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A. RENOU.

President: "Fête Suisse" Committee

Brilliant sunshine heralded in the 78th Fête Suisse. After weeks of indifferent and depressing weather so typical of the month of April with its heavy showers and grey skies, the lovely month of May has, at last made its appearance in all its glory.

Spring flowers in their chaste beauty are enchanting our eyes, new hope, new vigour, and a deep *joie de vivre* is filling our hearts.

Birds in the fields and woods are serenading each other, lilac bushes, pear and apple trees are in full bloom, looking like young brides in their nuptial attire. The tender green leaves on the trees are telling us that winter is past, nature is awakening and in its loveliness makes us happy and immensely glad to be alive.

With such feelings I wended my way to the Central Hall, Westminster to spend a few hours amongst my countrymen, to listen to songs and melodies from our own land, melodies which always bring back treasured memories of happy times spent in that little paradise which is so deeply engraved in our hearts.

Shall I be disappointed, I asked myself on entering the portals of this imposing building? Will it be just another celebration like so many I *have* to attend, and which vary very little from each other, leaving no lasting memories behind.

I can, already at this juncture say that it was a marvellous evening, full of mirth and gaiety, with the exception of the interval to which I will come back later on.

On mounting the stair-case I was met by a charming programme seller in national costume, who bewitchingly invited me to buy one of the attractive programmes, and on handing over the money was rewarded with a "Merci bien, Monsieur."

In the Foyer there were stands covered with cantonal flags, pictures and postcards depicting views from our homeland. It is the custom to wear the flag of the canton to which one belongs, so that every-one knows at once from whence you come. This was an easy matter as far as I was concerned, but less easy for another charming young Lady to whom I offered to buy a flag.

78th FÊTE SUISSE

at

CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER

on

THURSDAY, 7th MAY, 1953

 Under the Presidency of

MONSIEUR HENRY DE TORRENTÉ

Ministre de Suisse

Blushingly she confessed, that she was rather in a quandry which flag she should choose, saying that her father hails from the canton of Solothurn, that she herself was born in the canton of Basle-County, and that her mother came from Basle. I suggested that an easy way out would be to wear all three, which would not only be beneficial to the Funds of the Fête Suisse but would add to her attractiveness. She, however, modestly chose the flag of Basle-Town, and thus saved me "two bob", God bless her!

What a conglomeration of languages one heard, the melodious sounds from the canton of Ticino, the elegant French of our Romands, the Romantch from the Grisons, and, of course, "Schwyzerdütsch" with its various "accents". One young Bernese Lady said to her friend from Basle: "D's Program choschtet de es Fränkli", to which the latter answered, "Jä, jä, a Frange isch tir".

In year's gone by the start of the performance was announced by ringing a cow-bell, I am glad to see that this practice has been dispensed with, as I never considered it much of a compliment to the audience.

Shortly after 5 o'clock an electric bell was rung inviting the visitors to take their seats. The large Hall was finely decorated, above the organ was a huge Swiss flag flanked by the Union Jack, whilst along the balcony the cantonal escutcheons were displayed. In front of the stage were placed troughs of flowers, consisting of narcissus, geraniums, hydrangeas and rhododendrons in red and white colouring, but which unfortunately somewhat interfered with the view from the stalls.

When the audience was seated, the Swiss Minister, and Madame de Torrenté, accompanied by his collaborators at the Legation, and by the President of the Fête Suisse, Mr. A. Renou, made their entry. A little girl presented Madame de Torrenté with a large bunch of narcissus, and then the mighty sounds of the organ were heard; this year's Fête Suisse had started. The organ Prelude was played by Mr. E. P. Dick with his usual efficiency, and was followed by the rendering of the Swiss National Anthem by the entire audience. I am glad to say that this time everybody

most heartily joined in, and whilst we sang "Rufst du mein Vaterland" in all four national languages, our English friends no less heartily sang "God save the Queen", and why not, it is the same tune anyhow.

Then appeared on the stage, amidst great applause, the "Ländlerkapelle" of the "Jodlerklub" Wattwil" dressed in their "Toggenburger" costumes. They played a lively march, a "Ländler", and a polka, and many a leg began to "itch" to do a "hop".

