

**Esther Waeber-Kalbermatten, President of the Cantonal Council
Head of the Department of Health, Social Affairs and Culture**

RECEPTION OF His Excellency Mr. David Moran

Tuesday, November 22, 2016



**Your Excellency Mr. David Moran
British Ambassador to Switzerland,**

**Members of the
British Delegation,**

**President of the Cantonal Parliament,
Edmond Perruchoud,**

Cantonal Councilor and Vice President of the

Cantonal Government, Oskar Freysinger,

Cantonal Chancellor, Philipp Spörri,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

Welcome to the Canton of Valais!

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to welcome you, dear Ambassador, in the name of the government of the Canton of Valais.

The relations between the United Kingdom and the Canton of Valais are very old, but also very strong.

The British alpinists have always been fascinated by the majestic mountains of the Valais and so their history is closely linked to our own. When the first British researchers and scientists began to examine the geology of our mountains and glaciers, they also brought us a **great gift**: they laid the foundations for our **tourism**.

During the golden age of alpinism in the middle of the 19th [nineteenth] century several British

pioneers were the first to climb our four-thousander peaks. Even today, names like Smyth, Hudson, Whympfer, Tyndall or Moore are still well known here in Valais.

And so it is the British with their love for our mountains that are at the origin of our tourism, which is the most important economic sector of the Canton of Valais today. Approximately every third person works in this sector.

And the British?

They are still loyal visitors and represent the third largest group of foreign visitors in Switzerland. They are and always will be welcome guests not only in Zermatt or Verbier but also in the rest of our beautiful Canton.

Finally, I would like to see the dynamic exchange and the mutual understanding between the Canton of Valais and the United Kingdom continued and I hope that the British will continue to hold a special place in their heart for the Valais, its residents and its mountains.

Welcome!