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Carlo Berti, President Unione Ticinese.

# UNIONE TICINESE

## 75th Anniversary Banquet and Ball

at the

DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, LONDON, W.1

on

SUNDAY, 23rd OCTOBER, 1949

*In the Chair:* THE SWISS MINISTER

Monsieur HENRY DE TORRENTÉ

Few will dispute that the Banquet and Ball at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, on Sunday evening, October 23rd last, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of foundation of the "Unione Ticinese" Mutual Aid Society — Sezione autonoma "Pro Ticino" of London was not just another society get-together, but a great Swiss occasion. This function marked another milestone in the history of the London colony. Although it might be granted that in the "naughty nineties" the "Unione Ticinese" was perhaps stronger in number than all the other Swiss societies put together, this is obviously to-day no longer the case. But as one exponent of Switzerland's several ways of life, the society of our Cisalpine "confederati" can still hold its own. Perhaps this is due to its homogenous character, consisting as it does of citizens of one Canton while its sisters with few exceptions tend to appeal to all Swiss regardless of Cantonal allegiance. Perhaps it may be due even to the quality of adaptability which the Latin race seems to possess in abundant measure. Few will be inclined to quarrel with the compatriot who remarked recently that the "Ticinesi" owe their success to the way in which they have introduced and kept the family spirit in their Society. No greater compliment could have been paid to their inexhaustible vitality and warm patriotism by the Mother Country than the acceptance by Federal Councillor, Dr. Enrico Celio, the Head of the Department for Posts and Railways at Berne, and twice President of the Confederation, of their invitation to their Society's 75th birthday party. This inspiring gesture will have given new heart to any "Ticinesi" who, especially as a consequence of the recent devaluation, may have thought the time ripe for casting off the link with the home country. These and many others, together with numerous Swiss from other parts of the Confederation and English friends, some 600 in all, packed the capacious Dorchester Ballroom to see, hear and pay homage to the distinguished member of the Federal Government. And how all heartily agreed with Mr. Keller's greeting to Sig. Celio: " . . . dass Ihr Beispiel Schule macht!"

At one time the organizers had hoped that other important personalities might visit London for the occasion, but although the function took place at the week-end, our southernmost Canton without an air link with London (Swissair and BEA please note!) was still too far away to permit of a flying visit, such as Dr. Celio's, without serious interruption of important duties. The numerous telegrams and letters received, however, amply testified to the popularity of the "Unione Ticinese" at home and in other lands.

The appreciative terms of these messages happily revealed the warmth of their senders, who we feel sure, would not have been daunted by the pouring rain (here at last!), to which the Federal Councillor referred in his description of the scene relayed from Monte Ceneri, or by the austerity meal.

This last of course lacked quantity but by no means quality. It commenced with a typical "piatto": the "Minestrone alla Ticinese", followed in due course by the "Poulet à la casalinga", "les petits pois étuvés Verbano", "le cœur de Céleri Ceresio", "la Salade de Laitue Leventina", concluding with "la Macédoine de fruits Melba et la Génoise marbrée." The souvenir menu cover was embellished with a sketch, specially drawn by the young artist Ottorino Olgiate: an abundant female figure embracing with one arm the Castello di Svitto at Bellinzona and with the other the Tower Bridge, symbolizing the "Unione Ticinese" as a mighty link between this Country and the Canton Ticino.

If we may be allowed a slight criticism of this otherwise most successful function, it is a pity that a somewhat late start was made, as this in its turn caused the official part of the evening, with the several speeches to be expected on such an occasion, to last up to eleven o'clock much to the impatience of the dancers.

Upon the M.C.'s stentorian command all took their places, and upon the notes of the Swiss Psalm being played somewhat uncertainly by the English band, the principal guests, Fed. Councillor Celio, the Swiss Minister, the President of the Society with Mrs. C. Berti made their entrance amid applause, Miss Cynthia

Allegrezza presenting Mrs. Berti with a bouquet of fresh red and blue flowers, the cantonal colours.

When the coffee was served the Swiss Minister, M. Henry de Torrenté, proposed the loyal toasts to The King and to the President of the Swiss Confederation and the Federal Council, coupled with the name of Dr. Enrico Celio.

A very popular item in the proceedings was the performance of the "Corale" of the "Unione Ticinese". They sang, with accompaniment of their pianist, violinist and accordeonists, and in their usual polished style a number of Ticinese folk-songs ("Noi siamo ticinesi", "Ticino", "Num da Lugan") and a potpourri of several other songs under the capable leadership of their "maestro" Mr. P. De Maria. As we have now sung the praises of this efficient group of singers on several occasions we shall now only remark that all present visibly enjoyed the nostalgic arias, not excluding the principal guest of the evening whom we spied merrily joining in the singing.

