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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Wednesday, May 12th, and Mr. J. J. Boos presided.

Although the attendance was not up to the average of the last few months, those present were highly delighted with the very interesting and animated discussion on various matters relating to the Society and planning for the future. The President was able, thanks to the arrival of air mail from Headquarters, to give the latest S.K.V. news.

First, he gave details of the very successful Jubilee meeting which the lady members of the S.K.V. held at Basle on March 27th and 28th. They celebrated the 25th anniversary of the admission of lady members into the association. The fact that the original number of 1,500 members of the fair sex has risen to to-days figure of 10,000 speaks for itself.

The President also referred to the "Congrès de l'Union romande," held at Yverdon on the 11th April, which was attended by 65 delegates from 24 sections out of 27 which have their headquarters in the French and Italian speaking parts of Switzerland.

Mr. Boos further acquainted the members with the agenda of the Delegates' Meeting of the S.K.V. at Lugano on May 7th to 9th. Under the prevailing conditions, it was not possible for the London Section to be represented as was customary in normal times, but Mr. Pfändler was able to give a résumé of the proceedings as broadcast by the Swiss wireless.

Mr. A. C. Stahelin also had some very interesting news from Switzerland, which he imparted to the members in his usual eloquent style. Of particular interest was a letter which he had received from National Councillor Ph. Schmid-Ruedin, General Secretary of the S.K.V., which he read out to the meeting.

The President then quoted from an article in the "Kaufm. Zentralblatt" under the heading "The influence of rationing on the cost of living." According to index figures, the cost of living in November last was 44% higher than in August 1939. Owing to rationing and the reduced possibilities of consumption, it was found that the actual increase in the cost of living in the case of a middle-class family amounted to about 22% above pre-war level. Efforts have been made for increased salaries in the case of commercial employees which have resulted in a rise of salaries of from 10 to 15%, and employees in Switzerland have, therefore, to manage on a slightly lower standard of living.

There was a general demand for a series of discussions within the S.M.S. on post war problems, with particular reference to economic subjects such as trade, banking, currency, investment, etc.

It was accordingly decided that the first of these discussions be held following the Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, June 9th, under the title "A Target for Trade in Peace Time."

Mr. W. Meier, Vice-President, will introduce the subject and Mr. W. Beckmann will open the discussion of the ensuing debate. A number of other members have agreed to prepare data for this discussion which promises to be very lively and interesting.

We, therefore, hope that a large number of members and friends will be present on June 9th to take part in the debate and to hear the different points of view regarding post war trade problems, thus helping to make the meeting of really successful one. **WB.**

HANS RENOLD, D.Sc. †.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Hans Renold, of Priestnall Hey, Heaton Mersey, Manchester, founder of the famous engineering firm which bears his name. Mr. Renold, who had been living for the past two years at Grange-over-Sands, was in his 91st year.

His funeral was attended by our Vice-Consul, Mr. H. W. Hirs and the President with a large number of members of the Swiss Club Manchester, of which he was an Honorary Member. We are indebted to the "Manchester Guardian," May 3rd, for a much deserved appreciation from which we reprint the following extract.

"Hans Renold, the son of a master baker, was born at Aarau, Switzerland, in 1852. His family had been burghers of Aarau or of villages in the neighbourhood for several centuries. As a small boy he helped in his father's business, and one of his tasks was to deliver the bread. His interest in engineering began while he was still at school, and holidays he spent working as an apprentice in small machine shops. At the age of 18 he entered the Polytechnic School, Zurich. The year 1871 found him engaged in engineering construction work in Paris, which the Germans had just evacuated, and two years later he came to England, where he worked as a technical draughtsman and machine inspector. He became a British subject in 1881.

It was in 1879 that the seed of the great Renold chain company was sown. Hans Renold bought for

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£300 the Salford business of a man name Slatter, inventor of the "bowl" type of chain. The development of the "safety" cycle, which for lack of a durable chain was not a complete success, led to Renold evolving the bush roller type. This assured the success of the cycle industry and started a demand for chains which Renold met by moving to a larger workshop in Brook Street, Manchester. Extension of the Brook Street premises was soon necessary, but this was not enough to cope with the business, and in 1906 he began to build the great works at Burnage. They were completed in 1914 — a modern estate of one-storey buildings surrounded by trees, lawns, and flower beds. Already in 1896 he had been one of the first employers to institute a 48-hour week, and the conditions under which his employees worked were further improved by the equipment of the works with all modern amenities, including canteens and first-aid departments. He also provided facilities for games, including golf, a small course being laid out by the side of the works. While in the Brook Street premises Renold had installed electricity for power purposes, the supply being taken from the corporation cables. He was, indeed, the first manufacturer in Manchester to use this source for power.

During the Great War the works was engaged in the manufacture of munitions, and in 1916 Renold patented the segmental bush bearing for inverted tooth chains, which became in post-war years one of the most important chain developments. He served on the committee of management of the Manchester and District Armaments Committee. In 1930 the business of the Coventry Chain Company, Ltd., and Brampton Bros., Ltd., were merged with Hans Renold, Ltd., thus bringing under one control nearly the whole of the British precision-chain industry, of which Renold, working with one man and a boy, was the founder in 1879.

He was made a magistrate of the city of Manchester in 1917, and in 1940 Manchester University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science. There were until his death three generations of Renolds in the business — Mr. Hans Renold, Mr. Charles G. Renold (his eldest son), and Mr. Hans Renold, jun. (Mr. Charles Renold's eldest son).

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to go to press again on June 25th. We are sorry to state that on account of pressure on our space several items had to be left over for the next issue.

SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON.

Every Sunday at 11 a.m.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Tuesday, 1st June, 1943, at 6 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting at Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1. (See Advert.).

Wednesday, 9th June, 1943, at 6 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. — Monthly Meeting, at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, 19th June, at 2.15 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1 — followed by Mr. G. J. Keller's usual talk on "Current Events."

Tuesday, 22nd June, 1943, at 5.30 for 6.30 p.m. — London Swiss Philatelic Society — Monthly Meeting at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1, preceded and followed by "Swopping."

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