

Swiss Mercantile Society

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believe, bread, are now rationed, whereas a short while ago it was possible to buy any amount of ham, jam, chocolates, sweets, meat, lemons, wines, sherries and other delicacies.

The two main problems of Eire are fuel and gas. There is very little coal, and trains have now started running on peat, with disastrous results. Gas is not rationed, but the gas company turns the gas on only at certain hours, and the life of the whole community has had to adapt itself to the gas company's time table. Only Government officials, army officers and diplomats are allowed to run cars, doctors only if on urgent cases. But anybody is free to run a car on other means than petrol, and peat-burning cars are now making their appearances, looking somewhat like dinosaurs. Public transport is good, clean and frequent; this applies both to buses and trams. Many people have taken to bicycles, and quite a number of shops have been converted into bicycle-parks.

On the whole the war seems incredibly far away. The atmosphere is rather uncanny. The Irish are extremely hospitable, and time does not seem to matter to them. Parties go on through more than half the night, and arguing for argument's sake thrives.

The Government would like the whole of the country to use the Gaelic language, but only very few people do, though street names and the names of stations are given in Gaelic first and then in English. American films, the British press and wireless, and the constant stream of visitors coming and going are of course a hindrance to the policy of making the people Gaelic-minded. It is an odd coincidence that Eire's Prime Minister cannot write his own name in Gaelic, as his name is of Spanish origin, and Gaelic does not know the letter "V."

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

The Monthly Meeting of the Society was held at Swiss House on Saturday, December 12th. The President, Mr. J. J. Boos, welcomed the large number of members and friends present. Six new members were admitted, viz. Messrs. W. Bachmann, A. de Westenholtz, W. Flory, J. J. Keller, A. Kern and E. Ulmann, bringing the total of admissions for the year to 23.

The Chairman read a letter from Mr. G. Hafner, a founder of the S.M.S., who had for many years taken a very active part in the affairs of the Society. Though in retirement, Mr. Hafner still follows the activities of the S.M.S. with keen interest as evinced by his letter in which he related some reminiscences of the early days of the London Section. It was on Mr. Hafner's suggestion that the Society began to hold its deliberations in English which, as he put it, had previously been carried on in some sort of "Hochdeutsch." The innovation proved so successful that it has never been departed from since. Mr. Hafner has now rejoined the S.M.S. as a Contributing Member.

The Chairman announced that owing to special circumstances the next Monthly Meeting had been postponed to Saturday, January 23rd. The Annual General Meeting, however, will be held as customary on the second Saturday in February, i.e. the 13th.

In winding up the official part of the meeting, the President, on behalf of the Council and the Committee,

extended best wishes to all present for a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The Meeting was followed by a film show. Through the kind offices of Mr. Gottfried Keller, President of the Foreign Press Association, the Society was able to procure four excellent sound films from the Ministry of Information. The first, "Corvettes," showed the little wizards of the ocean coming off the slips and steaming across boisterous seas to join the convoys. It was interesting to see these agile boats shepherding the numerous merchantmen with their invaluable cargoes through the U-Boat infested sea-lanes. There were thrilling moments when the anti-aircraft defences went into action and when the depth charges sent high cascades of water with a roar into the air.

The second film, entitled "Battle of Supplies," gave a graphic account of the enormous supply difficulties facing the United Nations with their external lines of communication. The supply routes across the vast ocean tracts form an infinitely greater problem than the internal lines of communication of the Axis, harassed though the latter may be by constant Allied air attacks. That these problems have not proved insuperable to the Democracies was amply proved by this film.

In the third film, "H.M.S. George V," we gained an insight into the life on board a modern super battleship. There has lately been a great deal of controversy as to the value of these capital ships, but there is little doubt that they still form the backbone of the navy and combine everything which mechanical science and technical skill have been able to contrive.

The fourth and last film of this series, "Troopship," vividly depicted the life of soldiers whilst sailing to distant lands to carry on this world-wide struggle.

The second part of the programme formed a complete contrast to the first. The scenes shifted from a world of strife, with whole Continents engaged in a deadly grapple, to peaceful little Switzerland. By courtesy of the Swiss Federal Railways the Society was able to show two excellent Swiss films.