As soon as the Corale had completed a thunderously acclaimed *encore*, the Chairman for the evening, the Swiss Minister, rose to propose the toast of "La Suisse et nos Tessinois." His Excellency said:

"Chers amis tessinois,

Le Tessin jouit aujourd'hui de l'enviable privilège d'être le Canton le plus admiré, le plus adulé, le plus populaire de la Confédération. Je m'en réjouis avec vous, non seulement parce que de longs séjours dans votre pays m'ont appris à l'aimer et à m'enthousiasmer pour son peuple, mais parce que cette situation exceptionnelle vous l'avez méritée en enrichissant le patrimoine moral de la Suisse et en mettant à son service vos qualités de labeur, de persévérance et de patience.

Tel ne fut pas toujours le cas. Vous aviez pu avoir parfois l'impression d'être traités un peu en parents pauvres. Mais ce sont là de petites querelles de famille qui appartiennent à un passé lointain.

Le fait est que ces dernières décennies ont mis toutes choses à leur place et dans leur véritable lumière.

La Suisse avait échappé à la première guerre mondiale d'une part grâce à sa volonté de défense, fondée sur l'esprit de sacrifice et de solidarité, d'autre part grâce à la structure même de notre état fédéral. Il apparut que les raisons profondes de cette attitude, de cette détermination à résister à toute absorption, résidaient précisément dans ce particularisme local, dans cet attachement au sol et aux coutumes, autant de traditions qui s'étaient conservées intactes dans nos populations montagnardes.

La mobilisation vous avait révélé à vos compatriotes transalpins. Ils avaient respiré votre atmosphère méridionale, subtile et douce, s'étaient extasiés sur vos paysages et penchés sur l'âme de votre peuple.

Au surplus l'idée de grouper tous les Etats du monde en une ligue des nations rendit plus évident le miracle de la Suisse, l'union de trois peuples, de trois cultures différentes dans la solidarité et la paix. Le rôle du Tessin au sein de la Confédération apparut essentiel. Quelques années plus tard la menace à votre frontière d'idéologies subversives vous rapprocha du reste de la Suisse, exposée à un danger plus grave encore.

Dans ces conditions il était indispensable que le Tessin continuât à être représenté au sein du Conseil fédéral. Les deux hommes d'état que vous avez envoyé siéger dans les Conseils du Gouvernement ont fortifié



Federal Councillor, Dr. E. Celio, addressing the gathering.





Standing left to right: **Sig. Garbani-Nerini, Mme. Berti, Dr. E. Celio, M. Henry de Torrenté, Sig. C. Berti.**

encore le prestige de votre canton. Votre cause est gagnée et tous vos confédérés éprouvent la joie pure de vous avoir rendu justice.

Vous en êtes du reste pleinement conscients. Je n'en veux pour preuve que la réponse que fit un jour M. Motta à l'écrivain tessinois Zoppi: "In tutta la mia lunga carriera, non ho mai avuto l'impressione di rappresentare una minoranza. Questo è, appunto, il miracolo svizzero: che la maggioranza e particolarmente la maggioranza svizzero-tedesca, ha imparato a rispettare e a stimare le minoranze. Se fossimo maggioranza noi, non so se saremmo capaci di tanto."

Mais si j'ai qualifié d'essentiel le rôle du Tessin au sein de la Confédération, je ne saurais négliger le rayonnement de votre canton dans le monde. Le Tessin s'honore d'avoir produit une pléiade d'artistes qui ont connu la célébrité. Votre peuple tout imprégné de culture méditerranéenne, possède le sens inné des belles choses. Les campaniles et les églises des villages les plus modestes et les plus reculés y revêtent souvent les formes les plus pures de l'art médiéval ou classique ou baroque. "Peu d'autres pays", a observé Francesco Chiesa, "présentent une telle richesse et une telle variété de monuments artistiques". Aussi est-ce dans l'architecture qu'au cours des 16 et 17ème siècle, les Tessinois brillent au premier rang. Je me bornerai à citer: Domenico Fontana, l'architecte de la Basilique de St. Jean de Latrana à Rome et du Palais Royal de Naples; Carlo Maderno, dont le nom est lié à St. Pierre à Rome; enfin Francesco Borromini, le plus fameux de tous, qui a doté Rome de tant de chef d'œuvres. A l'époque contemporaine ces grands artistes ont eu un digne héritier dans le sculpteur

Vincenzo Vela. Dans le domaine des Lettres, le Tessin possède aujourd'hui avec le poète Francesco Chiesa l'un des grands noms de la littérature italienne.

Mais le rayonnement du Tessin à l'étranger revêt également une autre forme que je ne saurais passer sous silence. Je veux parler de l'émigration. Née d'un fort excédent de la natalité, et des difficultés de nourrir une population nombreuse sur un sol ingrat, l'émigration tessinoise a été pour la Suisse une source d'enrichissement moral et matériel. Des milliers de vos compatriotes sont établis aujourd'hui à l'étranger. Avec le courage, la volonté l'obstination propres aux races montagnardes, le Tessinois, ouvrier, artisan, hôtelier, artiste, mène à chef tout ce qu'il entreprend. Le succès sourit à son labeur et c'est ainsi que nous assistons à l'efflorescence de ces puissantes colonies dont celle de Londres est l'un des plus brillants exemples.

