

Father Christmas on 443 meters

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FATHER CHRISTMAS ON 443 METERS.

The Swiss Radio Station Sottens (Lausanne) has for some time broadcast a weekly feature which deserves to be better known. They call it "La Chaîne du Bonheur" (The Chain of Happiness). It works as follows:—

Every week a listener is allowed to express a charitable wish. The other members of the radio audience try their best to fulfil it. The person or organisation who has, according to his or their means, contributed most to the realisation of this weekly good deed has the privilege to pronounce a similar wish the following week. It is, therefore, not always the one who provides the most money or goods who is selected a week later to make a fresh suggestion, but the one who makes the biggest sacrifice. The scheme is best explained by means of a few examples.

Some time ago a listener who had heard that a large number of Swiss families could not afford to buy fuel for the coming Winter suggested they should be helped. Messrs. Nordman and Rollan of Radio Lausanne broadcast this wish, asking school-children and boy scouts to collect wood in the forest. The result was excellent: 75 tons of wood were gathered and distributed to the needy families. The various Swiss Haulage Contractors helped also by transporting the gift free of charge. The man who contributed most in this case was a woodcutter in the mountains. He was, therefore, chosen to express a wish in his turn. He suggested that the poorer patients in the famous T.B. Sanatorias should be helped. And so the Chain goes on. Whilst this broadcast feature comes from Lausanne, the good deed which it tries very successfully to inspire is not always restricted to Switzerland; for instance, a listener heard that the children of Toulon in France were short of milk, cots, blankets and even teats. He suggested, therefore, that Radio Lausanne should send out a call for help. Within a week this French town was supplied with a very considerable amount of the articles it needed, including a large quantity of tinned milk.

Some time ago the metal workers of Geneva through their Union asked the employers for a wage supplement to cover the increased cost of living. It appears that the various firms offered a rise of 6/- a month. Needless to say, the workers, to put it mildly, were very disappointed. However, instead of refusing the offer or striking, they decided to present this extra 6/- to the "Chaîne du Bonheur" and suggested it

should be used to buy a wedding present for Her Royal Highness, Princess Elizabeth. Radio Lausanne accepted this wish. Messrs. Nordman and Rollan offered to make arrangements for 20 children from England to have a month free holiday in Switzerland. Her Royal Highness graciously accepted this gift, and the twenty happy youngsters left for Geneva by Swissair. A well-known Swiss firm who supplies the world with milk products, very kindly presented the children with a free ticket each. The 5 girls and 15 boys were selected by the Soldiers', Sailors, and Airmens' Families Association. They are mostly orphans whose fathers died for their country at Dunkirk, Arnhem and in the Navy. They will escape the murky London Winter and, no doubt, have a happy time and a jolly Christmas on the sunny and snow-clad slopes of the French Swiss mountains. They are all staying with English-speaking Swiss families, 10 at Montreux, 5 at Château d'Oex and 5 at Cergnat, a small village near Leysin. After a month they will return to this country and, if Radio Lausanne have their "wish," be replaced by another batch.

This happy idea of doing good by Radio, especially in such a charming way in which the word charity is not even mentioned, deserves every support and encouragement. Perhaps at some time to come other countries may imitate it. If by one step further it could be extended to the whole of Europe, it would, no doubt, relieve a great deal of the present distress and misery.

COLLEGE OF THE SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

We have been informed of the following Evening Classes, which will take place at "Swiss House," 35, Fitzroy Square, W.1:

English Elementary: Wednesdays from 6—7.30 p.m., beginning January 7th, 1948.

English Intermediate: Wednesdays from 6—7.30 p.m., beginning January 7th, 1948.

English Advanced: Thursdays from 6—7.30 p.m., beginning January 8th, 1948.

Advanced English Commercial Correspondence: Tuesdays from 6—7.30 p.m., beginning January 6th, 1948.

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