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SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY LTD.

The Monthly Meeting was held at Swiss House on Saturday afternoon, December 9th. Mr. J. J. Boos, President, was in the Chair and over thirty members were present. It is a source of gratification to the President and the Council that a large number of members continue to take an active and keen interest in the Society's endeavours to keep the flag flying. Although the present situation has made it necessary to curtail the activities very considerably, it is in difficult times like these that support is wanted more than ever and by meeting regularly the interest is kept alive and in this respect members have not failed to respond to the President's appeal.

There was no further progress to report regarding the sub-letting of Swiss House, but the President mentioned that there were still hopes of negotiations before the end of the year and so long as the possibility of letting Swiss House as a whole exists, the Council members consulted did not think it expedient to sub-let in parts.

The President recalled the arrangements for the Swiss Minister's departure and expressed the hope that many of the members would be present at the farewell dinner.

In answer to the recent appeal made by the Swiss Benevolent Society who have to meet many additional calls for assistance, and at the same time are deprived of the usual contributions from collections at dinners, etc., it was decided to make a donation of £50.— towards their funds.

The Meeting further decided to contribute £20.— towards the annual Christmas collection of the S.K.V., the proceeds of which this year are destined for needy families of members in active service in Switzerland.

To the pleasant surprise of all present, trays of glasses of Neuchâtel and Dôle were then brought in, the gift of the President, who expressed thanks for the numerous messages of congratulation he and his wife had received on the occasion of their recent wedding. All then joined in the toast of Mrs. Boos and the President.

Messrs. J. Oertli and R. Senn, who had only recently returned from military service in Switzerland, were then called upon by the President to give their impressions. Mr. Oertli related his experiences as officer in charge of sentry posts at Bergün, Filisur, Tiefencastel and the many bridges and tunnels in the valleys of the Wiese and Albula. While he enjoyed the tours, often on foot, up and down the picturesque valleys, there was more than one thrill, when in the middle of the night he was approaching sentries with loaded rifles, whose challenge he could hear no more than his own shouts, all human voices being drowned in the roar of the waters below and the noise of the wind in the trees above. Only when he had approached so near as to be held up by a rifle being prodded in his ribs could he make himself known in the pitch darkness of the night. — Later he was in charge of auxiliary (Hilfsdienst) soldiers, who, although not used to the strenuous service, pulled through by sheer determination to do their part in serving their country. — Later still he was transferred to Lucerne to be trained

with the modern weapons introduced in recent years. There and earlier on he had met many an old face of the times of military service during the Great War and his early days in London as one of the first students of the College, which was then in Henrietta Street. His most striking impression was the determination and good humour of the Swiss soldiers, to many of whom the absence from work and family meant a great sacrifice.

Mr. Senn then gave an account of his experiences. He had also travelled on the special train via Le Havre and Vallorbe and together with the Hon. Secretary of the S.M.S., Mr. Max Schneider, he went to Basle where brand new uniforms were issued to them. They were both sent to the headquarters (Mannschaftsdepot) of the 4th Division, where they received a fortnight's training before being sent to their units.

While at the depot they had all enjoyed the comfortable quarters and musical evenings. His regiment was stationed in the wooded valleys of the Jura and he with a few others was billeted in an isolated farmhouse. There they had to work hard from early morning with spade, pickaxe and saw, building defence works. The intermittent rainfall from end of September right through to November and inches of snow made things no easier. — He was fortunate enough to visit with his regiment the National Exhibition (Landesausstellung) on two occasions. After a somewhat prolonged journey, which was not without funny and adventurous incidents, he reached London. — Both speakers found a very appreciative audience and

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were heartily applauded on the conclusion of their respective talks. — It was decided to have a Christmas parcel despatched to Mr. Max Schneider who is still in service and may not be back in London for some time.

This terminated a very enjoyable meeting and many stayed on to have a chat and a game of cards.

W.B.

DAHEIME.

D'r Tag wicht sacht,
D'Arbeit isch gmacht.
I mach Fürebe,
Tue s'Wärchzüg versorge,
Eile im Nu
Mim Heimeli zue.
Ke B'suech umenang
Zwe Stüehl näebenand,
Bim Lampeschyn
Am warme Kamin,
Paar Wörtli g'seit,
Was g'hört, was geht,
As Buech und a Huch,
Vo Pfyfeli Ruch.
A chlyne Ruck,
A Händedruck,
Nüt meh, nur as Hei,
Vo glückliche Zwei,
B'hüet Gott dä Säge
Da Himmel uf Erde.

H.E.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

W. Gradman, J. Jenny, J. D. Bernoulli, J. Graf, J. Weil, P. Lansel, W. E. Schlumpf, J. Manzoni, H. Muller, O. Muller, T. Siegfried, O. Wuest, J. Trachsel, S. Jeker, J. Pfaendler, W. Tomlin, M. Lochinger, J. E. Zaeslin, Swiss Consular Agent (Balloch), Swiss Club (Balloch).

LETTER BOX.

W. R. and other subscribers. — The S.O. is posted regularly every Friday afternoon. We can, of course, not account for non- or irregular delivery which may be due to a new postman not being familiar with the locality. We have recently had an instance where the S.O. was dropped into a letter-box somewhere next door which happened to be an evacuated house.

Miss A. C. — We are very sorry that we dare not post the prints you sent us to your sister in Switzerland. If you had sent us the original publication there would not have been any difficulty but small pieces cut out without disclosing the origin cannot be forwarded.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

The last monthly meeting of the year took place on December 5th, at Pagani's Restaurant, and it is gratifying to the Committee to find that members were once more supporting their endeavours irrespective of the black-out.

Numerous distinguished guests were there, and a full report of this very successful meeting will appear in our next issue.

Bee.

SWISS MINISTER'S RETIREMENT.

The Applications for dinner tickets have been so enormous, in fact they have exceeded all expectations of the Committee, with the result that some late applicants had unfortunately to be turned down, which is greatly regretted.

This important event for the Swiss Colony in Great Britain will be fully reported in our next issue, and as no doubt a good many of our compatriots will wish to obtain extra copies, we strongly urge them to send us their order for extra copies immediately.

We also suggest that now is a very good time to win new subscribers to the "Swiss Observer" which does such excellent service in holding all of us Swiss together. See how many names you can get.

Bee.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Saturday, December 16th, at 1.30 p.m. — Nouvelle Société Helvétique — Monthly Meeting — at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

Thursday, December 21st, at 6.30 — Swiss Y.M.C.A. — Xmas Celebration — at 12, Bateman Street, Soho, W.

Tuesday, December 26th, at 8.30 — Helvetia Club — Boxing-Day Ball — at 1, Gerrard Place, W.

Sunday, December 31st, at 8.30 — Helvetia Club — New-Year's Eve Ball — at 1, Gerrard Place, W.1.

Tuesday, January 2nd, at 5.30 — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W.1.

Divine Services.

Dimanche 17 Décembre 1939: 3e dimanche de l'Avent: à **Eglise Suisse**, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2.

11h. Culte M. M. Pradervand.

11h. Ecole du dimanche.

5h. Culte au Foyer Suisse, 15, Bedford Way, W.C.1.
(Ce culte remplace le culte du soir.)

Sonntag, den 17. Dezember 1939: 3. Advent: in der **Schweizerkirche**, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

Gottesdienst um 11 Uhr morgens B. Segal.

Pour tout ce qui concerne le ministère pastoral, prière de s'adresser à Monsieur le pasteur Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View Road, N.4. (Téléphone Mountview 5003). Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de 11-12h.30.

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