Mais l'émigration du Tessinois n'est pas sans comporter quelques dangers; elle peut causer le déclin de la natalité indigène et l'accroissement de l'immigration. Or il est indispensable de conserver au Tessin le caractère qui lui est propre. Les autorités fédérales ont compris combien il était nécessaire de favoriser le développement économique du Tessin et le peuple suisse accueillera avec sympathie tout geste de solidarité à l'égard de votre canton. Certes les "rivendicazioni" ne sont pas encore toutes satisfaites. Il s'agit là de problèmes souvent délicats, mais la présence de Monsieur le Conseiller fédéral Celio au sein du Gouvernement nous garantit que les "rivendicazioni" sont examinées avec la plus grande bienveillance.



Monsieur le Conseiller fédéral,

Vous allez nous quitter demain à la première heure. Votre séjour à Londres aura été bien fugitif. Mais de cette brève visite vous remporterez, j'en suis certain, une impression profonde. La Colonie suisse de Londres tout entière s'est groupée autour de vous pour manifester son vif attachement et son dévouement à la Suisse et au Gouvernement fédéral.

Je ne saurais donc mieux terminer qu'en reprenant à mon compte les paroles que le Président de l'Union tessinoise adressait à votre illustre prédécesseur à son départ de Londres: "Ritornere presto al vostro focolare e per noi ci consolerà il pensiero che in un cantuccio del vostro cuore ci serberete dolce e cortese ricordo del fatto che quantunque lungi dalla madre terra, le spirito svizzero di fratellanza e libertà potrà essere curvato, ma mai spezzato."

This warm appreciation of the part played by the Canton Ticino and its people in the life of Switzerland was well received by the company.

It was then the turn of Mr. Berti, President of the Unione Ticinese, to propose the toast of the Unione Ticinese. He began with a warm tribute to the Swiss Minister for all the help the Society had received from him and from the Legation, particularly with regard to the celebration. He then greeted Dr. Celio in Italian and went on to report on the activities of his Society during the year, which caused him to hold up the Georges Dimier Challenge Cup, won by the Ticinese athletes at this year's Swiss Sports, a good omen incidentally for the Society's attaining the century. In moving terms he reminded his hearers of the loss sustained by the death earlier this year of "Socio Benemerito," Mr. Oscar Gambazzi, who had been Secretary for 31 years and President for 3. Mr. Berti then proceeded to give a brief review of the Society's history from its foundation in 1874 to the present day (a fuller account of which was published in our issue of 30th September), concluding as follows:

... "Having looked back at our past, of which, as I have just said, we have every justification to be proud, we look forward to the future with every confidence. Remember we are a "Unione"; provided we keep together in harmony and steady purpose we cannot fail, for, as you have just heard, we were born in optimism and have been tempered by adversity, hence our confidence in the future can be no stronger."

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Then the microphone travelled to another side of the room, for Mr. Eusebio, Secretary of the Organising Committee, to welcome the guests of the evening.

Mr. Chairman, Cons. Fed. Celio,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over here, people who don't know take it for granted that in Switzerland they speak English: people *who know a little* say that every Swiss speaks fluently Italian, French and German — and even a little English, but we Swiss, being far from a modest race, always fight shy of admitting to admiring English friends that really more than four languages are spoken in the Alps: there are such melodious idioms as the Bärndütsch, the Baslerdütsch, the patios de Vaud, the Romantsch, and "ul nost dialett", to mention but a few. Therefore, looking at the company here assembled this evening, I cannot help wishing I had the several heads of St. George's dragon in order to address you all in your own tongue simultaneously. But as this atom age has not yet invented the device for granting extravagant wishes, I humbly pray for your indulgence if now and again, as I go along, I shall break into some strange vernacular to greet our Guests.

Monsieur le Ministre, our President has already thanked you for taking the Chair here to-night, but I would be failing in my duty if I did not say how much we appreciate the high esteem in which you hold us Ticinesi, and for this fact we deplore that our two neighbouring Cantons are not one: for one thing, they



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would be complementary, the Ticino has The Lakes, while the Valais has *the* mountain, the Matterhorn. I need not assure you, M. le Ministre, of our whole-hearted loyalty to you and to your Legation.

On, Cons. Fed. Celio, Vorrei essere un Francesco Chiesa per dirLe con tutta l'eloquenza e l'armonia della lingua di Dante la viva emozione che prova oggi tutta la colonia Ticinese, anzi debbo dire l'intera colonia svizzera di Londra per il gesto altamente patriottico che Lei ha voluto compiere nel volare qui per partecipare alla celebrazione del 75° annuale dell'Unione Ticinese — Sezione di Londra della Pro Ticino. Sì, la famiglia ticinese di Londra — così Ella con pensiero gentile ha voluto chiamarci — è fiera del suo consigliere Federale e gli è sommamente grata per il Suo cortese interessamento, per il Suo devoto ricordo.

