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# SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, March 11th, 1936.

The *pièce de résistance* of the agenda was a presentation to Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Pfäendler in commemoration of Mr. Pfäendler's 25th anniversary of the managership of the Employment Department. A supper preceded the meeting and an old custom was thus revived. The ladies were particularly invited to what proved a *soirée familière* in the very sense of the word. About 50 members, including a number of ladies, sat down to supper and not since the early days of Swiss House could one recall a like gathering. After a very palatable meal, Mr. A. Steinmann, President, in chosen words informed the meeting that the Council at its last meeting had decided to mark the auspicious occasion of Mr. Pfäendler's 25th anniversary in a tangible form. A social evening was deemed the most suitable manner of doing so and the President said that the best testimony to Mr. Pfäendler's never waning popularity was the large number of members present who had come along to enjoy with him and his family a few happy hours of reminiscences and rejoicing.

Mr. Steinmann briefly recalled Mr. Pfäendler's meritorious services to the Society during a quarter of a century and in particular his splendid work as manager of the Employment Department. Many a Swiss who holds to-day a responsible position started his career via 24, Queen Victoria Street. In fact, the President said he had it from older members that at one time Mr. Pfäendler was the Society. The President then asked Mr. and Mrs. Pfäendler to accept as a token of appreciation the Society's memento in the form of a "Plus-a-Gram" and a suitably inscribed plate. Mr. W. Deutsch, a member of the Council, suitably seconded the President's address. There was yet another surprise in store. Mr. Ch. Chapuis, Delegate on the Advisory Board of the Employment Department said he had been delegated by the Members of the Advisory Board who were important men in the City to voice on this occasion their appreciation of Mr. Pfäendler's services and he thought it best to address those words in the form of a letter which read as follows:

Dear Mr. Pfäendler,

The Members of the Advisory Board to the Employment Department wish to associate themselves with the celebration of your 25 years' Jubilee as Manager of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Employment Department.

These 25 years included a very long period of industrial depression, which made conditions most difficult, and the Members of the Advisory Board were well placed to appreciate your untiring efforts.

I have been requested, and it gives me great pleasure in doing so, to present to you these two gifts as a slight token of appreciation for the way you have carried out your duties, and to express to you the hope that you may long be spared to continue your wonderful work.

May the Desk Set be a daily reminder of the esteem which we have for you, and may the two Pipes bring you pleasure and good companionship during your time of leisure.

For and on behalf of the Advisory Board to the Employment Department.  
(Sgd.) Ch. Chapuis.

Mr. Chapuis then handed Mr. Pfäendler the fine gifts.

Mr. Pfäendler, deeply moved by these testimonies, returned his personal thanks as well as those of his family to the speakers for the sentiments expressed and for the tokens which accompanied them.

There followed yet another surprise item. The President, on behalf of the Society, presented Mr. E. Hardmeier with the golden badge of the S.K.V., in recognition of his invaluable services rendered to the Society and the Education Department in particular during a large number of years as Member of the Education Committee and of which he was Chairman for some years. A hearty ovation seconded this presentation and Mr. Hardmeier, taken completely by surprise, replied in suitable terms.

The Chairman, Mr. Steinmann, then proceeded to the formal part of the Meeting. He acquainted the members of the contents of a letter received from the Nouvelle Société Helvétique with reference to a proposed lecture to be held at Swiss House by Dr. H. P. Zschokke, Zentralpräsident der N.H.G., Legal Adviser of the "CIBA," Basle, who will address the Swiss Colony on "Einiges zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage der Schweiz." The lecture is provisionally fixed for Friday, April 3rd, and the Chairman exhorted the members to attend what would no doubt prove a most interesting and instructive lecture.

Mr. W. Meier, Chairman of the Education Committee, informed the Meeting that the Col-

lege this summer will, for the first time, be holding a Holiday Course. This course is chiefly intended for students of Universities and Commercial High Schools. It will take place from July 20th to August 14th, and the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, has kindly offered to give a reception to the students of this course at the Swiss Legation. The prospectus for this course as well as posters have already been sent to the respective institutions in Switzerland through the kind services of Dr. Cl. Rezzonico, First Secretary of Legation. Mr. Meier also informed the members that he would make an exhibition of the advertising media and cuttings as well as the new illustrated prospectus of the College on the occasion of the next Monthly Meeting.

It was thereupon decided that the Society as in former years be represented at the forthcoming Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. to be held at Berne on May 9th and 10th.

The Meeting then adjourned into the lecture room for the social part of the evening.

There the audience were regaled by Mr. Pfäendler's own "house orchestra." The first item was a violin solo by Master Ray Pfäendler, cleverly executed and splendidly accompanied on the piano by his little sister Rosemary. This piece, entitled "The Humming Birds," was specially composed by Miss Miriam Stein and it is intended to have it published. The unconcerned way in which both these young children performed in front of an unknown audience and surroundings soon won them the admiration of all present. When Miss Rosemary mounted the platform to play a Cello Solo she wrestled many a smile from the audience by the cool and unperturbed manner in which she handled her tiny instrument. This item as well as that of her brother earned the two budding artistes a well deserved applause. The two children wound up their programme with a trio with Mrs. Pfäendler at the piano and this finale was warmly applauded.



