

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1951)
Heft: 1170

Artikel: Manchester says goodbye to Vice-Consul J.J. Huber
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695383>

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MANCHESTER SAYS GOODBYE TO VICE-CONSUL J. J. HUBER.

Mr. J. J. Huber, Swiss Vice-Consul at Manchester, has left for a new appointment at the Swiss Legation in London, and to mark the occasion there was a pleasant ceremony at a Manchester Hotel when presentations were made to Mr. and Mrs. Huber, and a warm welcome given to the new Consul, 54-year-old Mr. Oscar Schneider.

Many members of the Manchester Swiss Colony gathered under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. Berner, President of Manchester Swiss Club, who paid tribute to the work of Mr. Huber during his five and-a-half years in Manchester.

Turning to Mr. and Mrs. Huber he said: "We shall not only remember both of you in your official capacities, but most of all as our friends whose freely-given hospitality we enjoyed so many times and which will always be thankfully remembered".

He continued: "When I first came to England in 1937, the Consul was the late Dr. Schedler, whom I still remember with great admiration and affection. He and his wife were called and looked upon as the father and mother of our Colony. Afterwards we had Mr. Hirs, who left for New York, and then Mr. Pernet, who soon followed him to the New World. Now we have to say goodbye to Mr. and Mrs. Huber, who have taken good care of our interests and needs here in the North.

"Swiss diplomatic and consular representatives are very often changed and we do not want by any means to challenge the wisdom of such a habit. But we Swiss overseas do not just look on our Consul as an ordinary government official or civil servant. He is much more to us than that. He reminds us at all times of our homeland, watching over us as a mother would watch her child and we feel protected. The Consul and his staff form a legal and moral bond between we abroad and our people at home."

There was a farewell message, too, from Professor, Jean P. Inebnit, of Leeds University, on behalf of the Swiss Club of Leeds. During the evening Professor Inebnit gave a talk on "Contes et Legendes Suisses".

In his reply Mr. Huber spoke of the goodwill, friendliness and encouragement he had received from

the Colony during his stay in Manchester, and thanked everyone for their trust, friendship and help.

"My wife and I regret to leave you", he said, "but we can take with us a thousand happy memories, of friendly personal contacts, of Club meetings and outings, of First of August celebrations and other patriotic gatherings.

"Always we have found that happy family atmosphere which we have so greatly valued and enjoyed.

"Throughout my stay here you have worked together with the Consulate, harmoniously and successfully, for the good of our country and our compatriots in this district. To all those who have helped in this patriotic task I would like to express my gratitude on Switzerland's behalf. And I must add a special word of thanks to our Consular staff who have given me such faithful and able support.

"As you know by experience, Consuls come and go. But the Colony remains and the task seems to grow. You will find in my successor, Monsieur Oscar Schneider, not only a Consul with a wealth of experience, but one who has your interest and welfare very

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much at heart. His knowledge of people and affairs and his many human qualities are a guarantee for you that under his direction the Manchester Consulate will be of the great services to our country, your Colony and all those who may be in need of help and advice."

The retiring Consul was presented with a suitcase. As he laughingly remarked: "Proof enough that the time has come for me to pack my bags!"

* * *

Mr. J. J. Huber joined the Swiss Legation in London in 1939 as Chancellor of the Special Division which, until 1945, dealt with the safeguarding of foreign interests, care of civilian internees, liaison with the British Home Office, exchanges of sick and wounded prisoners-of-war and civilian internees, as well as with visits to prisoner-of-war and internee camps.

He moved to Manchester in 1946 and two years later was responsible for exchange visits between the "Stadtpräsident of Zurich and the Lord Mayor of Manchester which marked the opening of the Swissair service between the two cities. He will long be remembered for his work during the recent Swiss Week in Manchester, which he organised in collaboration with Mr. Otto Gersbach, of Swissair, and Mr. Albert Kunz, Publicity Manager of the SNTO in London.

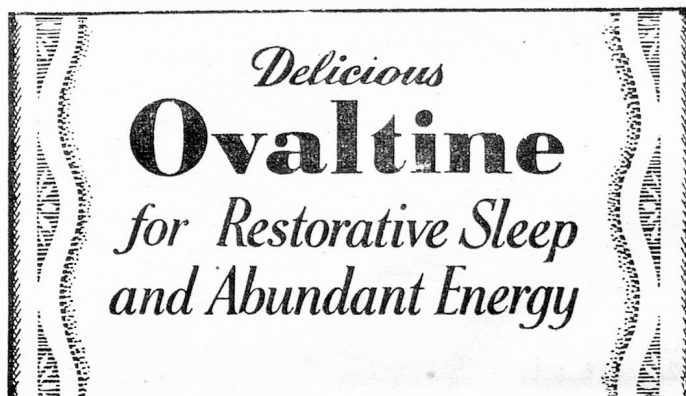
During the last year the Swiss Consulate in Manchester, which has for long been one of the largest Consulates in Britain, has played an even bigger part in the diplomatic life of the North. When the Liverpool Consulate closed last year Mr. Huber took charge of a territory extending from Lincolnshire to the North of Scotland, as well as the Isle of Man and Northern

Ireland. He has been responsible for the welfare of 1,800 Swiss nationals living and working in the area, as well as the important tasks of assisting trade and commercial relations between Switzerland and Great Britain.

* * *

Mr. O. SCHNEIDER has spent the last six years as Swiss Consul at Manila in the Philippines, but he is no stranger to this country. Between 1928 and 1933 he worked at the Swiss Legation in London, and then went to the Swiss Consulate-General in Dublin as Chancellor, where he stayed until 1939. For a brief period he represented his country in Danzig, and then from 1940 to the end of the war he was with the Federal Political Department in Berne.

Derek Meakin.



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