Infatti, già sono più di vent'anni, Lei onorava una nostra festa familiare con la di Lei presenza. Questo fatto mi è rimasto impresso siccome io ero da poco rientrato in questa vasta metropoli dopo aver compiuto i miei studi in patria. Sono certo che quale ex-Direttore del Dipartimento Cantonale dell'Educazione Le sarà di interesse il sapere che lavorando durante lo scorso ventennio nella City, mai ho dovuto vergognarmi dell'istruzione appresa sui banchi della scuola ticinese, al contrario, mi sono sempre sentito spiritualmente agguerritissimo. E' questa un'esperienza fatta pure da altri discendenti ticinesi d'Inghilterra, ciascuno nella propria sfera, e ci riesce pertanto dolorosa la constatazione che, date le condizioni attuali, non potremo più fare altrettanto per i nostri figli. Da qui la necessità per l'Unione Ticinese di dedicare sempre maggiori cure alla difesa culturale, specialmente da quando ci siamo costituiti Sezione Pro Ticino, nell'intento di creare nella nuova generazione dei Ticinesi nata in questo paese ospitale l'amore per la terra dei padri, per la lingua e costumi ticinesi. Per raggiungere questo scopo, abbiamo negli'ultimi anni aperto i nostri ranghi a questi giovani ticinesi; abbiamo fondato una sezione femminile, dalla quale è poi sortita la nostra Corale. Meno successo ha avuto invece il nostro esperimento con la scuola, data la dispersione della colonia sulla vasta zona metropolitana, dispersione accentuata ancor più dall'ultima guerra. Attualmente stiamo preparando una piccola biblioteca, e pubbli-

chiamo di quando in quando una colonna cosiddetta nostrana sul giornale svizzero. Tutte le difficoltà malgrado, non da ultimo il continuo assottigliamento della colonia, tengo a rassicurarLa, on. cons. fed. Celio, del leale attaccamento dei ticinesi del Regno Unito alla madre patria. Anzi è ragione di maggiore fierezza per noi, in gran parte oriundi delle Valli superiori, di salutare stassera un membro del Governo Federale nostro confederale: degno successore del bleniese abate Vincenzo d'Alberti — di cui si è celebrato quest'anno il centenario della morte, e che fu uno degli autori della neutralità svizzera; degno successore anche del leventinese Stefano Francini, primo consigliere federale ticinese e padre dell'educazione svizzera; degno successore pure dell'airolese Giuseppe Motta, primo e per cinque volte Presidente della Confederazione.

Da ultimo ci permetta, on Celio, di felicitarLa per il di Lei 60° e di bene augurarLe — mentre facciamo voti che goda ognora di salute e di purezza di spirito per sempre meglio reggere i destini della nostra cara patria, della nostra Confederazione Svizzera.

Porgiamo un saluto fraterno al Sig. Garbani-Nerini, Presidente della Sezione consorella di Parigi e rappresentante delle Sezioni all'estero sul comitato centrale della Pro Ticino, per la prima volta in seno alla Sezione di Londra.

Di fresco arrivato dall'a Patria, abbiamo fra noi stassera il Sig. Guido Riva, Segretario di Legazione, al quale auguriamo ottima permanenza a Londra.

A very old friend of the Unione Ticinese who needs no introduction from me is Mr. A. F. Suter, the London member of the Commission des Suisses à l'Etranger, who is here with Mrs. Suter.

We are glad to entertain for the first time Col. Stuart Townend, Director of the Anglo-Swiss Society, with Mrs. Townend, and we ask him to convey our thanks to his President, the Right Hon. Philip Noel-Baker, for accepting the Chairmanship of our Committee of Patrons for this celebration, and our regrets for his unavoidable absence.

Also absent, owing to illness, is a direct link with our founders, Mr. Rocco Gatti, who has sent a cheque for 10 guineas for our Benevolent Fund and wishes us well.

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We are also very happy to have with us our Hon. Vice-President, Mr. Carlo Meschini. He is keeping up a tradition which began with our first Vice-President, Mr. Mario Pagani, the founder of Pagani's. You all know what staunch and generous supporters of the *Unione Ticinese* have been the late Mme. Linda, and the late Mr. Arturo Meschini. We wish our Hon. Vice-President well in the re-building of PAGANI'S.

We pay tribute also to the encouragement we have received throughout our history from the family of our founder-member, Mr. Giacomo Monico, four of whose descendants are with us to-night. A most unique record in the annals of the *Unione Ticinese* is represented by Mr. W. Notari, who for 16 unbroken years held the reins of our destiny during a period described as the most brilliant.

