

Subject: Dinner with Philip Swinton in London in ~~1938~~⁴⁸ or ~~1939~~⁴⁹ discussion with regard to Churchill.

After Swinton

I did not personally know Philip Swinton until after I retired from the Foreign Service. In ~~1938~~⁴⁸ and ~~1939~~⁴⁹, after my retirement, I made a trip to London with my wife on business of Mexlight and in order to explain to the bondholders and shareholders of Mexlight in the United Kingdom and in certain countries of Europe the outlines of the reorganization of the financial structure of Mexlight, which we were under the necessity of carrying through. When Swinton was not a member of the Cabinet he was a member of the Board of Directors of Sofina, the company which held a majority of the shares of Mexlight at the time. It was through this that we became associated with each other and through the intermediary of a good long-standing common friend of Swinton's and mine - Dannie Heineman, the head of Sofina. Swinton had great affection for Heineman as well as great respect and he was aware of the many services which Heineman from time to time had rendered to the British government.

It was either during the trip in ~~1938~~⁴⁸ or ~~1939~~⁴⁹ that, during dinner at Swinton's house or rather apartment in London, we had a most interesting conversation. The dinner was a very small one as Swinton had only a small apartment. He had a very large estate "Swinton" near London but, for some years already, like so many other Englishmen he had had to give up living on his estate and had turned it over to the Conservative Party. The main house, which was a very large one, was used as a training school for young conservative politicians and prospective members of Parliament, etc. The Marquis of Saulsbury, who was then the leader of the Conservatives in the House of Lords, was to be at the dinner. Swinton wished us to know each other. Swinton at the time was number two to Saulsbury as leader of the Conservatives in the House of Lords. The Marquis of Saulsbury was not particularly well at

the time and unfortunately could not come to the dinner. His mother came to the dinner and I had the privilege of sitting next to her. I found her to be an extraordinarily frank, direct, exceedingly well informed and intelligent lady. She was well on in years but she was following closely not only events in her own country but in mine and some of her questions were so pointed and frank that they even embarrassed me a little. This is saying a good deal because I'm supposed to be very forthright and I'm not at all disturbed when others are equally forthright with me.

I am making this note, however, of this dinner because there were present two of the leading members of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. The conversation during the dinner was very largely between Swinton and these two members of Parliament with regard to the situation of the Conservative Party. Although, as I have elsewhere noted in these memoranda, I have never had the privilege of knowing Churchill I have been a great admirer of his. I have not been a blind admirer during these many years for I knew of his mistakes as well as his successes, but a great man has to be measured by the many times he is right and by the vision and understanding and courage which he shows. I've always felt that Churchill was one of the greatest men not only that England has produced but that we have had in our time. I was therefore amazed when Swinton and these two members of Parliament spoke of Churchill in the terms that they did. I am sure they admired him no less than I; they were close friends of his. They saw him or worked with him constantly and, in Swinton's case, almost every day. Their concern was that it was time for Churchill to retire and to leave the leadership of the Conservative Party to Eden. They were critical of Churchill because he did not make any moves towards retiring. At the same time it was quite obvious that they were not at all certain that Eden could in any

way fill the Churchill shoes either as leader of the Conservative Party or in the high position he would have to hold in a Conservative government. They had admiration for Eden and his obvious qualities but they did not speak of confidence in the future with him as leader of the Party. I took no part in this conversation. What struck me was that there was this obvious feeling/^{that}~~on the part~~ Churchill should retire, that Eden should take his place, and at the same time the feeling that if Churchill retired things would not go well with the Party and that if Eden took over the leadership of the Party, etc. that things would not go well. I was left a good deal confused by the conversation. It was the first time, however, that I realized how much the retirement of Churchill was a matter of such deep consideration and concern in the higher circles of the Conservative Party. Lady Saulsbury, I ~~noticed~~, listened to the conversation with a smile. She realized what confusion of thought there was in what was being said. I've often wished since that I had been able to see Lady Saulsbury in the years that followed. It would not only have been a very pleasant experience to have contact with so keen and penetrating a mind, but to be around a great lady who had obviously a great understanding of human nature.

Much water has run under the bridge and many pages have been written with regard to the retirement of Churchill since this dinner in 19~~58~~⁴⁸ or 19~~59~~⁴⁹. The Conservative Party is richer today than it was at that moment because Butler has come forward in the Party and Eden's health, which had been so seriously menaced, is now so much improved. Apparently there are those who still fear, however, that his health may be too frail to bear the burdens of the Party leadership and of the responsibilities of government he would have to carry with the Party in power. As one who considers whatever the British government does so

important for us and for the world and one who believes so deeply in Anglo-American collaboration, I often wonder whether Eden in spite of frailer health may not be the surer man for Britain in these days. Butler, with his broad economic capacity, has not had the long experience of Eden in diplomacy and in politics nor does he have the knowledge of men and circumstances and background in so many countries that Eden has. In any event, England is the better off for having two runners instead of one.

Special Note.- In connection with the notes which I shall prepare in the next weeks and which may bear on Churchill, I wish here to note that it may be possible for me to recount the story of the visit of Dr. Richard Cattell of the Lahey Clinic to London when Eden was so ill and which trip resulted in Eden coming to the Lahey Clinic for a third operation within a year. I cannot make a note of this story without the consent of Dr. Cattell. I shall have to endeavor to get Dr. Cattell's authorization to make a note of this story as it throws a very vivid light on the character of Churchill.