

Dear Guests of Honor - Ladies and
Gentlemen:

Minister Bruggmann and
Madame Bruggmann have come to New York
to say good-bye to us. Minister
Bruggmann has reached this year the
age of sixty-five which, according to
existing rules and regulations in
Switzerland, constitutes the legal age
limit for government officials after
which retirement is a matter of legal
course.

The Swiss Society of
New York is very honored and privileged
to have our Minister and Madame Bruggmann in
their midst today for a farewell party,
but the desire to pay tribute to the
outstanding activity of our Minister and

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his wife and to express to them our deep appreciation and gratitude, as well as our best wishes, goes far beyond the circle of our compatriots present here today and far beyond the membership of the Swiss Society; it animates the entire Swiss colony of this country. So please let me be the spokesman today of the Swiss in the States of New York, New Jersey and New England which comprise the territory of this consulate general.

Minister Bruggmann has been our diplomatic representative with the American government for over fifteen years-- since the first months of the Second World War until today. He has represented Switzerland in this country in a period in which our relations with the

United States have seen very lively developments to say the least. From the days of the great war through the post-war period and in the years afterwards, American-Swiss relations were constantly confronted with complicated and difficult problems which seemed to arise one after another without interruption. During all these years, Minister Bruggmann has been at his post as a highly-qualified diplomat, trusted by his home authorities and highly appreciated by the Americans with whom he came into contact.

It cannot be my task today to give a full account of Minister Bruggmann's activities in Washington. I can only touch lightly on a few points which may concern us more particularly. Let us recall, for instance, the war

years: it is not an easy task to be the diplomatic representative of a small country in a big country. It is especially difficult to be the representative of a small neutral country. A well-known correspondent of the New York Times, speaking of our neutrality said rather pointedly in a recent article that the Swiss, because of their neutrality "are envied by many, loved by almost none." It certainly is a most difficult task to represent a small neutral country in times of war in one of the principal belligerent lands. If Switzerland has been able to emerge from the Second World War as a respected member of the family of nations, it was due not only to the scrupulously correct attitude of the Swiss government towards both sides, but largely also to the intelligent, tactful and efficient way our

diplomatic envoy in Washington untiringly explained Switzerland and its unique situation to the American world. And if the Swiss colonies of America were able to maintain an honorable and respected position in this country, they also owe it in great part to the respect our Minister always commanded in Washington.

You know that our country is eager to combine neutrality with solidarity and sympathetic understanding of the problems of other countries. In application of this principle, Switzerland undertakes, particularly in times of war, various humanitarian activities which, to cite the words of Professor Rappard. . . "ennobled a policy which is admittedly inglorious, but which might otherwise have been ignoble."

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Thus, when the diplomatic connections between the two belligerent camps were entirely disrupted, Switzerland assumed the role of a protecting power and ~~represented belligerent countries in the~~ represented belligerent countries in the ~~lands of their enemies.~~ Among others, our diplomatic mission in Washington took charge of the interests of a number of countries in the United States. This, of course, was an additional heavy burden placed on the shoulders of our Minister.

It may be that once the hostilities were over, Minister Bruggmann asked himself whether he did not desire and deserve a quieter occupation after the tremendous strain of the war years. But the Swiss government wanted to keep this trusted and able diplomat at the post which was to become our most important

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diplomatic connection in the post-war world. So Minister Bruggmann remained our envoy in Washington for another nine years. These years were by no means tranquil, for in spite of the fundamentally good and sound political and commercial relations between Switzerland and the United States, a surprising number of points of friction cropped up almost incessantly. These concerned delicate problems some of which were of the utmost importance to the Swiss colonies in this country.

I shall only mention a few examples: Immediately after the great war, for instance, and again after the outbreak of the Korean War, our Legation in Washington had to fight for a reasonable share of the world supply of raw materials which was more or less administered by the Americans. Thanks to the great

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and successful efforts of our Legation it was possible to secure the resources of which our industry was in dire need. This success greatly contributed to the favorable development of our economy at home. The direct result of this happy development was felt by our Swiss colonies in this country which with their many representatives of Swiss export interests have flourished and prospered to a great extent.