When the applause had subsided the time for the speech-making arrived, which this year was rather on a generous scale.

Mr. Renou, President of the Fête Suisse, firstly extended a hearty welcome to the Swiss Minister and Madame de Torrenté, to the Swiss Press, the audience and to the "Jodlergruppe Wattwil".

He referred in his address to the recent anniversaries of the entries into the Confederation of the cantons of Vaud and Ticino, pointing out the value of these celebrations and their historical significance.

The President then announced a "surprise item", saying that our "confères du canton de Vaud" as a special greeting sent a large quantity of narcissus by Swissair, and that everyone leaving the Hall would be presented with a bunch. This "beau geste" of our romands was greatly appreciated and sincerely cheered.

Mr. Renou, although a Vaudois, speaks remarkably well "Schwyzerdütsch", and it was in that language that he extended especially hearty greetings to our "Toggenburger" visitors. His patriotic address received the acknowledgement it fully deserved.

Pasteur C. Reverdin then spoke very feelingly and earnestly about our duties we owe to our homeland and of the liberty we enjoy in its precincts, concluding with the Lord's prayer.

The Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté, on rising from his seat was loudly cheered. In English, French and German he addressed the audience, saying:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, first of all, bid you and your friends a sincere welcome to this our 78th Fête Suisse. We are all looking forward to a pleasurable evening and will, I'm sure, enjoy the excellent programme, which your Committee have arranged.

Before I speak of our own affairs, I would like to mention an event, which looms very large in the hearts and minds of our English friends. The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is a manifestation, which interests not only the people of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, or those of Europe, but the people of the world at large, because it is a symbolic act of rededication to the principles of freedom and justice, as seen and understood by the inhabitants of these Isles and the Commonwealth.

The Coronation of their young and gracious Queen is a solemn event, which in these troubled times brings a new ray of light and hope to the British peoples. I would ask you therefore, to associate yourselves with the joyous and festive mood of this country, which for so many of you has become a second home, and which has always extended a friendly hospitable hand to any Swiss. May Providence protect Her Majesty and all the peoples of Her realm.



By courtesy of Ringier, Illustrated Press.

LAENDLERKAPELLE AND JODLERGRUPPE WATTWIL.

Photo by Hans Gerber.



By courtesy of Ringier, Illustrated Press.

"CORALE" UNIONE TICINESE"

Photo by Hans Gerber.

Mes chers compatriotes,

Je vous ai entretenu l'année dernière de l'histoire de la Colonie suisse de Londres. Je reviens cette année à un problème plus actuel. Quelle est l'importance de notre Colonie, quelle est sa composition, sa structure, que font ses membres, quelle langue parlent-ils?

L'on a dit que "la précision d'un renseignement était en raison inverse de son exactitude". Comme beaucoup d'entre nous du reste, l'humoriste qui a frappé cette formule lapidaire n'aimait certainement pas les statistiques. Et cependant, faute de mieux, c'est aux chiffres qu'il nous faut recourir pour mesurer le temps, les distances, les valeurs, les volumes. Vous me pardonnerez donc cette petite incursion dans le domaine de l'arithmétique. Je me plais à espérer que vous ne trouverez pas mon exposé trop aride, car je vous promets de me tenir à des indications d'ordre général et aux traits essentiels.

Depuis mon arrivée à Londres, il y a plus de cinq ans déjà, j'ai entendu les estimations les plus diverses sur l'effectif de notre Colonie en Grande-Bretagne. Nos trois arrondissements consulaires — Londres, Manchester et Liverpool — possédaient bien des chiffres que l'on tenait pour exacts, mais le temps et le personnel manquaient pour les vérifier. Certains sondages avaient néanmoins révélé au cours de ces dernières années que, par leur négligence à s'immatriculer, leur migration sans tambour ni trompette ou leur départ pour une vie meilleure, nombre de nos concitoyens traitaient nos statistiques avec une parfaite désinvolture. Une revision générale des fichiers consulaires s'imposait. La suppression du Consulat de Liverpool et la division en deux arrondissement seulement de la Grande-Bretagne et de l'Irlande du Nord facilitèrent grandement les

opérations. Les pointages sont presque terminés et c'est le résultat de cette entreprise dont je voudrais aujourd'hui donner la primeur à la Colonie.

