

"Rounabout Switzerland" tunes to the shortwave service and says

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Paul Basilius Barth (70), a well-known painter of Basle.

Mme. A. C. Wehrle-Keckeis (70), known by her great work for prisoners of war, during the last two wars. [A.T.S.]

American tourists spent more than 5,522,870.—Fr. in Switzerland last year.

The Swiss Football Federation has decided not to send a soccer team to the Helsinki Olympic Games next year.

A Yugoslav airliner from Ljubljana with a crew of five and 22 passengers landed at Zurich instead of Belgrade. The flight had been arranged by two pilots who wanted to leave the country with their families and they were granted asylum by the Swiss authorities. Another Yugoslav airliner returned to Belgrade with the other occupants.

Swiss troops accidentally shelled the village of Fully, in the Valais Alps, damaging two farms and a vineyard.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, November 30th, 1951. We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donation over and above their subscription: E. Forster, G. Senn, Th. Erb, J. J. Brutsch, O. Brullhard, A. R. Tissot, W. Allenspack, A. Diethelm.

"ROUNABOUT SWITZERLAND" TUNES TO THE SHORTWAVE SERVICE AND SAYS — Swiss Radio Needs More Imagination.

For the last three months this column has been tuning in regularly to the Swiss Shortwave Service in Berne, but it regrets to report it has found it a rather disappointing experience.

When, on November 1st, the programme schedule made a number of important changes, I hoped it would have meant some improvement on what we have been hearing up to now. But if the first few days are anything to go by, the mixture is basically the same as before.

In my opinion the English programme put out by the Shortwave Service during the Summer showed slipshod organisation. There were many small mistakes so irritating to listeners. For instance, at the beginning of one programme the announcer promised us a talk by Pierre Cordey in the "Behind the Headlines" series, but 15 minutes later when the talk began we found the speaker was Jean Seitz.

The programme seems to rely far too much on recordings, which lead to numerous errors. At 7.45 on October 6 listeners in the United Kingdom and Ireland tuned to Switzerland for the nightly programme and to their surprise were first greeted with "Switzerland calling South-east Asia and Japan". Then, a few minutes later, a woman announcer said: "Good evening, friends in the United Kingdom and friends in Ireland". What happened was that someone substituted by mistake the introductory record used to welcome people in S.E. Asia and Japan when the identical programme is beamed there at 1.45 p.m. each day. The same error was repeated on October 12th.

Even the administration seems to be just as inefficient. On July 25 I wrote to Berne with a few suggestions which I thought might be of interest to the people concerned. It was 69 days later before I received an acknowledgement!

Why? Why? Why?

Listening to Berne day after day made me want to ask a number of questions, like:

Why repeat "Home News", now heard originally at 6.50 every evening in the U.K. transmission, eight times during the next day. Surely listeners in other parts of the world who listen to it in turn during the following 24 hours would like to hear the latest news, not a recording of items that are quickly becoming history as the hours flash by.

Why permit the Press review to show such a complete lack of imagination? It is just a string of quotes, read one after the other, without any attempt being made to join them together into a lively five-minute summary of what Switzerland thinks of the outstanding events of the day.

Why lump together 15 minutes of typical Swiss music and songs under the bald statement: "Here are some Swiss discs", instead of telling us what they are called. I mentioned this point in my letter of July 25th. I cannot say whether that had anything to do with it, but shortly afterwards someone started finding a number of different ways of announcing the "discs", varying from "typical Swiss melodies" to "popular



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Swiss tunes " or simply " Swiss music ". It goes to prove there is no shortage of talent in Berne — it just wants bringing into the open.

Of course, the programme has a few good points, like " Information Desk ", which is a really fine feature. Lance Tschannen, who answers the questions, provides some interesting information, but I wish he would always check his facts before committing himself on the air. When one listener asked if Swiss rolls were known in Switzerland he replied on October 11th: " I doubt whether many Swiss have ever seen a Swiss roll ". Has he never heard of *biscuit roulé*, which is by no means scarce in Switzerland?

One man who deserves a pat on the back is Russell Henderson, the programme's star commentator, whose on-the-spot broadcasts I found bright and chatty. But his weekly " Take it Easy " sketch was a perfect example of how to waste good broadcasting time.

And what about " For Women only " ? Joan Rossley is a good reporter, but not a good speaker. She gives me the impression of trying to race the Geneva-Zurich express. And how mournfully melodramatic is that catch in the voice that breaks out every other second and makes listeners feel she has tears streaming down her cheeks all the time. She has also been fifty per cent. of the " Take it Easy " team, which isn't any credit to her, either.

New Programme.

But several days ago a revised programme made its appearance. First thing I noticed in comparing the old and new schedules was that " Take it Easy " is no longer with us. Well, that's a relief, at any rate.

From now until April 30th the programme starts each evening with " Disc of the Day " (the old " Musical Greeting ") and " Views on the News " becomes simply " Press Cuttings ". " Behind the Headlines ", which we have been hearing four times a week, strangely enough changes to " Facts in the Fore-ground ", and is on the air every day of the week. " Europe at Work " becomes " Europe Rebuilds ", but Theo Chopard is still " On Common Ground " and Paul Ladame unceasingly Struggling for Peace.

Lucas Staehelin, head of the music department, has changed the title of his " Musical Scrap Book "

to " Animal Scrap Book ". Instead of " For Women Only " we have " Women's Week ", with Mrs. Mossadeg still in charge.

One of the biggest changes concerns the lamented " Swiss Discs ". In their place we get a different programme every night. The peak spot on Saturday evenings goes to the music of Western Switzerland. Musical gems from the East are being played on Mondays, from the North on Wednesdays and from the South on Fridays. On Tuesdays we are being treated with " Light and Likeable " (sub-titled: " Music for Relaxing "), which takes the place of the old Light Music Parade.

One thing that really pleases me is that " Dancing in Switzerland " has been cut from one hour to 20 minutes. Why? Well, for one reason it was not a correct title. Too much of the time was spent on playing records from American films. Now we are promised nothing but Swiss dance music. Another reason is that while Lance Tschannen has a nice easy manner which many listeners undoubtedly find attractive, there must be many others who think he would be more palatable if given in smaller doses.

Many readers of this column are, I know, regular listeners to the Swiss Shortwave Service. Can I ask you, then, to give the new winter programme a few weeks trial and then write to me: c/o Editor, with your praises, criticisms or suggestions so that I can pass them on to programme officials? Your opinions can go a long way towards improving the service.

Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The scarcity of paper and the costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Saturday, 15th December, 1951, together with remittance for 6/-.

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