Miss Doris Deutsch thereupon delighted the audience with a piano solo.

By way of an intermezzo M. André Purro, a student of the College, touched the humorous vein with some comic French songs with himself at the piano and to the accompaniment of some queer self made jazz noises. This turn was generally much appreciated.

The star turn of the evening was provided by Miss Eva Cattaneo who needs no introduction to the Swiss Colony. She enraptured the audience with her powerful voice and her southern vivacity. One could not help admiring the beauty which the Italian language lends to singing. Miss Cattaneo brought the house down with the favourite Ciribiribin which she sang by special request.

The members then had an opportunity to see under working conditions the newly acquired Swiss film projector. A film entitled "The Masqueraders" by the famous film comedian, Charlie Chaplin, did not quite come up to expectation. The film undoubtedly had seen better days and reminded one of the earlier days of the movies. The next film, however, amply rewarded the audience. By courtesy of the London office of the Swiss Federal Railways the Society was able to show a film entitled "Zermatt-Paradis des Sports d'Hiver." The photography was excellent and depicted some of Switzerland's finest scenery with the exhilarating winter sports providing thrill upon thrill. Above all towered the majestic silhouette of the Matterhorn, an unforgettable sight. This film was greatly appre-

ciated by the audience and kindled a fervent longing to spend some more of those carefree days in the ever beautiful scenery of the homeland.

The evening was brought to a close with a Ticinese popular song "Cucu" by Miss Cattaneo and will long remain in the memory of those present as one of the most happy and cordial evenings ever spent at Swiss House.

W.B.

## RADIO IN SWITZERLAND.

By HANS W. PRIWIN.

From the radio listener's standpoint Switzerland is certainly one of the most interesting countries in Europe. It may, perhaps, be compared only with Belgium, which also needs several broadcasting stations to satisfy its diverse population. Most people know that in Switzerland three languages are spoken: German in the north and east — economically the most important part with its big towns of Basle, Zürich and Berne — French in the west, with its chief towns Geneva and Lausanne; and Italian in the south, where Lugano is the principal town.

Three races live peacefully next to one another in this country — Germans, French, and Italians. Yet they are all good Swiss, without the slightest feeling that they are living in an unredeemed country. A fourth race, less known to the foreigner, lives in and around the Engadine with its famous winter sports resorts, St. Moritz, Samaden, Celerina and Davos. Here an almost lost tongue is spoken, Romansh, the last remains of the language of those Roman soldiers who had settled in the valleys of Grisons.

Four main languages, therefore, are spoken in Switzerland, and for three of them individual broadcasting stations have been erected. The most powerful station is that for German Switzerland, situated at Beromünster, near Lucerne. Using a power of 100 kilowatts, Beromünster is as powerful as Sottens, the French Swiss station near the Lake of Geneva. Much less is the power of Monte Ceneri, the station for Italian Switzerland, which is only 15 kilowatts. Apart from these three "Landessender," as they are called, Switzerland has other transmitters at Basle (0.5 kw.) and Geneva (1.3 kw.). These, however, are purely local in character and transmit the programmes of the Landessender.

The various languages in the country have, of course, added to the difficulty of organisation of Swiss radio. Besides this, the peculiar interests of the different cantons have led to the establishment of independent broadcasting companies in all important towns. Thus Basle, Berne, Zürich, Lausanne, Geneva and Lugano have their own companies, which work through their district transmitters. Basle, Berne, and Zürich claim a share in the programmes from Beromünster; Geneva and Lausanne in those from Sottens; and Lugano in those from Monte Ceneri.

Apart from these companies, there is still a seventh, probably the only broadcasting company in the world without a transmitter of its own. It is the "Ostschweizerische Radiogesellschaft St. Gallen," which for years has been demanding in vain its own transmitter in east Switzerland.

All these companies are under one central organisation, the S.R.G., "Schweizerische Rundspruch-Gesellschaft," with headquarters at Berne. The S.R.G. carries out much the same functions as the German "Reichsrundfunk-Gesellschaft" towards the separate German district organisations. That is to say, it has entire administrative charge, regulates the radio tax, represents Switzerland in foreign organisations, has a seat in the "Union Nationale de Radio-diffusion," etc. The work of the S.R.G. is, therefore, purely administrative, while the compilation and execution of programmes is left to the district broadcasting companies, which in this respect work as autonomous units and make their own arrangements with each other regarding their share of work and broadcasting times.

The geographical position of Switzerland, the complete isolation in which the inhabitants of many valleys live for months, and the hunger for education which is so characteristic of the Swiss, have resulted in a very high proportion of listeners. At the beginning of September, 1935, there were in the whole of Switzerland 383,352 listeners, an increase of 26,000 since the end of 1934. This means that the listening percentage of the population is 8.7, which puts Switzerland into the seventh place in the European percentage list. This, the January 1935 percentage, will be considerably increased this year.

In accordance with the importance of the towns, the greatest number of listeners is to be found in east Switzerland. In the town of Zürich almost 15 per cent. of the population are licence-holders. The smallest percentage is among the exceptionally poor inhabitants in the valleys of Grisons, where only 4 per cent. are listeners. This is about equivalent to the percentage of Hungary, while we only find such a small percentage in Great Britain in the counties of Berwickshire, Dumfriesshire, and Anglesey.