

News from the Zurich Insurance company

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THE CHALLENGE TAKEN UP

In the "Swiss Observer" of 10th February, Mr. W. T. Zuber's scheme for decimal coinage was described. Another subscriber, Mr. J. Perrin, of 3 Rookfield Close, N.10, has taken up the challenge and would like to know whether Mr. Zuber agrees that his scheme may be better — it would save the country about 100m. pounds, its author suggests. The scheme was submitted to Lord Halsbury's Committee through Lord Cromer, then Governor of the Bank of England, as early as 1961.

Mr. Perrin's contention is that there are already too many different cents in the world without starting another one. His scheme preserves the word sterling, whilst discarding the word pound. ST. would be a similar symbol as DM, FF, FL, etc.

The new unit according to Mr. Perrin would be divided in 10 shillings and 100 (new) pennies. There should be a note like the present 10/- one, marked "One Sterling" (ST.1.—), another note like the present £1, marked "Two Sterling" (ST.2.—) and a "Ten Sterling" (ST.10.—) note equivalent to the present £5 note, but in pale blue, and a new note of "20 Sterling" in royal purple.

The three large coins would remain, and a new coin of $\frac{1}{2}$ shilling (5 new pence) would be introduced. The present sixpenny and threepenny pieces would be worth 5 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ new pence respectively and would gradually be withdrawn.

A plastic One Penny ($\frac{1}{10}$ th of a shilling) and a Half Penny would be introduced. The present copper coins would also gradually be withdrawn.

It will obviously not be possible to have any arbitration in the columns of the "Swiss Observer". If any readers have strong views, perhaps they will be good enough to communicate with the two gentlemen concerned.

TAKING WINE WITH THE SWISS

Switzerland has become internationally famous as a producer of watches, cheeses, chocolates, textiles, and machinery. But the wines of Switzerland are still an unfamiliar pleasure to many, yet they offer wide scope for both the connoisseur and the less experienced wine drinker.

Four of the more popular wines, all of which are available in this country, Dôle, Fendant, and Johannisberg which come from the Valais area, close to the Upper Rhone and Neuchâtel which comes from the shores of the lake of that name.

Dôle is one of the few red Swiss wines and is of Burgundian stock. It is described in the Handbook and Guide as "fruity, fresh and light".

Fendant is a white wine of delicious bouquet, referred to as "a soft, dry white wine suitable for drinking with hors d'œuvre or fish".

Johannisberg a vintage similar to a Rhine wine, light with a lot of character.

The white *Neuchâtel*, originating from the chalky soil of vineyards overlooking the lake, is dry, light and delicate, with more sparkle than other Swiss wines.

In order to popularise Swiss wines, the Swiss Wine Growers' Association are making special efforts of bringing them to the British public. One of the methods used is to arrange Wine Tasting Parties.

The first of these was held at the offices of their U.K. Public Relations Representatives, Joan Pound Ltd., at 1 Great Cumberland Place, Marble Arch, W.1, on 2nd March.

Among those present, were members of the national daily and trade press, the Wine Writers Guild and also Mrs. S. Sklar of Capital Wine Agencies Ltd., Mr. Peter Reynier and Mr. Victor Hargreaves of J. B. Reynier Ltd.

Twelve different types of wine were tasted from among the twenty-two on display, and samples of genuine Swiss Gruyère Cheese were made available by Messrs. Crowson & Sons Ltd. Together with "Le Parfait" (Swiss Pâté with Truffle) which was kindly prepared by the sole importers in the U.K., R. A. Jewison Ltd., these made very attractive displays, and very palatable tasting.

The Party was supported by the Swiss Embassy, Swiss National Tourist Office, Swissair, Swiss Cotton and Embroidery Centre, Swiss Cheese Union and Suchard Chocolates Ltd.

For details regarding Swiss wines, we refer readers to the respective advertisements in the columns of the "Swiss Observer".

NEWS FROM THE ZURICH INSURANCE COMPANY

Mr. B. J. Birkle, F.C.A., Manager of the Zurich Insurance Company for the United Kingdom and Ireland and of the Bedford General Insurance Company Ltd., and Director and Manager of the Bedford Life Assurance Society Ltd., retired at the end of February.

Mr. Birkle qualified as a Chartered Accountant at 21 years of age. He joined the United Kingdom branch of the Zurich as Chief Accountant in 1931. In his time with the Company he has seen very considerable growth take place in the Groups' activities.

During the war, Mr. Birkle assisted in the establishment of the de Havilland Engine Company of which he was the first Secretary, and on returning to the Zurich he was appointed Secretary in 1946.

He joined the United Kingdom Management in 1951, finally taking over as Manager early in 1966.

Mr. Birkle is an acknowledged expert on revenue taxation and accounting systems and in 1936 he introduced to the Zurich a system whereby agency accounts were handled through the medium of punched cards. The Zurich was the first Company to achieve this degree of mechanisation in the United Kingdom.

During his service with the Company, Mr. Birkle has travelled extensively on behalf of the Zurich and has had much to do with their Companies in Australia.

Mr. Birkle will continue to be available to the Zurich Group in a consultative capacity and will remain on the Board of the Bedford Life Assurance Society Ltd.

He is succeeded by Mr. A. F. Noyes who, prior to joining the Zurich Group in the Autumn of 1966, was an Assistant General Manager of the Eagle Star Group and before that served for many years with the Northern Assurance Group.



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