From the *Swiss Legation* we welcome M. and Mme. E. de Graffenried, Dr. and Mme. Bircher, Mr. and Mrs. H. Baehler, Mrs. Baehler being the descendant of one of our founder-members, Mr. James Jemini.

On this occasion, we are also happy to show our appreciation of a serious effort made with a view to solving one of the standing problems of the Swiss Colony, the setting up of a Swiss centre. With the great increase in the temporary, as against the permanent, immigrant, this question has become very real indeed. We, therefore, gave all possible encouragement to the President of the *Nonvelle Société Helvétique*, Dr. W. H. Egli, who is here to-night with Mrs. Egli in the negotiations which only just failed to succeed.

Looking back on our past, we find at all times the most happy relations existing with the other sister societies and we extend, therefore, a very hearty welcome to their representatives, they are:

Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Moehr, President City Swiss Club; Mr. and Mrs. W. Meier, President Swiss Mercantile Society; Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Gandon, President *Société de Secours Mutuel*; Mr. and Mrs. Schneeberger, President "Schweizerbund"; Mr. and Mrs. A. Boog, President Union Helvetia; Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Sommer, President Swiss Male Choir and newly elected Chairman of the Committee of Swiss Presidents; Mr. J. Boos, Hon. Secretary representing the Chairman Committee of Swiss Catholics; Mr. Renou, *Confrérie Vaudois*. The Swiss Catholic Chaplain, Father Lanfranchi, is also our honoured guest. Mme. M. Bolla, President Rütli Club. A new but strong Swiss Society is represented by Mr. Fred Streit, President

of the Swiss Philatelic Club, with Mrs. Streit. Col. Bon, S.B.S., and Mr. Fischer, Swiss Y.M.C.A. have asked to be excused.

If I have left the Press until the last, it is not for any other reason than that I want you to give them a specially hearty welcome. We have with us the President of the Foreign Press Association, Mr. Gottfried Keller, with Mrs. Keller, and we are also glad to entertain the Editor of the "Swiss Observer," Mr. A. Stauffer, with Mrs. Stauffer; we thank him for the space he invariably allots to us in generous measure on his popular bi-weekly.

Our oldest member, Mr. Giuseppe Bassi, who is 92 years of age, is in hospital and has sent us a goodwill message, but I want you also to give a special cheer to a few of our veterans, who to great inconvenience to themselves, have come here to-night: Mr. Costante Togni, 87 years of age; Mr. Bartolomeo Albertoli, of Portsmouth, 78 years of age; Mr. Domenico Lunghi, 73 years of age.

Before ending, there is one duty I know you will want me to perform and that is, to thank on behalf of us all, Mr. Ronus, the Managing Director, and our own Mr. Gastone Colombi, Banqueting Manager, of this famous establishment for the perfection of the arrangements they have made for our comfort and well-being this evening.

And now I call on you all to charge your glasses and drink to the health and prosperity of the GUESTS OF THE 'UNIONE TICINESE'.

Thus was reached the climax of the official part of the evening, when the red-coated M.C. prayed for silence for Federal Councillor, Dr. Enrico Celio, who was greeted with a roar of applause. Hoping to meet with readers' approval, greatly daring, we have attempted to translate the first part of Dr. Celio's speech, which is as follows:

"Words are inadequate to express my happy surprise at finding myself in London this evening with you, "confederati e fratelli ticinesi."

My first greeting is to Their Majesties, the King and Queen, to the Authorities and people of this noble England. It is the homage of a friendship and admiration which the events of three decades have made clearer and deeper. If, as is a fact, the thoughts and deeds of the British people have in all ages exercised an influence beyond their insular confines, Great Britain, by her participation in the last two World conflicts, has written an indelible page in world

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history, for she fought not only for her own freedom, but for Freedom itself. Hence the sincere gratitude of the Swiss people for Great Britain and her Allies — a gratitude all the more spontaneous because of its spiritual union with the Allies during the years of great trial and because of its conviction that, without the armed defence of its neutrality combined with the victory of their arms, Switzerland to-day might be just a name buried in dusty archives.

But, however, admirable was the example given by Great Britain during the world conflict, even greater, under certain aspects, is that of the unceasing sacrifices to which she afterwards submitted and is still submitting; for it is much easier to accept the harshest privations when the life or death of one's own country are at stake than to continue them after victory has been won. May her recent and any imminent new sacrifices be her last; may they really mark the return of her prosperity. We wish it as the reward of her victory and as a real contribution to the new Europe. We are more than convinced that, without a Great Britain solidly re-established, the re-establishment of Europe would be but a fragile and incomplete work. In these words of mine there are summed up the goodwill and the gratitude of the Swiss authorities and people towards the authorities and people of Britain.

