced that "dinner is served", and the company adjourned to the banqueting hall to their respective places. The orchestra struck up a lively tune and amidst hand-clapping the Swiss Ambassador and the President with their ladies made their entry.

The banqueting hall, considered to be one of the finest in the West End presented a magnificent spectacle, the flower decorations, especially at the top table, were a wonderful sight, and crystal candelabra shed their brilliant lights over the assembly. The lovely toilettes of the ladies, and the colourful menu cards on the tables added to the festive garb. Immediately behind the Presidential Chair could be seen the Swiss National Emblem and the Union Jack.

Grace was said by the Rev. C. Reverdin, and the company sat down to an excellent dinner consisting of *Le Consommé Carmen, Le Filet de Sole Bonne Femme, Le Suprême de Volaille Florida, Les Petits Pois Etuvés, Le pommes Delmonico, Le Soufflé Suchard, Les Petits Fours, Le Café*. This fine *Ménu*, prepared by the head chef of The Dorchester, Mr. E. Kaeufeler, a compatriot of ours, was much enjoyed. Fine vintage wines, some from the famous vineyards of our country, added to the enjoyment. During the dinner the "Tafelmusik" was provided by Les Brown and his Orchestra.

When coffee was served the Toasts to H.M. the Queen and to "La Suisse" were proposed by the Swiss Ambassador, with the playing of the respective national anthems.

Now the company prepared to listen to the speeches. At a function like this, when a number of official guests not belonging to our country are invited, it becomes indispensable that something should be said as to why they have been bidden to grace the company with their presence.

After a short lull, the Toast-Master began to function again, by saying "Mr. President, Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, pray silence for your President."

On rising from his chair, Mr. H. Knoll received a spontaneous reception. He addressed the gathering as follows:

"Your Excellency, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, *"Non ricordare che le ore felice."* Let us remember only the happy hours. No one will question the wisdom of such philosophy. For you I hope these annual gatherings of the City Swiss Club rank among such happy hours. To-night we are holding our 93rd annual banquet and ball. The fact that our Club has been in existence for more than one hundred years and is still going strong speaks for itself. Its activities are well known to you. They are not confined to our own little colony, but extend to the country we have chosen as our second home. We are ever mindful of the hospitality and friendship we are privileged to enjoy from her people and we must

always endeavour to strengthen these relations between our two countries.

"To-night I have once again the pleasant task of introducing and welcoming our guests who, as in former years, include some prominent British personalities.

"It gives me particular pleasure to welcome Sir Lionel and Lady Lamb.

"If I am not mistaken, Sir Lionel and Lady Lamb were good enough to join us on a previous occasion and we are delighted to see them here again.

"Sir Lionel, as you know, has spent most of his life in the Diplomatic Service; his first assignment took him to China where he was destined to remain for over thirty years, with the exception of a two years' stay in St. Paul, Minneapolis. In 1945 he was appointed Chinese Counsellor to the Embassy in Chungking. He was a Minister in Nanking from 1947 to 1949 and Chargé d'affaires in Peking until 1953.

"Sir Lionel left China on his appointment as Ambassador to Berne where he remained until he left the Service. He is therefore well acquainted with our country, our people and our customs. We hope that Sir Lionel did not find things in Berne too slow after the excitement of his life in the East. He will, however, have had one advantage; having mastered the Chinese language — and I have no doubt that Sir Lionel did — our Schwyzerdütsch will not have presented him with any great difficulty.



VIEW OF THE BANQUETING HALL.



VIEW OF THE BANQUETING HALL.

“ Sir Lionel has now retired from public life and we should like to take this opportunity of wishing him and Lady Lamb good health and good fortune in their years of leisure. We hope they will remember their Swiss friends and we hope to see them again.

“ We are pleased to welcome for the first time Lord and Lady Ogmore.

“ Lord Ogmore is a man of many parts, lawyer, soldier, politician and a Welshman!

