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## ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MEMBERS OF THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB.

For many years previous to the last war, this well-known Association, composed of keen mountaineers and ardent friends of Switzerland, used to meet in Switzerland, either at Kandersteg or Grindelwald.

Owing to the restricted travelling accommodations and other difficulties, it was decided to hold this year's reunion again in London, and consequently a dinner with the Ladies took place, on Thursday, August 1st, the Swiss National Day, at "Chez Auguste," Soho, W.1.

After the customary toasts to H.M. the King and the President of the Swiss Confederation, Doctor Sfinzi, the President of the Association, and one of England's foremost radiologists, in a happy little speech, expressed his disappointment at not having been able to arrange this meeting, as in former years, in Switzerland; he also voiced his regrets that the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paul Ruegger, was unable to be present on this occasion. He ended his short oration with the wish, that, in the near future, members of the Association will be able to meet again in one or the other of the "beauty spots" of Switzerland.

Mr. Charles Lehmann, a former President of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, was entrusted with the task of proposing the toast to the guests. He greeted the representative of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur V. Umbricht, Secretary of Legation, Dr. Paul de Wolff, Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation, Mr. Tall from the Swiss Legation, Mr. V. P. Ceresole, and Mr. A. Stauffer from the SWISS OBSERVER.

He acquainted the company with some of the experiences he had made on the occasion of a recent visit to Switzerland and paid a high and warm tribute to the hospitality of the Swiss people.

Mr. Lehmann, in giving particulars of the culinary art in our country, made every one's mouth water, and when relating experiences of "shopping excursions," including such articles as silk stockings, most of the ladies present were green with envy.

Although I appreciate the speaker's *compte rendu*, I thought he ought to have mentioned that the Swiss people themselves are rationed just as much, or even more, than English people over here, and that only in Restaurants and Hotels a more generous and varied fare can be obtained.

Major Roberts, who for many years used to represent the Association at the annual banquets of the City Swiss Club, congratulated the President for having invited to the gathering a number of Swiss who might be helpful in facilitating travelling from this country to Switzerland, especially if it would lead to larger allowances and easier travelling conditions.

Monsieur Umbricht, Secretary of Legation, representing the Swiss Minister, expressed the Minister's regret at being unable to attend the gathering owing to his imminent departure for Switzerland.

"After an interval," he said, "of a hard war period, our British friends have, in 1946, again the opportunity to go to Switzerland and to renew there, their former relations. We are very happy indeed, to see them again in our country, especially, to welcome the members of the British Alpine Club. The Swiss

mountains have remained the same, and I feel sure, the heart of our British friends have not changed. Being myself a member of the Swiss Alpine Club, I can assure you that all our guides the sons of Taugwalders, Centinella, Lochmatter, Perren and others greet you today, the 1st of August, our Independence Day, and with you, all the famous British climbers, whose names are so intimately connected with our mountains."

Monsieur Umbricht shortly referred to the travelling difficulties, and the tiresome visas, and monetary conditions, expressing the hope that before long improvements will be made so as to enable a greater number of British visitors to come to our country.

In conclusion he thanked the President and the members of the Association for their attachment to our country, which is, to-day more than ever appreciated by the Swiss people.

Dr. P. de Wolff, Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation, on behalf of the Swiss guests, thanked the President and the members for their generous hospitality, and promised the company to do his best to convince the "Gentlemen of the Bank of England" of the necessity to make more liberal allowances.

Thus a most enjoyable function came to an end, a gathering which was composed almost entirely of old and enthusiastic friends of our homeland, friends whom we value not only from a pecuniary point of view, but for their similar outlook on life and their characteristics which have endeared them to us in the past.

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