1. Ainsi que vous le savez, la Grande-Bretagne, depuis la suppression du Consulat de Liverpool, est divisée en deux arrondissements consulaires par une ligne qui passe par Chester, Birmingham et le nord du Comté de Norfolk. Au sud de cette ligne, l'arrondissement consulaire de Londres, au nord de cette ligne, celui de Manchester.

En additionnant les immatriculations dans nos deux consulats, je constate que la Colonie suisse en Grande-Bretagne et en Irlande du Nord comprend 10,850 personnes, dont 7,600, 70%, ne possèdent que la nationalité suisse et 3,250, 30%, la double nationalité, britannique et suisse.

2. Toutefois, l'image ne serait pas complète si l'on ne tenait compte des personnes qui pour une raison ou l'autre négligent de se faire immatriculer. Une supputation du nombre de ces citoyens est dans une certaine mesure possible grâce aux statistiques britanniques, aux permis de travail délivrés, aux chiffres des étudiants, des stagiaires, etc., et nous ne sommes certainement pas loin de la vérité en estimant à 17,500, dont 8,000 doubles nationaux, le nombre de nos ressortissants résidant en Grande-Bretagne et en Irlande du Nord. Pour éviter tout malentendu, je précise que pour les doubles nationaux cette évaluation ne s'étend qu'à la première et à la seconde génération nées à l'étranger.

3. Sur les 7,600 citoyens de nationalité suisse immatriculés, 1,180 sont incorporés dans l'armée: Elite, Landwehr et Landsturm — l'effectif d'un fort bataillon — et 2,050, dont 850 doubles nationaux, sont astreints aux déclarations militaires (services



By courtesy of Ringier, Illustrated Press.

Photo by Hans Gerber.

THE SWISS MINISTER DELIVERING HIS ADDRESS

complémentaires, non recrutés, inaptes au service). Enfin, "last but not least", 40 jeunes femmes sont incorporées dans le Service complémentaire féminin.

Une première constatation un peu alarmante pour l'avenir et la stabilité de notre Colonie: les 800 hommes incorporés dans l'élite sont presque tous des stagiaires, des étudiants ou des jeunes gens qui ne font en Grande-Bretagne qu'un séjour de courte durée.

4. Enfin, 726 personnes versent à Manchester et à Londres leurs cotisations à l'Assurance vieillesse et survivants et 185 bénéficient des rentes de cette institution.

J'en viens maintenant à l'arrondissement consulaire de Londres qui nous intéresse particulièrement.

a) Sur les 9,350 personnes immatriculées à Montagu Place, 7,500—c'est-à-dire 4 sur 5—habitent l'agglomération londonienne. 72%, soit 5,400 ne possèdent que la nationalité suisse; 28% ont la double nationalité.

b) Autre constatation. Nous n'avons pas échappé à la tendance que révèle le dernier recensement suisse: la prédominance du beau sexe sur le sexe dit fort! Les enfants mineurs représentent un peu plus du 8ème du chiffre total.

c. De la répartition per classes d'âge, l'on pourrait à première vue inférer que le climat britannique favorise la longévité.

En effet, la Colonie de Londres — abstraction faite des doubles nationaux — compte :

| | |
|---|-------|
| 72 personnes au dessus de 80 ans soit le | 1.5% |
| 1,171 personnes au dessus de 60 ans soit le | 22% |
| 1,256 personnes de 41 à 60 ans soit le | 23.5% |
| 2,531 personnes de 20 à 40 ans soit le | 46% |

Les moins de 20 ans forment un groupe de 370 personnes.

Hélas! Ces chiffres ne font en réalité que souligner le vieillissement de la Colonie, sur lequel j'aurai encore l'occasion de revenir.

d) Des hommes domiciliés à Londres, 30% s'étaient fixés en Grande-Bretagne avant 1920, 27% de 1920 à 1939, 25% de 1940 à 1945 — durant la guerre —, 11% de 1946 à 1950, 29% de 1951 à 1953.

e) Des hommes de 25 à 65 ans, 1,422 sont établis définitivement et exercent une profession lucrative dans notre arrondissement consulaire.

