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Swift Action Follows Complaints.

TRUDI BÄUME "SACKED" BY B.B.C.

By DEREK MEAKIN.

Trudi Bäume is to go. Following my personal appeal to the Director General of the B.B.C., Sir Ian Jacob, programme planners have ordered that the so-called Swiss girl in "Mrs. Dale's Diary" must disappear.

My letter to Broadcasting House, first published in the "Swiss Observer" and later reported in a number of national newspapers, was written on behalf of the many British people who know and love Switzerland, as well as the thousands of Swiss citizens living in Britain. It told Sir Ian that Trudi, the girl who was an idler and a waster and could do nothing right, was doing irreparable harm to the Colony and to Switzerland generally, and that Swiss girls in Britain to learn English were finding her actions a source of almost daily embarrassment.

In answer to my appeal to see an end of Trudi the B.B.C. now writes: "The incidents which highlighted Trudi's lack of domesticity are now over and there will be no more transmissions on this subject. In fact we are at the point of resolving this character in the Diary, and propose to do so in a positive and pleasant way so that when she leaves the Dale family there will be real regrets on both sides."

The B.B.C. also asks for it to be made clear that Trudi Bäume was not conceived as a typical Swiss girl but as "an individual human being with individual shortcomings", and adds: "She was certainly not intended to reflect in any way on the Swiss character and we can only apologise if we have given a false impression about the character of the Swiss people in general."

I accept the B.B.C.'s explanation and apologies, and welcome the assurance that Trudi is to disappear. I only hope that before she goes she will be given an opportunity of remedying the harm that has already been done.

The actress who has had the part of playing Trudi has my sympathy. Since my original letter was published in the "Swiss Observer" I have learned she has stated that to portray Trudi as an example of a Swiss girl was "disgraceful" in her opinion, and has complained to the producer that the part was ruining her reputation.

It was pleasing for me to know that in my "Trudi must go" campaign I had as a powerful ally none other than the poor girl's "voice" herself!

My thanks for helping Trudi's escapades to come to a speedy end are due first of all to all those members of the Swiss Colony in Britain who joined the protest by sending their own letters direct to the B.B.C.

But they also go to Sir Ian Jacob himself, who by his actions in this affair has confirmed a promise he made when he was appointed to the £10,000 a year post only a few months ago. Within 48 hours of the appointment being announced he called a Press conference, said he considered the B.B.C. as one of the most sensitive organisations to public opinion in existence, and he declared: "We must never be an ivory tower".

Let me put it on record that the B.B.C. is certainly no ivory tower.

As it happens Sir Ian is no stranger to our country, and sincerely admires the Swiss. When the European Broadcasting Union held its first meeting at Torquay three years ago and he was elected president, one of his two vice-presidents was the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation's own M. Conus, whom he found a valued colleague.

"Jake", as Sir Ian is called at Broadcasting House, also appreciates to the full the importance radio can be in preserving harmony among the nations. He once said that apart from the simple desire to interest or amuse, radio programmes should meet "the deeper aim of promoting the universal exchange of ideas and of developing friendship across frontiers."

With those words in mind, I am sure that, like me, he must be really glad that Trudi is on her way out!

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, March 27th, 1953. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: J. Donat, A. J. Gomiero, P. E. Lequint, M. A. Rothlisberger, Giron Frères, E. Fankhauser, A. E. Banderet, O. Braga, J. Scheiwiler, C. H. Willi, F. Heller, C. R. Jaeger, F. E. Brunner.



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