

Zeitschrift: The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK
Herausgeber: Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom
Band: - (1940)
Heft: 972

Artikel: Swiss short wave emissions
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-693464>

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SWISS SHORT WAVE EMISSIONS.

By Paul Borsinger, Chief of the Swiss Short Wave Service.

("Swiss Industry and Trade," May, 1940.)

It may be a question in the minds of some just why Switzerland has organised a regular service of short wave emissions. This country, you may say, has no colonies, is destitute of imperialistic ambitions, and, furthermore, has no well defined world mission such as that of the Vatican, for instance. Therefore, why a service of broadcasts intended for peoples beyond her frontiers? I think I can give a satisfaction to this query.

Switzerland is, indeed, a small country; but only from the viewpoint of geography and population. Moreover, though without imperialistic designs, our land does have world-wide economic and spiritual interests. Switzerland is without colonies, but one tenth of her population lives abroad, while three fourths of her inhabitants cannot be fed by her somewhat unproductive soil and must depend on import and export industries for a living. Economically our country is not a negligible factor.

What we have just said not only contains a justification, to our mind, of Switzerland's decision to organize a short wave service, but connotes as well the general aims of this service. Our programs are intended to develop economic relations with the rest of the world, to tighten the bonds uniting Swiss nationals abroad with the homeland, and, most of all, to tell our listeners in all parts of the world just what our little portion of earth's soil stands for. Mankind must know, in the turmoil of a gigantic cataclysm, that there still remains a country which holds aloft the old ideals of humanity — the ideals for which it has stood through the vicissitudes of the centuries — and considers them still of such priceless value that it is ready to defend them if need be against the material odds of more resourceful adversaries.

You perhaps are already aware of the fact that the Swiss short wave service was inaugurated some years ago. The service was organized before the existence of an exclusively Swiss transmission station. The League of Nation's transmitter, located at Prangin, near Geneva, was rented for that purpose at certain free hours. Our first concern was for our countrymen overseas. Thus, in the first stage, the service was limited to one weekly broadcast for Swiss citizens in each continent separately.

The spontaneous reactions of Swiss abroad were very favourable to the continuation of our emissions. Moreover, the experience gained was very valuable, not only from a technical viewpoint but from the viewpoint of the contents of the programs as well. Soon we were able to double the number of our broadcasts, adding a program, in their language, for the foreign listeners of each continent. The programs intended for the Swiss were of a homely, popular character, while the foreign emissions were of a wider scope. In the broadcasts for Swiss abroad we speak to the heart of the listener; in the foreign service we endeavour to convey a rounded-out conception of Switzerland's artistic achievements, of her general activities, and of

her age-old ideals. All these emissions begin with a commentary on current world events from the Swiss standpoint, or on Swiss events of a nature and of sufficient importance to be of interest to citizens of other countries. They include one or two short talks on the diversified aspects of Swiss cultural life, and end with an exposé of one or more problems pertaining to Switzerland's important economic activity. These talks are enhanced by samples of Swiss musical art — light, popular music with the more stately, and the classical with the modern and contemporaneous. The Swiss soloists give evidence that our people have a leading part in the interpretation of the masterpieces of all times and of all nations.

Such are the programs whose number we intend to increase as soon as we can have a short wave station of our own at our disposal which will permit of it. And our station is under construction; *in fact, well on the way to completion.* It is located at Schwarzenburg, about twenty kilometers from Bern. The construction of the Schwarzenburg station was no light undertaking for our country. The great nations who operate world-known short wave transmitters are rightly proud of their achievements; and anybody acquainted with the financial and technical requirements of a first class short wave station knows that the successful termination of such a project means something for a little country of no more than four million inhabitants. Already a year ago, the first Schwarzenburg station, during the few days it operated before being destroyed by fire, gave temporary evidence that Switzerland was capable of the enterprise. And now the reconstruction of the station without loss of time and in spite of enormous difficulties inherent to a world crisis, is additional proof of Swiss tenacity and capacity. The final result of the fire will be, moreover, a marked improvement in the technical installations authorizing us to expect a fully perfect instrument for future activity.

You have been able to gather from the above that Swiss short wave emissions have been confined, up to

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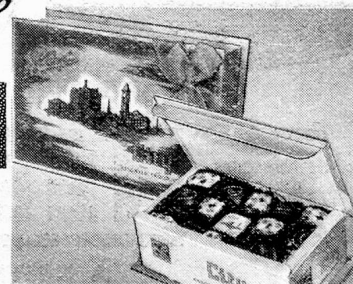
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date, to the experimental stage. But now we shall advance more rapidly. When the Schwarzenburg station is put in operation *regular daily programs* will be organized for all continents. Of course a station like Schwarzenburg cannot be brought to a maximum of development over night; its activity will develop through consecutive stages. The first step will include a one station service only, with two directed aeriels for North America, one for South America, two for Africa and one for Far East. The second step will not only bring two additional aeriels for Central America, Southern Asia and Australia, and a circular emitter which will insure the listeners in bordering European lands of a good reception — but also a second station in connection with all these different types of emitters, allowing, thus, simultaneous transmissions of two programs on different wave lengths for different destinations.