Ce chiffre comprend les Suisses au bénéfice d'un permis de trois ans au moins, c'est-à-dire établis en Grande-Bretagne avant 1950.

Ces 1,422 personnes se rattachent aux professions suivantes :

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Commerce et industrie | ... | ... | 40.5% |
| Hôtellerie, restaurants, etc. | ... | ... | 38% |
| Banques | ... | ... | 10% |
| Tourisme | ... | ... | 1.5% |
| Professions libérales | ... | ... | 3% |
| Divers (artisanats, etc.) | ... | ... | 7% |

Le 32% de ces hommes sont âgés de plus de 60 ans.

f) Au point de vue linguistique, il vous intéressera de savoir que de ces 1,422 concitoyens

le 59.0% ont pour langue maternelle l'allemand.

le 29.4% le français.

le 11.6% l'italien.

La proportion des langues romanes est donc nettement plus forte parmi nos ressortissants établis en Grand-Bretagne qu'en Suisse même. L'ensemble de la Colonie révélerait sans doute un pourcentage plus élevé de personnes parlant l'allemand.

* * *

Nous sommes arrivés au terme de notre voyage de prospection et je vous remercie de l'attention que vous m'avez accordée. J'y vois le signe de l'intérêt que vous portez à la Colonie. Des chiffres que je viens de citer, une fois de plus une conclusion générale s'impose: la Colonie établie en Grande-Bretagne vieillit dangereusement.

Mais ce vieillissement n'est que l'indice des transformations profondes qui se sont opérées depuis la guerre sur le plan économique. La Grande-Bretagne n'offre plus aux jeunes générations les mêmes perspectives, les mêmes situations durables et en même temps profitables. En revanche, son prestige subsiste et aussi celui de la langue anglaise, qui est aujourd'hui la "lingua franca" du monde entier. D'où la contraction de la population stable de notre Colonie et l'accroissement de ce vol d'oiseaux migrateurs, de ces éléments jeunes et enthousiastes que nous désirerions en vain retenir au rivage. Hélas, rien ne sert de se lamenter: nous ne pouvons que nous adapter aux conditions nouvelles, tout en nous réjouissant de constater qu'elles resserrent plutôt qu'elles ne détendent les liens d'amitié qui existent entre nos deux pays.

* * *

Mes chers compatriotes,

Je ne saurais passer sous silence les fêtes commémoratives qui marquent cette année notre vie nationale. Le Canton de Berne se prépare à célébrer avec faste le 600ème anniversaire de son entrée dans

la Confédération. Six autres Cantons — Saint-Gall, Grisons, Argovie, Thurgovie, Tessin et Vaud — fêtent en 1953 le 150ème anniversaire de leur accession, avec une pleine égalité des droits, à l'ancienne Confédération des Treize Cantons.

Certes, il eût été désirable que chacun de ces anniversaires trouvât son écho à Londres et que notre Colonie s'y associât par quelques manifestations. Mais je comprends les difficultés d'une telle entreprise que seuls nos compatriotes tessinois ont pris sur eux d'affronter; ce dont je tiens à les féliciter. Que les ressortissants des autres cantons considèrent un peu comme une commémoration de ces dates historiques cette 78ème Fête Suisse.

Notre Patrie pourra célébrer à perpétuité l'anniversaire de ces événements qui lui ont donné son vrai visage, si toujours nous savons conserver, ainsi que le disait le Président de la Confédération dans son appel du jour de l'an au peuple suisse :

" Des cantons forts, mais aussi une Confédération forte, avec derrière eux un peuple capable de sacrifices et prêt à les accepter. "

* * *

Il me reste l'agréable devoir de remercier et de féliciter le Comité de la Fête Suisse du succès de la manifestation de ce jour et d'adresser quelques mots de bienvenue à nos compatriotes Saint-Gallois.