My second greeting is to you, emigrated compatriots. Oh, to see at least once one's own countrymen outside the homeland, and to see them assembled around their flag, as if each one were sitting round the hearth of his own distant home, and to speak to them and to interpret the nostalgia which brings back to them the sweet memories of childhood and sustains them in the hope of a joyous return; this, believe me, dear emigrants, is the fondest wish of every statesman and of every citizen at home, so much do they feel that you are their favourite brothers. I thank you, therefore, dear Mr. Berti, President, and you Committee members of the Unione Ticinese in London, for having fulfilled this most ardent wish of mine; and through me the Federal Council transmits to you their message of profound devotion and particular affection.

I feel, dear emigrants, that it will not be unwelcome to you if I speak to you very briefly on present conditions in our home country. — They are the living conditions of a small country which, to make itself worthy of its independence and of outside respect, remained armed during the prolonged period of the Great War, and which, in order not to be caught unprepared in any new, not impossible, conflict, allocates

a large share of its resources to the requirements of its defence. This greatly strains the finances of the Confederation and of the tax-payers alike. These, naturally, are not enthusiastic! Still less are they so, as, the post-war boom period is about to come to an end, as our customs receipts are falling, as the cost of living is still high, and as in fine the devaluation of the pound and of allied currencies have reduced the volume of our exports and perhaps of our tourist trade. The general situation in Switzerland, in short, as reflected in its economy, though still good, is not, however, as good as in the immediate past. Still sound, on the other hand, in spite of certain appearances, is her internal political situation. It is undoubtedly true — and herein lie the appearances — that the Swiss electorate, in recent consultations has not sanctioned certain reforms brought in by the Government and approved by the Chambers; but it would be wholly arbitrary to see in this attitude of the people. I shall not say a constitutional crisis, nor even a gesture of a loss of confidence in its rulers. By refusing these reforms, the Swiss people have merely stated their firm will for a return to the classical forms of our constitution, according to which the direct intervention by the State in the political and economic life of the nation must remain rigidly confined to exceptional times and situations. And there can be no doubt that such an aspiration responds fully to the sense of Helvetic institutions. That which, will always remain less clear and controversial is to know when the times and situations are exceptional. One thing, however, is certain; that the positive results attained by Switzerland both in the political and economic field during the hard decade of the war and of the post-war period prove that the authorities and the people have up to now been well-inspired in the conduct of the affairs of the State. Thus, if we should (which God forbid) fall back into the grey atmosphere of the past decade, how and where could Swiss politics adopt and follow other policies?

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Freedom in discipline, a military defence both careful and well-organised, fair-dealing as a principle of honour in international relations, good workmanship both well-directed and intensive, and civic concord, these are the constants of our political life. For these reasons, dear compatriots, we may look forward with confidence to our country's future."

The closing part of Sig. Celio's speech, which was addressed to his "Ticinese" brothers, as he called them, we give in the original:

"Ed è infine a voi — dulcis in fundo — ch'io rivolgo il mio fraterno saluto, o Ticinesi. Che voi veniate dalle pianure o dai colli del Mendriosotto ubertoso, dal Luganese vivo e ridente, dalla salda regione della Capitale, dalla placida contrada del Locarnese, dalle terre rupestri della Vallemaggia, dalla granitica Riviera, dalla splendente valle del Sole o dalla fiera Leventina, io v'accolgo tutti nella mia mente e vi stringo al mio cuore come la parte più gentile e più cara della famiglia svizzera. E rievoco con voi, in un pensiero di rispetto e di riconoscenza la moltitudine anonima e l'eletta compagine dei vostri predecessori nell'Unione Ticinese di Londra. Sono settantacinque anni d'ansie e di speranze, di nascosti o palesi sacrifici, di disillusioni e di successi che oggi voi commemorare. Tutti i ministri della Svizzera che si sono succeduti a Londra in questi tre quarti di secolo — dal console generale Alberto Streckeisen, all'attuale ministro Henry de Torrenté, che mi compiaccio di salutare fra noi e che con tanta accortezza e distinzione qui assolve al suo mandato — hanno sempre rilevato a Berna l'operosità e la rettitudine, la dignità ed il patriottismo delle colonie ticinesi in Inghilterra. Voi siete stati e siete all'estero così gli ambasciatori inofficiali eppur quanto efficaci della vostra terra natale, ben sapendo che le vostre opere buone non giovano a voi soltanto, le cattive non nuocciono solo a voi, ma che esse giovano o nuocciono al prestigio della vostra patria.

Non è quindi senza commozione che, giorni or sono, io leggevo lo squarcio d'uno di quei mirabili discorsi di cui Giuseppe Motta possedeva il segreto. Era rivolto a voi, emigranti ticinesi. Uditelo quale un messaggio che dall'eternità ancor v'invia quel nostro Grande:

"Parmi les Suisses, des milliers et des milliers sont partis du Tessin, mon canton natal. Ils ont fondé partout des colonies prospères où continuent à briller leurs qualités héréditaires de simplicité, d'attachement à la famille et de persévérance au travail. Que ces Tessinois veuillent écouter dans le son de ma voix les appels nostalgiques de leurs vallées et de leurs rivières, de leurs montagnes et de leurs lacs que Dieu a illuminés d'une beauté sans pareille . . .