“ As a young man he practised law in the Straits Settlements and there was admitted to the Bar. During the last war he served in the Royal Artillery and in 1945 presided over the first General Military Court in Berlin. Later he took up politics and joined the Labour Government where he represented Croydon South. During this time he held many important posts in the Colonial Office and afterwards in the Commonwealth Relations Office. It would take too long to enumerate Lord Ogmore's activities in this connection; they have taken him to many distant corners of the globe — Sarawak, Zanzibar, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya — to mention only a few. In short, it seems that Lord Ogmore likes to roam and since we Swiss are reputed to be of a roving disposition — one hears complaints that we are to be found all over the world — I wonder whether Lord Ogmore feels some affinity with our people, which perhaps persuaded him to come and meet us to-night. Whatever the reason, I feel sure that Lord Ogmore has numerous claims upon his time and we are therefore the more appreciative that he and Lady Ogmore decided to accept our invitation.

“ We are honoured to have with us to-night Lord and Lady Sempill, who were unfortunately prevented from joining us last year. Lord Sempill, a Representative Peer for Scotland, is well known for the prominent part he has played in the field of aviation. He is also remembered as active competitor in the King's Cup Air Race round Britain during the years 1924-30. His activities which have taken him far afield have earned him many decorations including the Air Force Cross, as well as a number of foreign decorations.

“ I understand that Lord and Lady Sempill are the happy possessors of a castle in Scotland. Judging by the experience of many of my compatriots and by my own, we Swiss feel very much at home in Scotland. This may be due to our common love of mountains and lakes, but I suspect that the pageantry of the highland dress, the skirl of the pipes, the lassies, the haggis, not forgetting the whisky, have proved a very strong attraction. Anyway, I do hope that Lord and Lady Sempill have felt that affinity between our two countries when visiting Switzerland.

“ And now I am particularly pleased to greet Sir Patrick and Lady Scrivener.

“ Sir Patrick, who began his diplomatic career after the First World War, held posts in various European capitals and in the Far East. We remember him more especially as British Ambassador to Switzerland. Sir Patrick and Lady Scrivener must therefore have come to know our people and country pretty well and since, I am told, ‘A friend is someone you know very well, but whom you like just the same’,

we can feel flattered that they agreed to join us to-night.

"In introducing to you Sir Wavell and Lady Wakefield I think I can best describe Sir Wavell as a sportsman and a great one at that. His speciality, if I may call it that, is Rugby football. Sir Wavell has captained England, Cambridge University, Middlesex, the Royal Air Force and Harlequins; he is also a past President of the Rugby Football Union. I think that Sir Wavell has displayed a very sporting spirit in coming along to-night to mingle with the Swiss, for although we have graduated to football — and rather fancy ourselves at that game — I have to admit that we know nothing at all about that superior sport, Rugby football.

"But you must not think that Sir Wavell has spent all his time with two feet on the ground or wherever they are supposed to be in a rugby game. On the contrary, he has many hours of flying to his credit and can look back on a brilliant record in the Air Force during both World Wars. He is also a politician and represents Marylebone in the present Government. In short, Sir Wavell is a very prominent figure in British life and we are very proud to welcome him and Lady Wakefield among our guests.

"We are happy to welcome again Air Chief Marshal The Rt. Hon Sir Ralph Cochrane.

"Sir Ralph is President of the Ski Club of Great Britain, a club with whom we maintain very cordial and close relations. We regret that Lady Cochrane was unable to join Sir Ralph owing to indisposition. We wish her a speedy and complete recovery and hope to see her again on a future occasion.

"The Alpine Club is represented to-night by its Vice-President, Lord Chorley, and Lady Chorley. This is the first time we have the pleasure of having Lord and Lady Chorley with us, both of whom I understand, are keen mountaineers, and I therefore hope that they will feel as much at home with us this evening as they do with our mountains.

"As usual, the Associated Members of the Swiss Alpine Club are represented this evening and we once again extend a cordial greeting to the President of the Club, Mr. Starkey, and Mrs. Starkey.

"And now I should like to say a few words about our Ambassador and Honorary President, Mr. Armin Daeniker, and his most gracious lady, who, as you see, are again honouring us with their presence. It is often said that Switzerland is the model democracy of the world. I think it is equally true to say that Monsieur and Madame Daeniker are the most democratically-minded representatives of that democracy we have had in London for a long time. They take a very keen personal interest in all the happenings of our Colony however insignificant they may be, and this has endeared them to us all. We in the City Swiss Club are deeply grateful to them for the time and energy they devote to our activities.