Ich möchte nicht unterlassen, auch einige Begrüßungsworte an Sie, liebe Landsleute von Wattwil, zu richten. Ihr seid ja nach London gekommen, nicht nur um uns Grüsse aus der Heimat zu bringen, sondern auch, um uns mit Euren Darbietungen etwas Heimatluft und Heimat-

atmosphäre vorzaubern. Ich darf ruhig sagen, dass die Anhänglichkeit an die Heimat bei uns " Auslandschweizern " mindestens so gross ist wie bei Euch zu Hause, und dass wir alle nicht nur mit Freude Euren Besuch begrüßen, sondern mit aufrichtiger Dankbarkeit den schönen Klängen aus der Heimat zuhören.

Das " Fête Suisse " der Schweizerkolonie ist eine alte Tradition und ist aus einem bescheidenen gesellschaftlichen Abend der " Eglise Suisse " in London vom Jahre 1865 herausgewachsen. Deshalb ist die geläufigste Sprache am heutigen Tage das Französische.

Trotz verschiedener Muttersprache sind wir aber alle Schweizer und danken Euch herzlich für die schönen Heimatlieder. Denkt nur an den bekannten Refrain des Dalcroze-Liedes " Et toute la Suisse romande, chante le Schweizerland, et tout le Schweizerland, aime la Suisse romande. "

Long applause greeted the Minister on the conclusion of his speech.

Now came the moment to which we were all looking forward to with great expectations. From both sides of the platform the members of the " Jodlergruppe Wattwil " descended from the gallery on to the stage, amidst " Juchzers " and an almost riotous applause from the assembly. In their most becoming national costumes they lined up and began to sing their songs which have made them famous wherever they appeared in our country.

This group does not only excell in the gentle art of " Yoddeling " but also know how to sing. Their simple songs, beautifully rendered, about home and



By courtesy of Ringier, Illustrated Press.

" LA JEUNESSE " OF THE " EGLISE SUISSE ".

Photo by Hans Gerber.

country went straight to the heart of the listeners, and many an eye in the audience became moist, in fact one of my immediate neighbours, a Lady, shed copious tears, could a better compliment be paid to any performers?

The rendering of a "Toggenburger Naturjodel" by one of the members of the group found an enthusiastic echo from the gathering. From all sides of the Hall and the gallery "blood curdling" shrieks were heard. Those expressions of delight are always puzzling to me; being myself a great lover of music, I wonder what would happen to me, should I, f.i. during the performance of Beethoven's 7th suddenly give vent to my feelings of delight with a high pierced shriek; I am sure I should be carried out, and put under lock and key, where people are confined, who do this sort of thing in public. It is very queer indeed.

The first item rendered by the "Jodlergruppe" was acknowledged with loud applause.

It was a delightful idea of the organisers to give the youngsters of the Colony again an opportunity to appear. Whilst on former occasions our French and Italian speaking youth made their appearance, this year it was the turn of the children of the "Schweizerkirche" who were coached by Frau Pfarrer Spoerri. They did very well, and played, sang and danced with much competence. Whilst most of them did not seem to be perturbed by the large audience, one or two suffered from stage fright, which, however, only added to the attractiveness of the display, especially one little chap with a "Mälcher-

chäppli", who would turn left when others turned right. They too were regaled with cheers.

This number was followed by the display of a "Fahnenschwinger" who, with the accompaniment of the "Ländlerkapelle" hurled his Swiss flag almost to the roof of the Hall.

The last item before the interval consisted of more songs from the "Yodlers", an accordeonist trio, and a display of cow bell ringing, which was most attractive and much applauded.

Then came the interval.

This interval can best be described as the "sausage battle", and it was not a very elevating performance at that, — no quarter was given. —

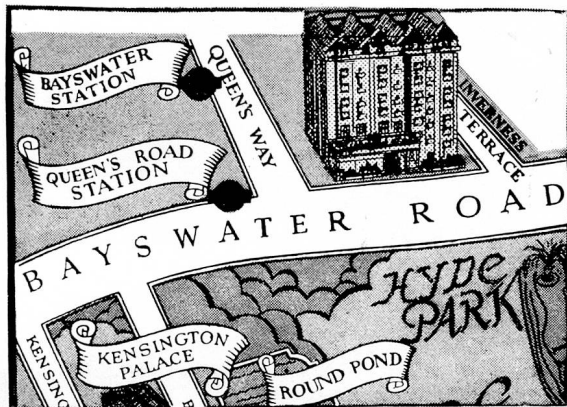
The catering arrangements, which were again in the capable hands of the Family A. Schmid, of the Glendower Hotel, has for years been a problem to the organisers. The Foyer on the 1st floor is far too small to accommodate, for a restricted time, well over 1,000 hungry mouths, and I would invite the committee to study again the question of providing refreshments also on the second floor (I think that had been done on a previous occasion), so as to relieve the "Pressure" below.