Veillons sur le sort des colonies suisses à l'étranger comme sur un capital précieux de la patrie suisse."

Non saprei con quali più nobili parole congedarmi da voi. Ma un voto ancora, questo: che l'amore — e ben so quanto sia ardente in voi — per la terra lontana, non si soffermi al limite del solo desiderio di rivederla, ma vi spinga potentemente, anche a costo di qualche sacrificio, a rivederla sovente. Forse voi ignorate di quanta poesia sia circonfuso il ritorno dell'emigrante al suo paese, al suo villaggio, alla sua città natali. E' come se vibrasse nell'aria l'annunciazione d'una rinata fedeltà, è come se nelle case si sciogliesse il fermento della famiglia che si perpetua, è come se i poveri morti elevassero per un istante il dolce capo a

salutare e a ringraziare, a salutarvi e a ringraziarvi, cari emigranti."

Our Ticinese statesman was visibly moved when, at the end of his speech, the Minister presented to him, on behalf of the Society, as a souvenir of his visit, a sterling silver inkstand with pen, suitably inscribed.

We are very pleased to quote in full Dr. Gottfried Keller's witty response to the toast of the Guests.

Mr. President, Mr. Federal Councillor,

M. le Ministre, dear Compatriots,

On my recent return from an extremely happy and particularly lovely holiday, much of which I had spent in the Ticino, I found a large bunch of letters sprinkled with one or two bills, waiting on my desk to be dealt with. The first one I opened was an invitation for my wife and myself to attend to-night's celebration. Having fallen completely in love with the Ticino and all it offers on various levels — not least, perhaps the gastronomical one — I followed my first natural inclination and accepted the invitation straight away. I was delighted about the prospect of spending an evening with Ticinesi. Here, I thought, was an opportunity of re-establishing contact with that easy and enchanting atmosphere, for which the Ticinesi are rightly loved, and which we had only left behind recently and reluctantly. I grasped, as it were, this opportunity, with both hands.

Of course, I knew that I would have to pay a price in the shape of a nice write-up in the Swiss papers. I was quite prepared for that. A few days later, however, my delight turned into anxiety, when I was told by the efficient Organising Secretary of this evening that I was expected to *speak* as well. It was, he said,

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the unwritten law in his society to ask the first guest whose acceptance had been received, to respond to the Toast of the Guests. I began to think that there is, after all, quite some wisdom in the English habit of leaving letters on some shelf for some time, before they are even opened. Of course, I could not very well refuse this signal honour, but my heart began to sink. After all, to have to speak from time to time — as it is my misfortune in the Foreign Press Association in London — in front of some British Cabinet Ministers, a number of professional diplomats and a crowd of foreign correspondents, is *one thing* — but to address a gathering of *Ticinesi*, who are *all* born orators and to whom speechmaking comes before learning to walk, is quite another thing, specially if there are among those Ticinesi such distinguished and accomplished speakers as is Federal Councillor Enrico Celio.

No doubt my Swiss friends in London will bear me out if I say that it might be somewhat risky to attempt expressing the feelings of our whole Colony. On this occasion, however, when thanking the Unione Ticinese for their generous hospitality, I am positive, that I am speaking on behalf of *all* the guests present, whether of British, Swiss or — Vaudois nationality, if I thank the Ticinesi for having organised this splendid gathering and enjoyable evening, I should like to couple these thanks with the *warmest* and *sincerest* of wishes for their Society's — and their Canton's — welfare and prosperity.

One of the most readable travel books about our southernmost canton, the one by Hans Schmid, starts with the statement that the Ticino is the *sunny porch of the Swiss House*. How very true this is and, I

think, how nicely put. In analogy one might be tempted to say that the Ticinesi are the most warm-hearted, certainly the most hospitable among the races which have grouped together and shaped our homeland.

Wenn ich jetz, Herr Präsident, Herr Bundesrot, Herr Minischter, no nes paar Wort uf Schwyzerdütsch säge, so tuen ich's nid, um unsere früechere Minister Ruegger i syner Vielsprachigkeit z' imitiere — das chönt ich sowieso nie — sondern damit au unsere houptsächlechtschti Nationalsproch hüt z' obe ned ganz umgsproche blibt. Bizfüege zu däm, won ich scho gseit ha, han ich nümme vil; villecht ghört se sech aber doch, wenn ich au uf Schwyzerdütsch eusem Gascht us der Schwyz, em Herr Bundesrot Celio säge, wie sehr me sech i der Kolonie über syn Bsuech und dä Kontakt mit im freut. Mer hoffe, Herr Bundesrot — und i däm Punkt bin ich no einisch sicher, dass ich im Name vo *allne* Schwizer in London rede — dass Ihres Bispiel Schuel macht. Mer hoffen au, Herr Bundesrot, dass Sie mit Idrücke hei gönd, die es Ihne ermögleche, Ihre Herre Kollege z' säge: Es isch sech doch derwärt, eusi Kolonie im Usland z' bsueche, ganz b'sunders die z' London. Was au Ihr Idrück si möged, gueti, gmischti, weniger gueti, eine *müend* Si sicher mit uf e Heiwäg nä: dass d' Schwizer in England, au wenn si no so lang i der Frömdi gsi sind, under der wohlwollende Füerig vom Herr Minischter de Torrenté une syne Mitarbeiter uf der Gsandtschaft i der Gsinnig und im Härzesgrund *gueti Schwizer blibe sind*.

