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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.

The radio tax in Switzerland is 15 Swiss francs (about £1) a year. From this source last year the S.R.G. received about 5,000,000 Swiss francs. Of this sum about one half was accounted for by technical maintenance, interest, and depreciation of the technical installations, while the other half was used in connection with the programmes.

Of this other half, 71 per cent. was spent on the programmes themselves, 23 per cent. on general expenses, and 6 per cent. on various sundry expenses — an exceptionally pleasing distribution which shows the listener that out of the 15 francs he pays every year he gets direct benefit from 7.61 francs.

In Switzerland — just as in Holland — the so-called "telephone broadcasting" is extraordinarily popular. Three companies, the official Post Office, "Rédifusion," and "Radibus," relay to their subscribers regular programmes, which include the most important programmes from abroad as well as those of the Swiss stations. In accordance with the desire of these companies, the S.R.G. has made agreements with France, Germany, Austria, and Italy whereby, for the payment of a small cable fee, the programmes of these countries are transmitted to Switzerland and relayed to the telephone broadcasting subscribers.

These listeners, therefore, do not have a receiving set. They simply have a loud speaker connected with the central relaying station, and need only switch on to hear the programme of the Telephone Radio. These relays have the advantage of being received without interference, but on the other hand there is, of course, no choice of programme, and the listener has to be satisfied with whatever fare the telephone broadcasting company happens to offer.

The programmes of the Swiss broadcasting stations have an excellent reputation in Europe. One finds that there are two main features to which the German Swiss and the French Swiss transmitters adhere. German Switzerland seems to favour literature above all, and besides this has introduced the so-called "Heimatsendungen," folklore programmes, which are entirely suited to the conservative and tradition-loving character of the German Swiss. French Switzerland, on the other hand, which culturally and traditionally is allied to France, is an exponent of the musical side of Swiss Radio.

The nearness of France, the influence of French culture, and last, but not least, the personality of the head of Radio Geneva, the musician, F. Pommier, have resulted in French Switzerland's special interest in modern French music and, through the influence of the French impressionists, in the Russian which is so closely allied to it. In Ernest Ansermet, the conductor of the West Swiss radio orchestra and of the "Suisse Romande" orchestra, Geneva and Lausanne have a man who has done a tremendous lot in the development of modern music.

German Switzerland, on the other hand, which in Berne, Basle, and Zürich has truly music-loving towns, is, from the musical point of view, far more conservative, or classical. Felix Weingartner, who lives permanently in Switzerland, is a frequent guest conductor of Swiss musical programmes. Dr. Kurt Schenker, the head of Radio Berne, is an expert on educational broadcasts, tourists propaganda, and similar radio plays.

I cannot call this article complete without mentioning a Swiss who has done a very great deal of good for radio, Maurice Rambert, the head of the S.R.G., who was recently elected president of the Union Internationale de Radio-diffusion in place of the retiring Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Carpendale.

Maurice Rambert has an adventurous career behind him. He has built hotels in Constantinople, has constructed bridges, had the first Swiss radio factory.

Not much is heard of Italian Switzerland. This may be due to the fact that the Monte Ceneri transmitter is still very young and that the resources at its disposal are not so great as in other parts of Switzerland. Radio Lugano is directed by F. Vitali, a young journalist, who was often heard as an announcer on the German Swiss station before Monte Ceneri was built.

An important part in Swiss broadcasting is, of course, played by transmissions from the League of Nations. These have become fewer and fewer of late, perhaps because so many broadcasting companies in Europe and America have League of Nations events described by their own correspondents. Moreover, the League of Nations has its own shortwave station at Prangins.

An extremely pleasing off-shoot of Swiss radio is the so-called "Swiss Radio Fellowship." This is an association of young Swiss listeners who have united in order to help one another to serve the community.

Wireless Magazine.

Annual Banquet and Ball of the Swiss Club, Birmingham

on Saturday, March 14th, 1936, at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham.

P. BRUN,

President of the Swiss Club, Birmingham.



The Annual Dinner and Dance of the Swiss Club Birmingham, on Saturday, March 14th, at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham, was attended by 91 Members, Friends and Guests — Mr. P. F. Brun, the President being in the Chair.

The Dinner, excellent in choice and preparation, no doubt due to personal attention of Mr. Oerli, the Manager, and the efforts of the Midland Hotel's famous Swiss Chef, was served in splendid manner and "Swiss Airs" played by a lively band formed musical accompaniments.

After the Loyal Toasts, proposed by the Chairman, Mr. Brun welcomed the guests from London, Manchester, Liverpool and Bradford, and also thanked the members and friends, some of whom had come from as far as Exeter, Cardiff, Liverpool, Blackpool, West Hartlepool and London for attending the function in such good numbers. — Notable absentees were Mr. and Mrs. Kunzle, through indisposition, Mr. and Mrs. G. Ellison, who wired best wishes from Switzerland, and Mr. G. Marchand, London, also telegraphed his greetings. The absence of the "Swiss Observer" was also specially noted and regretted.

Mr. Montag, Swiss Consul in Liverpool, in very humorous strain, replied for the guests, Mr. Billeter, President of the City Swiss Club, added words of thanks for the hospitality received, and expressed wishes of prosperity for the Swiss Club Birmingham, whilst Mr. Lamb, of West Hartlepool, a British subject, but great admirer of our Homeland, sang the praises of Switzerland and its people in well-chosen words.