"I am delighted to greet also Monsieur de Tribolet, First Counsellor, and Mme. de Tribolet, as well as all the other members of our Embassy and their Ladies who are supporting us to-night.

"This gathering would not be complete without our genial Press reporter and Editor of the *Swiss Observer*, Mr. Stauffer, and Mrs. Stauffer. Our thanks are due to Mr. Stauffer for his untiring efforts to make this evening a success.

"We are also glad to have with us Mr. Jacomelli, President of the Assembly of Presidents of the Swiss Societies in Great Britain, and the representatives of the Clergy, Reverend Father Lanfranchi, Monsieur le Pasteur and Madame Reverdin.

"Lastly, I should like to extend a very warm welcome to the Ladies. I thank them all for coming along to-night and I particularly thank all those who had to induce their husbands to do so. I know from experience that we are not always anxious to change and turn out again once we have reached home. I feel, therefore, that the ladies contribute a good deal to the success of these evenings, not only by their beauty and charm, but by their powers of persuasion behind the scene.

"And now it only remains for me to wish you all an evening to remember. May I ask you to raise your glass and to drink with me the health of our guests, coupled with the name of Sir Lionel Lamb."

The President's speech was very much applauded and his Toast to the Guests was enthusiastically honoured.

The response to the President's Toast was given by our Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, who received a hearty ovation on rising from the "Fauteuil Présidentiel"; he said:

"Mr. Chairman, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

"I am indeed greatly honoured that for the fourth time in succession I have the privilege to preside over this magnificent Banquet. Each time I had the honour to deliver a speech and all of you will therefore be able to measure the fall-out which you have to expect. At this season there is a great wave of such oratorical fall-out going on, harmless in itself and, I should think, not altogether unhelpful for the digestion of such an exquisite meal as we have just had. If you are indulgent enough and do not claim for the discontinuance of such rhetorical tests, the majority in this room will no doubt be anxious just the same to have them brought under adequate control; particularly as the younger generation — and they are in the great majority to-night — are most desirous to see the dance floor cleared soon.

"The main duty of an honorary President is certainly that of making his speech as brief as possible. Thus, in the first place I would like to join you, Mr. President, in your welcoming words to the many members and prominent guests; it is furthermore my agreeable task to praise and thank you and the members of the committee for carrying on the activity of the City Swiss Club in a way which is so worthy of its long tradition.

"I am particularly glad to greet among our distinguished guests two colleagues of mine who are present with their charming wives, Sir Lionel Lamb, who has just returned after having accomplished a brilliant mission during more than four years as Ambassador to Switzerland, and also Sir Patrick Scrivener, the first British Ambassador in Berne. We are delighted that this year at long last Sir Patrick and Lady Scrivener are able to be with us.

"May I, in the presence of such distinguished former representatives of the British Crown in our country ask you to dwell for a short time with some of their predecessors. To most of you it will hardly be known that Great Britain had established regular

envoys ever since 1689 until the French Revolution. Of course, there were occasional embassies exchanged before, at the time of the Reformation, when a lively intercourse was going on between England and the protestant centres, Geneva and Zurich. Some time later it was however considered in the interest of the Crown to accredit a regular envoy with what was then called the Helvetic Body or the Confederation of the thirteen cantons; naturally they were received only by the protestant cantons and looked at rather askance by the catholic governments, as much as by their French and Spanish colleagues.

"I wonder whether the life of those early British diplomats in Switzerland was a happy one. They had more time than we have to-day to write reports about the country which was then so little known still. Happily, we possess some of these reports written by Aglionby and his successor, Abraham Stanyan, both envoys under the reign of Queen Anne. Stanyan was particularly impressed by the lovely plain between Moudon and Morat with its gay prospects which he found the most beautiful part of the canton of Berne, then half of Switzerland. Of course, they were not yet privileged to go to places like St. Moritz, Wengen or Gstaad; Albrecht von Haller, who later on discovered the beauty of our alps was not yet born.