Per finire, vorrei dirvi poche parole nella vostra lingua. Lo faccio unicamente in omaggio a chi ci ospita. Vi confesso con tutta franchezza che non parlo correntement l'Italiano — e mi dispiace. Lo dico di proposito, perchè dopo il pranzo non vorrei cadere nel tranello in cui capitai poco tempo fa nel canton Grigioni.

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Mi trovai immediatamente travolto sotto un torrente di parole ladine e costernato. Quando si accorse che non gli sapevo rispondere nella sua lingua, il contadino disse, tra il serio e il faceto, nel suo migliore Bündnerdütsch:

Aha, so hani scho mänge verwütscht.

Accettate, dunque, queste poche parole nella vostra bella lingua come pegno di buona volontà, dedicato a coloro in onore dei quali alzo il mio bicchiere:

I Ticinesi."

To the approval of all present, the bout of speech-making was concluded by the youthful Vice-secretary of the Unione Ticinese (a most eligible bachelor and champion athlete!) who paid a gallant compliment to "The Ladies."

The official proceedings were closed with the presentation by Fed. Councillor Celio of an illuminated address to Mr. Peter De Maria, the genial Vice-President and conductor of the Corale, recording his nomination to "Socio Benemerito" of the Unione Ticinese, of which he was Secretary for eighteen consecutive years.

And so to dancing — to the toe-teasing tunes of Harry Vardon and his band.

J.E.

\* \* \*

#### MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATION

The following letters and telegrams of good wishes were received and read:—

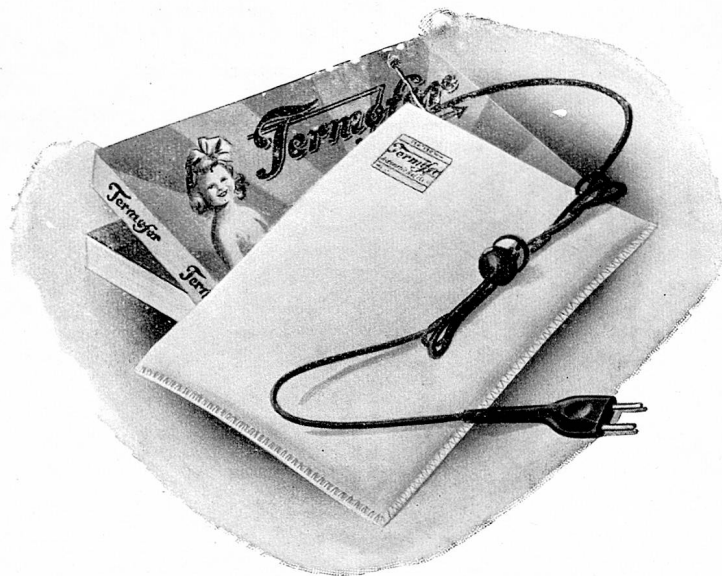
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Mrs. Antognini (née Pagani); Consigliere Nazionale Avv. Alcardo Pini; Il Presidente del Consiglio di Stato On. A. Bernasconi; Consigliere di Stato Avv. Brenno Galli; Consigliere di Stato On. Nello Celio; Presidente del Tribunale d'Appello, Avv. Gaspare Gatti; W. de Bourg, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires in Ireland; P. Mordasini, Console di Svizzera, Napoli; Dott. Felice Gianini, Presidente On. Pro Ticino. Sig. Franco Fumagalli, Presidente Centrale Pro Ticino. Sezioni Pro Ticino di: Berna, Zurigo, Milano, Lyons, Marseilles. Sig. C. Valsangiacomo, Pres. La Canterina Ticinese, Zurigo. Editore Carlo Grassi. Mrs. L. W. Krucker.

#### HAMILTON FYFE SPEAKING ON SWITZERLAND.

Our readers' attention is particularly drawn to the talk "A Scotsman's view of the role of Switzerland in Europe" given by Hamilton Fyfe at the next Open Meeting of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique on Tuesday, November 15th.

Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, is a distinguished author of a number of books, including the recently published "The Most Civilised People in Europe." This booklet conveys a very lively, and on the whole, flattering picture of Switzerland, though it does not by any means pass over the weak sides in our character and mode of life. Mr. Fyfe's forthcoming address on Switzerland should therefore be most interesting, and provoke a lively debate.



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