If anyone had any doubt, that the Swiss are not good fighters he or she, must have come to the conclusion, that the spirit of Morgarten, Sempach and St. Jakob an der Birs, is still alive, the pushing, fighting and elbowing was tremendous, one would have thought, that those who "stormed" the tables had had nothing to eat for weeks.

True enough the "Würstli" which came from

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Switzerland by "Swissair" were delicious, and so were the pastries, but if we *must* fight, then I hope we find a worthier cause than to fight for a couple of sausages. What would have Mrs. Dale said to Trudi Bäume about this spectacle? It is greatly to the credit of the catering staff, that they withstood the onslaught, and kept calm.

The ringing of the bell for the second part of the programme came as a relief, the "battlefield" was deserted, and the only victims left behind, were a few broken cups and partly eaten "Würstli", which, in the heat of the battle, were knocked out of the hands of the consumers.

When the "Warriors" were seated again, the "Corale of the Unione Ticinese" made their appearance, and were warmly greeted. It is a far cry from the Toggenburg to the Ticino, but they too sang, this time in Italian, of the sunny plains "down south". Under the very capable leadership of Mr. De Maria, this choir has become a great attraction at all Swiss functions; dressed in their Ticino costumes they bring warmth and cheerfulness wherever they appear. Was it to be wondered at, that they were asked to give an *encore*?

After the applause had ceased, the "Jodlergruppe" and "Laendlerkapelle" made their entry again, and started with an "Echojodel", the echo promptly came from somewhere in the gallery. Most attractive was the "Aeplerhilbi" with its performance of, what one may call a "Mühlrad", it wants some strength to do an act of this sort, but our "montagnards" are hefty fellows.

The "Toggenburgerjodel" was accompanied by the spinning of a coin in a basin, the latter looking suspiciously like those which are provided on a channel steamer during a rough crossing, but the sounds which these coins produce were more melodious than those agonising ones on the high sea.

Then followed a performance by the "Jeunesse de l'Eglise Suisse", starting with a very mysterious act by four young Gentlemen. It was all about some weird ghost, and almost gave me the "creeps", it was well acted, and well received. This was followed by several couples who very charmingly danced to the accompaniment of a choir, all in all a very enjoyable affair, which deservedly received a warm acknowledgement.

The last two items before the Finale were again allotted to our visitors from the Toggenburg. What a lovely little song was the one with the solo "Du

lieb's Schätzeli, gimer es Schmätzeli". All the young Ladies in the audience beamed with pleasurable anticipation at the thought of a "Schmätzeli", but — alas — there was no chance, at least not in public. Appropriately enough the last number sung by our "Toggenburgers" was called "Miss liebi Toggenburg", it was a befitting ending to a fine and enjoyable performance by our Swiss visitors. When some few years ago, I looked from the Säntis to this little corner of our homeland, I hardly anticipated to hear, one day, in this great Metropolis songs from this part of our country. Thank you "Toggenburger" for having given us a chance to be in thoughts, at least, with your heaven blessed land.

All good things must come to an end, could a more appropriated finish have been chosen, than our lovely National Hymn, "Trittst im Morgenrot daher", sung with enthusiasm by the entire company upstanding. The lights were lowered and above the platform where all the performers were assembled, the Swiss Flag was lit up, reminding us that we are all children of that land which we call so proudly "La Patrie".

Concluding this report, I wish, on behalf of all those who attended this 78th Fête Suisse, to express to the President, Mr. A. Renou, to his committee, the artists, and co-worker heartiest thanks for having given us an evening of unforgettable delight. About 1,500 of our compatriots attended, which is a splendid testimony of how much this Fête Suisse has become one of the most popular functions of the Swiss Colony in London.

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