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CITY SWISS CLUB. "Soirée Familiale".

Whilst the ordinary monthly meetings and "Jass", Bridge and Canasta evenings are reserved for "Gentlemen only", the ladies at the occasional "Soirées Familiales" are always most welcome. It was, therefore, a pleasure to see so many of them at the Dorchester Hotel on Wednesday, March the 20th.

The ante-room, where cocktails were served, was thronged with attractive ladies — most of whom wore the latest creations of "haute couture" — and "well-groomed" gentlemen.

When the company was bidden to adjourn to the Orchid Room for dinner everyone was pleasantly surprised to see the wonderful flower arrangements, more sumptuous than ever, no doubt, as a special compliment to the ladies. Indeed spring-time was in the air.

Towards the end of the dinner, and after the customary toasts, the President, Mr. Ch. Gysin, welcomed the various guests — amongst them Monsieur J. J. de Tribolet, 1st Counsellor of Legation, and Madame de Tribolet, Monsieur R. Faessler, Counsellor of Legation, and Madame Faessler, Dr. E. M. Bircher, Press Counsellor, Mr. J. Huber, Consul, and Mrs. Huber, Mr. & Mrs. K. Potter, and the representatives of the Swiss churches in London — ending by paying a touching compliment to all the ladies present. The excellent dinner served greatly helped in creating an atmosphere of geniality.

After a short interval two documentary films, "African Heritage" and "West Australian Adventure", were shown, preceded by a short talk on the Petroleum Industry by Mr. K. Potter, Public Relations Officer of the Regent Oil Company Ltd.

The first film, photographed in brilliant colours, brought us in contact with one of the world's oldest cultures — a culture which is gradually being integrated into the civilisation of the twentieth century. In this true anthropological study we saw the East African building his boats in the way that it has been done for centuries. Traditional methods of pottery making, basket weaving and the fashioning of hunting weapons were recorded perhaps for the last time on film before they disappear for ever. Ceremonial dances and folk music added to the beauty and intensity of the film. A first-class informative commentary increased the film's interest and value.

The second film, "West Australian Adventure", is the historical record of the first oil exploratory venture in Western Australia. Into a vast desert-like land devoid of roads and human habitation, geologists, drillers and engineers come to carry out the search. The great logistical problem of bringing equipment in by way of a beachhead landing at Learmouth and the exciting overland haul of vast quantities of equipment from Perth contributed to the great interest of this film. We saw the drill biting into the sandy earth and finally the flow of the first oil discovered in Western Australia, only to be followed by disappointment as subsequent wells proved to be dry.

Before the films were shown, Mr. K. Potter gave us a most lucid talk concerning the "Early History of the Oil Industry".

The early uses of petroleum (Rock oil) throughout the centuries were briefly outlined, leading up to the

point when Mr. Bisel leased 100 acres of land in North America and formed the Pennsylvanian Rock Oil Company in 1854 to supply crude oil for medicinal purposes. Four years later, in 1859, he employed an engineer, Mr. Drake, to drill for oil on his land. The first well was successful and oil was found at 69 ft.

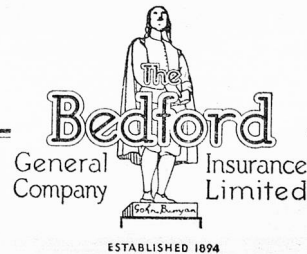
From 1859 to 1911 the development of the Oil Industry was then traced. During these fifty-two years Mr. John D. Rockefeller and Mr. Clark, his partner, developed the Standard Oil Company after they had sold their fruit and vegetable brokerage business in Cleveland and had built their first Refinery with all their available capital of \$4,000.

Since the first well was drilled in America, the speaker said, over 1½ million more wells have been drilled, 18,000 in Venezuela, and 1,500 in the Middle East. The deepest well so far drilled is in Louisiana, and it is 4½ miles deep. We learned that the world production of crude oil, outside of the Iron Curtain, approximates to the average daily flow of the Thames at Teddington.

Finally, some of the products of crude oil mentioned, other than fuel and lubricants, were the following: paint, metal polish, soap, explosives, medicinal ointments, chewing gum, wax polish, insecticides, printing ink, fertilizers and asphalt.

On the conclusion of this interesting talk Mr. Potter was loudly cheered, and the President, on behalf of the audience, thanked him and his colleague very heartily for having given us such an enjoyable evening.

The "Soirée Familiale" was, again, a great success. The committee, and especially Mr. Robert J. Keller, who made the arrangements, are to be congratulated on their endeavours. *ST.*



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