"Of the virtues and features of the Swiss, Stanyan writes: 'The Swiss have been noted during many ages for their great candour in their dealings, the simplicity in their manners as well as in their dress. But those who examine them at present do not think they deserve such a character as they did formerly. The use of the French language has intro-

duced the freedom of their behaviour, both in men and women and has been followed by that of their dress or at least an imitation of it as far as their purses can reach. They would be carried to even greater excesses if the magistrates had not wisely interposed and put a curb upon their vanity by prohibiting all costly apparel.

"The Switzers have always stood in the world for great drinkers and still have that character, though it would be unjust to reproach them with it at present.'

"Of the women, he writes that 'generally speaking they have the reputation of being chaste and certainly they are good house-wives, though perhaps their chastity among the protestants is as much owing to their political institutions as to their complexion and devotion. All serious gallantries pass for crimes among them much more than in other countries and are punished as such when found out.'

"On plays, operas and dancing: 'there are few of them that busy themselves in loving intrigues which seem to be the effect of idleness and luxury among the women of other countries.'

"He also says that 'the reputation of the Switzers for wit runs so slow in the world that whoever undertakes to defend them upon that head is in danger of being thought to have very little share of it himself.'

"Stanyan's predecessor, Aglionby, had not too good an opinion of the people amongst whom he lived. He writes that 'the Swiss have no representatives abroad because they rely on the argument that no foreign power will ever desire their territory and

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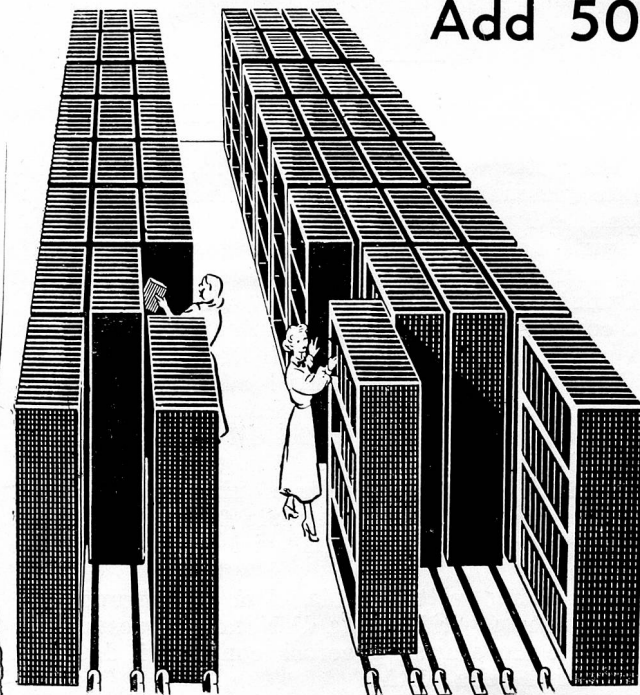
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would not find an attack worth the costs; thus they are very badly informed on what is happening in the world.'

"He warns his successor of the greed of Swiss people. He says that 'the Swiss know only too well how to make money; they take all for themselves and keep a foreign Minister breathless until he is pumped empty; their constitution offers them so many subterfuges and means of procrastination that they will always get away with it.'

"I do not know whether the observations of Sir Patrick or Sir Lionel have been of a similar nature. But that was 200 years ago. I feel sure that historians of the future will find no reference to the stinginess of the Swiss in the reports made by diplomats of to-day.

"As for myself, I am in the happy position to praise unstintedly the hospitality and generosity of this great Nation which our guests represent. The lively sympathies shown to our people have indeed encouraged responsible circles to envisage a Swiss Fortnight in England during the autumn of next year. It will be a comprehensive economic and cultural manifestation putting 'Switzerland on show' and combining arts and other exhibitions, concerts, fashion shows and a charity ball, with a display of Swiss goods in the main business centres of London, Manchester and Glasgow. Here is not the place to say more about these plans yet. When the time comes for them to take concrete shape — this will be before our next annual dinner — I hope that we shall be able to count on the generous support and active help of all members of the colony and that our societies too will co-ordinate their activities in connection with this great manifestation.

