

# Henry de Torrente †

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## HENRY DE TORRENTE †

1893 — 1962



We deeply regret to announce the passing away on Tuesday, 27th March — whilst on a visit to London — of Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, late Swiss Minister in London, and Swiss Ambassador in Washington, at the age of 69.

By his untimely death the Swiss Colony mourns the loss of one of its most distinguished Swiss diplomatists.

Almost from the beginning of taking up his post as Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Swiss Confederation at the Court of St. James's, the deceased had, in spite of his otherwise heavy engagements, shown a keen interest in the life of our Colony. It had been his endeavour to create a friendly and close relationship between the then Legation and members and institutions of the Colony. Amongst the many innovations which date back to the time when he was *en poste* in London, were the creations of the Assembly of Presidents of Swiss Societies, the Advisory Council of the "Swiss Observer", and the realisation of the Swiss Hostel for Girls.

Monsieur and Madame de Torrenté kept an open house at Bryanston Square, where many of the great ones in this country were entertained, and their parties to members of the Swiss Colony became famous. Many well-known Swiss artistes

both here and at home found in them generous patrons, and their musical evenings were events much sought after. Monsieur de Torrenté made it a point to attend whenever possible the often too numerous social and business functions held by Swiss Societies and Institutions.

Our country has lost in Henry de Torrenté one of its most distinguished sons, and a great patriot; the Swiss Colony in Great Britain deplores the passing of a friend who remained steadfast and helpful in any crisis; and his friends, colleagues and subordinates mourn the parting from a man who will linger for many a day in their grateful memory.

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Monsieur Henry de Torrenté was born at Sion (Ct. Valais) in 1893, the son of a former President of the Upper Chamber of Deputies. He was educated at Sion and Einsiedeln, and took distinguished degrees in Law, social science and economic science respectively at the Universities of Berne, Basle and Geneva. After several years abroad, of which two years were spent in London (1922/23) to finish his economic studies, he entered in 1925 into the service of the Federal Economic Department as secretary to the late Federal Councillor Dr. Schulthess. Four years later (1929), Monsieur de Torrenté was sent to the Swiss Legation in Paris with the rank of 1st Secretary of Legation, in 1933 he was promoted to the rank of Counsellor of Legation, and during the year 1935, he held the post of *Chargé d'Affaires ad interim*.

When in 1941 the Hitler Government requested that the Swiss Legation be closed — where he had acted as *Chargé d'Affaires* during the absence of the Swiss Minister in Vichy — he returned to Switzerland and took up his post in the Army as colonel on the general staff. After being a delegate to various economic conferences, he was appointed Minister to China in 1945, setting up the first Swiss Legation in that country, at Nanking. In 1948 he took up his post as Minister in London, where he remained until 1954, when he was transferred to Washington in the same capacity, becoming Ambassador in 1957. Monsieur de Torrenté retired in 1960, after which he occupied himself with his law and economic studies. In 1944 he married Anne-Marie de Courten. He leaves a widow and daughter, to whom we express our deepest sympathy in their loss.

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The Funeral Service was held on Thursday, 29th March, at Farm Street Roman Catholic Church. Amongst the numerous congregation was the Swiss Ambassador and Madame Daeniker, representatives of the Foreign Office, and personnel of the Swiss Embassy,