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A NEW SWISS FILM.

"THE LAST CHANCE."

(Empire Theatre, Leicester Square)

Until recently very little has been heard of the Swiss Film Industry; those films which were shown from time to time in this country, failed to attract the attention of the general public. Most of them bore the too pronounced cachet of "propaganda films," others again were hardly suitable, owing to their national character, to be shown outside our country.

Our readers will, no doubt, remember the excellent film "Marie-Louise," which had such a long and successful run at the Academy Theatre recently. We are now to have the pleasure of viewing an even finer production.

The Praesens Film Co. Ltd. in Zurich some time ago produced a film called "The Last Chance," which has had a tremendous success both on the Continent and in America. It has had a long run on Broadway, and was exceedingly well received both by the Press and the public. This film, which, in the U.S.A. and in this country is handled by Metro Goldwyn Mayer, was shown a few days ago to the Press, and will be shown at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, W.1, from February 1st, 1946, onwards. One American film critic has called it "The greatest advance in film technique since talkies appeared." It is interesting to note that in the yearly U.S.A. competition for the best film of the year, "The Last Chance" has a prominent place in the first ten outstanding productions during 1945.

The story is by Richard Schweizer, and is quite a simple one; it has been handled with consummate skill by the Producer, L. Wechsler, and his Director, Leopold Lindtberg. The photography is exquisite, and the Cameraman, E. Berna, is to be congratulated on an outstanding achievement, even when compared with Hollywood standards.

The film literally starts with a "bang." Our readers will recall that after the collapse of Italy, the Germans endeavoured to evacuate Allied prisoners of war back to Germany using the route over the Brenner Pass. The film starts off by showing an attack on one of these convoys by Allied bombers, during the night; making use of temporary confusion some of the prisoners manage to escape. A British lieutenant and an American sergeant succeed in getting away, and are starting on their long and adventurous trek to the Swiss frontier. On their way thither, they meet a contingent of civilian refugees of various nationalities and creeds, who are trying to escape from the clutches of the Gestapo. How these hounded victims of race-hatred and persecution reach the safe haven of Switzerland after the many thrilling adventures, would not be fair to tell. You must see for yourself, and we can assure you that you will not be disappointed.

The film has an International appeal; it is a story of unbelievable hardships and mental agony endured by people whose political opinion or creed, or race, has made them the target for relentless persecution down to the Ages, and which has certainly reached the apex of ruthlessness during the rule of the Swastika over most of Europe in this last war.

It would in every way be desirable for all the delegates to the United Nations Conference to see this film. Nothing could better demonstrate the necessity of

founding an European family of nations, a union which is based on respect for the individual human being. The thin snow covered ridge over which this unhappy flotsam and jetsam of humanity eventually reaches Switzerland, is symbolical.

Do not miss this outstanding Film, which is a splendid testimonial to the Swiss Film Industry.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY.

Despite the inclemency of the weather, there was a fair attendance at the Monthly Meeting of the Society, held at Swiss House, on Wednesday, January 9th.

It was with great regret that the President informed the meeting of the untimely death of our member, Mr. O. Brandenberg, late Chief Accountant of the Swiss Bank Corporation. The departed, who joined the S.M.S. as an Active Member in 1920, succumbed to a long and painful illness bravely borne, and the members rose in silence to pay him their last tribute.

Two new members, Messrs. A. Diserens and E. P. R. Maeder, were elected and there were no resignations. The remainder of the Agenda, which was speedily dealt with, was confined to matters of routine. Before closing the official part, the Chairman referred to the Annual General Meeting, to be held at Swiss House on Saturday, February 23rd, at 2.30 p.m. With a gradual return to the Society's normal activities, particularly in the educational sphere, it will be necessary to bring the various Committees up to full strength. The election will therefore be of particular importance and nominations will be invited in due course. Light refreshment will be served by the Lady Members.

Most of those present then adjourned to the Members' Room where a "Jass" Drive was soon in progress, the competition being won by Mr. J. Frei, closely followed by Messrs. Hauwyler, Streit, Wyss and Flueckiger, who also obtained prizes. Thus came to a close a most enjoyable evening.

W.B.

CAROL MARCHAND'S XMAS PARTY.

One hundred and fifty children, between the age of seven and twelve, and drawn from the Bromley district, were invited to a Xmas Party by Carol Marchand, the four year old daughter of the late Pilot Officer Roy Marchand, only son of Mr. and Mrs. René Marchand, of Hayes Lane, Bromley. All the 150 children who attended had lost parents or loved ones in the war.

The party, which was held at the Royal Bell Hotel, Bromley, was given by Carol, in memory of her father, who was shot down and killed during the Battle of Britain. His "bag" of German planes was nine, plus seven probables. Roy Marchand flew in the famous 73rd Squadron with Cobber Kain.

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