The first was a silent picture under the heading "Switzerland off the beaten track." It showed the life and sceneries of one of the most picturesque valleys in the Bernese Oberland, the Kienthal. The strenuous but healthy life of the inhabitants was excellently portrayed. We saw lumber jacks at work, bringing the timber down the dangerous mountain streams. Of particular interest was the unearthing of marmots by national guards who are entrusted with the safety of these quaint animals. This was indeed a delightful picture.

The last of the films formed the *pièce de résistance* of the afternoon's performance. It was the première of a talkie in the local dialect entitled "Besuch im Appenzellerland." This was a gem of a picture. We saw

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CITY SWISS CLUB.
FAREWELL LUNCHEON

to

Monsieur CHARLES DE JENNER
(First Councillor of the Swiss Legation)

Saturday, 2nd January, 1943, at 12.30 p.m. for 1 p.m.

at

DORCHESTER HOTEL, LONDON, W.1

Price 7/6 (excl. wines)
payable at table.

Please reserve your seats before December 30th, by card or letter to the Secretary H. BINGGUELY, 167, Clapham Road, S.W.9. Tel. Rel 4150. (Members only no guests).

a climbing party in the rocky Säntis region, the "Appenzeller Landsgemeinde," a "Kuhreigen" and numerous other homely scenes. The music was aptly provided by a "Ländler-Kapelle" which greatly added to the charm of the local inhabitants performing in their attractive national costumes.

The enthusiastic applause from the audience was the best proof that the pictures were greatly appreciated by all present. The Swiss films must have evoked in many a longing for the day when we shall be able to visit our homeland again.

In conclusion, Mr. Boos expressed the thanks of the audience to Mr. Keller and the Swiss Federal Railways for having made possible this most enjoyable afternoon and he particularly paid a warm tribute to Mr. C. Fer, who had so kindly and effectively projected the films on his Cynex Projector, the famous Paillard product. The sound reproduction was excellent and the whole function can be considered an unqualified success.

Despite the present adverse conditions, the Society can look back on a year of fruitful activities. The support from the members has been gratifying and the Council and Committee hope that many friends of the Society will respond to the appeal for new members so that the Society may continue its work in the educational and professional spheres and thus go from strength to strength.

W.B.

THE LONDON SWISS PHILATELIC SOCIETY.

The Committee is pleased to report that the announcement in the Swiss Observer has met with good response. The Society will hold its first meeting on Saturday, January 2nd, 1943, at 2.30 p.m., at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

We hope to go to press with our next issue on January 29th, 1943.

We are much obliged to the following subscribers who have added to the usual rates welcome amounts towards our increasing production costs: F. Beyli,

L. Guggenheim, O. Frei, E. Winzeler, A. Bolliger, E. Spleiss, G. Hafner, J. Zimmermann, E. Etter, J. L. Veil, C. J. Bernheim, F. G. Sommer, G. Ferrari, W. Mauch, E. Strauli, M. Bonnet, A. L. Borel, Miss M. Paur, A. P. Cima.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, 19th December, 1942, at 2.45 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1, followed by Mr. G. Keller's "Comment on Current Events."

Saturday, 2nd January, at 1 p.m. — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting. Farewell Luncheon to M. de Jenner, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Saturday, 2nd January, at 2.30 p.m. — London Swiss Philatelic Society — Meeting at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, 9th January, at 2.45 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Annual General Meeting at the "Dorchester Hotel," Park Lane, W.1, Deanery Street Entrance, to be preceded by a luncheon at 1.15 p.m.

Saturday, 23rd January, 1943, at 2.30 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society Ltd. — Monthly Meeting, at Swiss House, 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Saturday, 23rd January, 1943, at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Swiss Film Show, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

STOP PRESS.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE
SWISS MINISTER.**

The end of 1942 finds Switzerland and its people more united than ever and inflexibly decided to maintain the traditions of liberty and freedom which are part of our common heritage.

Although circumstances have not always permitted the close contact which it is my desire to have with the Swiss Colony enjoying this great country's hospitality I am particularly glad of this opportunity of greeting all my compatriots and to send them my sincere wishes for Xmas and the New Year.

W. THURNHEER.