Take another example: the thorny problem of the freezing and un-freezing of our financial holdings in this country. I am sure that the bankers and insurance men of our colony are thinking at this moment with gratitude of the diligent efforts our Legation has made in this field.

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I could also mention in this connection the many difficulties which have arisen and been dealt with by our Legation regarding our industrial relations with this country. There are many groups in our colony associated with our chemical industry, our machine-building industry, our textile industry, who are very thankful to our Minister for the very valuable services he has rendered them.

Speaking of industrial relations, everyone remembers at once the tremendous problems which our watch industry has had to cope with in this country. Since I have been here, that is, since the end of the war, there has hardly been a time when our watch industry has not encountered one serious difficulty or another. If we have been

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able to withstand pressure on so many occasions, if we have been able to beat off the most serious attacks for such a long time, this is due largely to the indefatigable and successful efforts of our Legation in Washington and of our Minister personally. These efforts were multiplied during the last attack and those of you who are acquainted with these matters know that our Minister had made an enormous and personal last effort to avert the danger. If in spite of all this the tidal wave swept across the dams, it was because of an entirely new trend which seemed to have gained momentum in this country, a trend against which our best arguments proved powerless. I know that the watch importers of New York who form an important element of our colony are especially thankful to

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Minister Bruggmann for the continuous great efforts he has made for the benefit of the Swiss watch industry and the Swiss watch imports into the United States.

As a last example, I should like to mention a field in which our Legation and our Minister have been active these last years for the benefit of our younger generation. I am thinking of the very difficult problems relating to military service, immigration and naturalization which the McCarran Law has created for many of our younger compatriots. Here again, our Minister fulfilled and continues to fulfill a delicate, arduous and perhaps often thankless task. In doing so he performs a service which is highly appreciated by those who are caught in the meshwork of

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this law, but which goes almost unnoticed by the majority of our compatriots.

This last remark is perhaps descriptive of Swiss diplomatic work in general. Our foreign policy, based as it is on the principle of perpetual neutrality, imposes a great deal of reserve and self-restraint on the Swiss people. Our foreign policy, therefore, does not as a rule make headlines in the world's press. Consequently, the activities of our Swiss diplomats lack much of the glamour and splendor which often surrounds the diplomats of countries which are more in the limelight of the world stage.

But I can tell you that the Swiss people know about the very great merits of Minister Bruggmann and that the

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Swiss people highly appreciate his untiring devotion to the Swiss cause and admire and applaud the numerous successes which he has attained during his career. I can tell you also that the Swiss authorities think very highly of Minister Bruggmann; they are conscious of the fact that they are losing one of their best diplomats when he retires.

Mr. Minister: The Swiss people are averse to bombastic oratory. Let me tell you, therefore, in very simple words but emphatically, in the name of the Swiss colony in this part of America, how very deeply we have appreciated all these years, what you have done for us as individuals, as groups and for the colony as a whole.

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We have been always very happy to know that you have represented our country in Washington in a most dignified and excellent way. Through your personal sincerity and integrity, through your distinguished and remarkable personality, you have contributed greatly to the excellent standing which Switzerland and the Swiss enjoy in this country.

We also on this occasion want to thank you for the interest you have shown in the life of our Swiss colony of New York, for the many visits you have paid us in spite of a heavy social schedule and we want to thank you in particular for the active interest you have taken in the work and problems of our Swiss Benevolent Society.

Our feelings of appreciation and profound gratitude include, of course, Mrs. Bruggmann. Mrs. Bruggmann, who

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comes from a very well-known and
prominent/^{American} family has been a distinguished
partner in the work of her husband.
She has identified herself so much
with our country and its way of life
that we have accepted her from the
beginning as a dear compatriot. Mrs.
Bruggmann went so far as to learn our
Swiss dialect and learn it well, an
achievement which has endeared her
particularly to many of our compatriots
at home and in this country.

And, now, Ladies and
Gentlemen, in saying good-bye to Minister
and Mrs. Bruggmann, we want to express to
them our heartiest best wishes for many
years of happiness in the midst of their
family from which they have been separated
so often by the necessity of their
service to our country.