"I mentioned already the generous reception and kind feelings offered so largely and openly to our compatriots in this country. Stanyan already mentioned: 'the Switzers learn with great ease the language and put on the manners and fashions of the country where they live; they study them at first to render themselves agreeable and by degrees make them habitual'. But more than such adaptability it is the admiration which we feel for your great Nation, its ideals and its destiny which made this country so greatly attractive to many generations of our compatriots. May I therefore conclude with the words of a Cantata which Albrecht von Haller, whose 250th birthday was widely celebrated here and in Switzerland, has made in 1748 to praise George II, his hero, 'the victor', as he says, in which our Swiss compatriots in this country to-day would readily join:

" 'Herr, unser Leben hängt an Deinem,
Für uns ist's, wenn wir für Dich flehen.
Oh lass noch lang Dein Beispiel scheinen
Nach dem gerechte Herrscher sehen.
Du dämpfst allein der Zwietracht Feuer,
Du hebst, wen stärker Unrecht fällt.
Oh halt noch lang Europens Steuer
Dein Wohlstand ist das Wohl der Welt.' "

The Ambassador's oration was loudly cheered.

To express thanks, on behalf of the guests, for the Club's hospitality, had been entrusted to Sir Lionel Lamb, a former British Ambassador to Switzerland.

Sir Lionel is, of course, no stranger to the Swiss Colony, having been the guest of the City Swiss Club and the Anglo-Swiss Society on former occasions. The applause which he received when rising was, therefore, particularly cordial.

Amongst the many diplomats who represented H.M. Government in Berne, he was undoubtedly one of the most popular. He knows Switzerland well and has, during some of the most difficult years — when he was *en poste* in the capital of the Confederation — proved to be a great friend of our country.

Sir Lionel is an excellent after-dinner speaker, and in his witty address he related some of his experiences during his long and distinguished career in the diplomatic service of his country; in particular he referred to the period when he was in Berne. Our country possesses in him a sincere friend, and his presence at the banquet was very much appreciated. On resuming his seat he was accorded a hearty ovation.

The last speaker of the evening was Mr. R. de Cintra, a former President of the City Swiss Club, who gave the Toast "La Charité". In moving terms he appealed to the Swiss members present not to forget their brethren who are in need. His appeal found a generous response, over £100 being collected for the Swiss Benevolent Society.

* * *

The official part of the evening thus came to a close, and after a short interval dancing began with an enticing Viennese waltz played by the excellent dance orchestra of Les Brown. Young and old joined in the many dances which followed in quick succession.

Midnight came and passed, and still the dancers carried on allowing themselves no respite. But all good things must come to an end, and shortly before 2. a.m. the band played "Auld Lang Syne", a circle was formed, and the President and his charming lady were ushered into the middle of it, and were accorded three cheers.

This was followed by the rendering of "God Save the Queen", and the 93rd banquet of the City Swiss Club came to a finish. It was a most successful and enjoyable evening, and the committee, who had so efficiently arranged this annual festival truly deserve the thanks of all who were present.

ST.

CRONACA DI NATALE.

Nella notte su martedì, 2 dicembre, approfittando dell'interruzione di corrente sulle linee tranviarie e filoviarie, gli operai dell'Azienda elettrica comunale di Lugano hanno dato inizio alla sospensione delle ghirlande luminose in piazza Manzoni dapprima e in via Luvini-Perseghini in seguito. Si tratta di 250 metri complessivi di festoni illuminati. In seguito, sopra piazza della Riforma è stata tesa la rete di filo invisibile che sostiene i pendenti luminosi.

Il grande albero è stato innalzato nell'angolo della Piazza formato dagli edifici del Credito Svizzero e della Banca dello Stato. Fu tagliato martedì mattina, 2 dicembre, a Cureglia e quindi preceduto da una staffetta della Polizia stradale fu trasportato in città. L'albero è alto 12 metri, ed è tutto decorato a festa.

E' la prima volta che la città di Lugano si è decorata a festa per le Feste di Natale e questa bella iniziativa è dovuta ai generosi contributi dati dai commercianti della città.

Poncione di Vespero.