In place of the usual collection for its own charitable institution, Mr. Brun announced that this year the money would be devoted to the "George Dimier Fund for aged Swiss." Mr. Brunner, Vice-President, warmly supported the appeal. The collection amounted to £7 10s. which out of the Club fund was increased to £10. Mrs. Beckman, Member of the Committee of the Swiss Benevolent Society, thanked all present who had so generously contributed.

A pleasant surprise item was the special toast reserved for the eldest member present, Mr. Ecker now in his 85th year, to which the Jubilar replied in strong clear words, and better still he with Mr. Gattiker treated us with a real Swiss Yodel.

Soon after 9 o'clock, dancing commenced and lasted till midnight, intermingled with songs and yodelling.

"Some" I fear did not get into the feathers till well in the morning, so jolly and happy was the select party in the Hotel Lounge.

The Sunday morning outing brought some 45 members and friends in Cars and Bus to Droitwich where a visit to the renowned and renovated Norbury Hotel was paid. It was unfortunate in more ways than one, that no brine baths could be had at the hour of visit — we had to be content with internal lubrication.

EDITOR'S POSTBAG.

London, March 15th, 1936.

The Editor,
Swiss Observer,
London,

Dear Mr. Editor,

My hearty congratulations for your article, "Naturalization in Switzerland."

Perhaps I can best express my feelings by making a peep into the future, as follows:

Eidgenössisches Sängerkunst in Zurich, Aug. 1955:

Committee: Dr. Klotzbi, Präsident, Herren Kaibowicz, Trombotzky, Fülliberinsky, Duchailinsky, Popoffsky, Schnapskinsky, Schwobemeier, Mauerblümchen und Nazimeier.

Die Festrede war von Herr Jacob Miansky. Die "Harmonie" Zurich eröffnete mit dem Lied, "O, mein Heimatland, o mein Vaterland, wie so innig feurig lieb ich dich" unter spezieller Mithilfe von Herren Goldenstein, Kummellinski, Vodkanunsky und Himmelblümchen.

The Luncheon party at the Midland Hotel was attended by 54 — it was a real happy family gathering and rightly the only speech made was to give thanks for the untiring efforts of Mr. P. Brun, not only to make this annual re-union such a great social success, but also for his devotion to the Swiss Club Birmingham, over which he has presided so successfully for eight years.

The Finale as usual took place in "Oakfield" Handsworth, the President's private residence where about 35 friends spent in the large gardens and the well stocked dining room a few more pleasant hours in Song and Music before returning to normal life again. —

J.B.B.

Amongst the guests were:

Mr. and Mrs. Billeter (representing the City Swiss Club, London); Mr. J. Boos (representing the Swiss Mercantile Society, London); Mr. and Mrs. Beckmann (representing the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, London); Mr. J. Faivre (representing Swiss Club Liverpool); Messrs. Spargnani and Heinrich (representing Swiss Club Manchester); Mr. Montag, Swiss Consul in Liverpool, Mr. and Mrs. Hilpert, London; Mr. and Mrs. Bertschi, London, Mr. and Mrs. Schedler, London; Mr. Horricks, Liverpool; Mr. and Mrs. Lamb, Hartlepool; Mr. and Mrs. Bolter, Blackpool; Mr. Bertschi, Bradford; Mr. and Mrs. Curlew, London; Miss Aeberhart, Miss Molinari, London; etc., etc.

SCHWYZERCLUB BIRMINGHAM.

Immer tuet's eim wieder freue
We der "Swiss Club" sini Gescht
Sig's i "Bäre" oder "Leue"
Jladet zu sym Jahresfest.

Natürli weiss a jederma
Dass me für a ganze Obe
Sich hätzlich amüsiere cha
Nach alter Schwyzermode.

Do trifft me alli liebe Fründ
Vo näher u vo fern,
S'dunkt eim we me Zäme sind
Mi sigi eifach z'Bern.

Au z'Aesse het de wäger oh
gar grüseli guet gfallt,
Der Chef, dä hüt si's beste do
Verdient gwüss z'Lob vo alle.

Für's Tanze, gheit, sono di no
Der Aeltischt, au i d'Falle,
U fö si afo Jodele
Wäht Schwyzlerluft dür d'Halle.

So Festli si as grosses Glück
Für d'Landslüt i der Fremdi,
Me fühlt sich näher zäme grückt
Ein für Alle, bis ans Ende.

H.E.

August 1955. Uruguay: Der Schweizerclub hielt sein Jahresfest und die Kolonie war stark vertreten durch die Familien: Anderegg, Krähenbühl, Imboden, Bolli und Benteli. Das Fest begann mit dem Lied: Von ferne sei herzlich gegrüsst.

With best wishes for success to your outspoken words,

Yours sincerely,

Alter Zürcher.

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE.

Dr. H. P. Zschokke, Zentralpräsident der N.H.G., Legal Adviser of the "Ciba" Basle, hopes to pay a visit to London which would give him an opportunity of speaking to our Colony on Friday, April 3rd, at "Swiss House," on "Einiges zur politischen und wirtschaftlichen Lage der Schweiz." We believe this to be of sufficient interest as to extend an invitation to the Members of all the Swiss Societies in London. A further announcement will appear in our next issue.