Switzerland, though ingenious and industrious, has limited means, we said in the beginning of our article. It must, therefore, aim at maximum results with a minimum of expenditure. Our future national short wave station will, for financial reasons, have to find ways and means of recuperating a part of its investment. To this end, the second emitter will be placed principally at the disposal of a *radiotelephone service* with overseas countries. But even this commercial arrangement will carry with it certain non-material advantages. Among others it will provide our country, which is without any direct access to the

seas, with a permanent connection with lands which heretofore have been out of contact with Switzerland excepting through foreign territory.

We trust, in closing, that these few remarks have helped you to realize better the importance to be attached to the Swiss short wave service in the future, not only from the viewpoint of Switzerland, but of Switzerland's friends and customers throughout the world as well. We hope the manifold possibilities represented by future development have been made evident. Our determination is to insure a maximum development, and with this in mind we invite our overseas listeners to show their goodwill toward our undertaking by forwarding to us such criticisms and suggestions regarding our trial emissions as they may deem useful. We thank you most cordially in advance.

HYDE PARK IN WARTIME.

Having nothing better to do I decided to visit Hyde Park and to find out what my old friends the soapbox orators were doing. True enough, they were still alive and kicking. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon; one or two people were already haranguing their audiences whilst two more platforms were put into position, indicating that:

"the time has come," the Walrus said,

"to talk of many things;

"of shoes — and ships — and sealing wax —

"of cabbages — and Kings." —

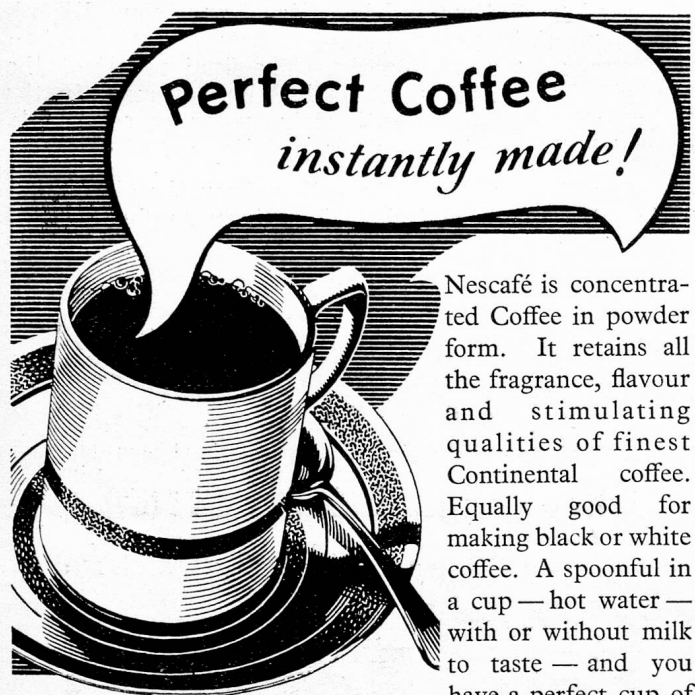
And talk of many things they did, from the sublime to the ridiculous. Every subject under the sun came under review. Religion, Politics, Astrology and Chiropody; Karl Marx, The Old Testament, the Koran and Old Moore. The knowledge and sagacity of some of the speakers seemed profound and made me wonder why parents go to the expense of sending their offspring to Oxford and Cambridge when the professors of Hyde Park give their lectures for nothing.

But let there be no mistake about it. The majority of the speakers take themselves seriously, believing that they have a mission to fulfill. Others are mere cranks and unmitigated humbugs, with bees in their bonnets and bats in their belfries, but without a sense of humour or commonsense.

Nearly all have excellent memories and are able to quote scriptures or books of reference at infinitum and with unfailing accuracy. In fact, some are walking Encyclopedias and Old Moore combined, able to tell not only what Gladstone said in 1878 but what Winston Churchill will say in 1941.

And the audience is just as interesting and varied, consisting of regular supporters, casuals, professional hecklers or like myself, of people out for some fun and cheap entertainment.

Some listen, learn and digest; others pooh-pooh, deride or protest. Some have an axe to grind or wish to air a grievance which they can't forget and which nobody wants to hear; others come out on mischief bent, looking for disgruntled and dissatisfied people



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