

# The alpine winter

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The Fair occupies two extensive park areas on both shores of the beautiful lake of Zurich. Trolleys, buses, boats and even an aerial railway will convey visitors from one Exposition centre to the other, with displays covering the life and work of the Swiss people, their history and culture from every angle. Zurich itself is a fascinating city and is within easy reach from all parts of Switzerland, as well as from all countries in Europe.

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### Die Schweiz und die internationale Lage.

Im Rahmen einer Vortragsveranstaltung der bernischen Bauern-, Gewerbe- und Buergerpartei sprach Nationalrat Dr. Feldmann ueber das Thema "Die internationale Lage und die Schweiz." In etwa zweistueendigen Ausfuehrungen entwarf der Redner ein Bild von der aussenpolitischen Lage. Er bezeichnet sie als gespannt und in fortgesetzter Verschaeerfung begriffen. Europa stehe vor einer Spaltung der Grossmaechte in zwei verschiedene Lager, und fuer die kleinen Staaten bestehe die Gefahr, in eines dieser Lager eingespannt zu werden. Der Redner kam dann auf die September-Ereignisse zu sprechen und wuerdigte kurz die letzten Erklaerungen Hitlers und Mussolinis ueber die gegenseitige Solidaritaet. Er bezeichnet die Erklaerung, die Chamberlain am 6. Februar im Unterhaus ueber die englisch-franzoesische Zusammenarbeit abgegeben hat, als die erste deutliche Antwort Englands auf die Politik der Achsenmaechte.

Fuer die Schweiz ergebe sich aus der politischen Lage die Notwendigkeit, fuer ihre eigene Sicherheit zu sorgen. Aussenpolitisch habe die Schweiz die Schlussfolgerungen aus der gegenwaertigen Situation bereits gezogen, indem sie ihre integrale Neutralitaet vom Voelkerbund zurueckverlangt und am 14. Mai 1938 zurueckerhalten habe, Deutschland und Italien, die dem Voelkerbund nicht mehr angeh hoeren, haetten der Schweiz die Anerkennung ihrer absoluten Neutralitaet ebenfalls zugesichert. Der Redner streifte dann in diesem Zusammenhang auch die von auslaendischer Seite aufgeworfene Frage, ob die Neutralitaet des Landes auch eine Neutralitaet des Buergers und der Presse bedinge und verneinte sie mit grosser Entschiedenheit.

Die Freiheit der Gesinnung und der Meinungsaeusserung sei ein Stueck der schweizerischen Unabhaengigkeit und muesse mit allen Mitteln verteidigt werden. Sie verlange aber zugleich Verantwortungsgefuehl und nationale Disziplin, und zwar mit Ruecksicht auf die Interessen des eigenen Landes. Auch militaerisch habe die Schweiz alle Massnahmen getroffen und eine wehrhafte und gut ausgeruestete Armee geschaffen, die in der Lage sei, allen Eventualitaeten zu begegnen.

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### THE ALPINE WINTER.

Winter Sport really dates from 1865, the year in which the Matterhorn was conquered, and the year in which Dr. Spengler, a well-known German doctor, startled the world by proclaiming that the dry cold air of the Alpine winter was of the utmost benefit to sufferers from tuberculosis. Little did the good doctor realise that those who visited the Alps in search of sport would soon outnumber by ten to one the invalids who flocked to Switzerland in search of health.

For one need not be a consumptive to benefit by a few weeks among the winter Alps. The man who is run-down and jaded, and suffering from the wear and tear of city life, will find in the Alpine air, and in the mid-winter sun, a sovereign alchemist. As the train begins to climb from the Swiss plains, he will notice the sudden thinning of the mists which lie heavy on lake and town. Suddenly the thick grey curtain will be swept aside, and he will see the sun; not the dim, water globe of the English winter sky, but a radiant orb, the authentic source of light and heat and health.

Winter is a season of contrasts. The thermometer in the shade may be recording an incredible number of degrees of frost, but a few yards off on the rink, a man is smoking a cigarette in his shirt-sleeves.

In the depths of winter you will see children, who are undergoing the sun cure, running about in the shore clad in nothing but a pair of wooden shoes. Both invalids and healthy folk benefit from the pure air and solar radiation which make the climate of the winter in Switzerland unrivalled in its therapeutic value.

Tobogganing is the oldest of winter sports, but it has suffered severely from the competition of ski-ing. The world-famous Cresta Run at St. Moritz still continues to attract a small, select group of enthusiasts, and there are skeleton runs and bobsleigh runs at almost all the Alpine centres. Bobsleigh races, which are held weekly at most centres, are in some ways the most thrilling of all forms of winter sport.

The Swiss ice rinks are famous throughout the world; for the Swiss have learned the art of keeping an ice-rink in perfect condition. The Swiss ice-men have carried this craft to a high pitch of perfection.

Curling is as popular as ever, and has suffered far less than skating from the competition of ski-ing. There are, of course, very few young curlers, but even the most ardent of ski-runners, when he reaches the forties or the early fifties often prefers a game of curling after tea to the alternative of climbing another thousand feet or so for the run down before dinner.

Ice hockey is also very popular. The Oxford and Cambridge Ice Hockey Match is an annual feature at St. Moritz. At most Swiss centres there are special rinks reserved for ice hockey.

But, of course, by far the most popular of all winter sports, is ski-ing. Skis were introduced into Switzerland in the eighties, but the popularity of ski-ing in Switzerland only dates from the late nineties, and from the opening years of the present century. There were many who prophesied that ski-ing would prove to be a temporary boom, like roller-skating.

They were wrong. Once a ski-runner, always a ski-runner. Every year, the number of those who ski increases. The Ski Club of Great Britain reports an annual increase of between four and seven hundred members.

It is not difficult to understand the popularity of ski-ing. The ski-runner is not confined to rinks or toboggan runs. His skis are the key to the winter Alps. He can wander through forests deep in snow and up to the final snow slopes of the great Alpine peaks. A ski track has been cut to the actual crest of the Dom (14,942 ft.), the highest peak entirely in Switzerland, since Monte Rosa is partly in Italy. Indeed, there are few Alpine giants which have not been climbed in winter with the assistance of ski; Monte Rosa, the Jungfrau, and Piz Bernina; to name but a few.

Ski-ing, therefore, appeals to all those who enjoy exploration and wandering, and the adventure of the hills. But skis are more than a means to an end, something more than a convenient mode of locomotion among the hills and mountains in winter. "Ski are the simplest of all the servants of speed," writes the author of "The Mountains of Youth". "The pioneers carved a plank from mountain ash and attached it to their feet by a rough leather thong. A man and his horse are two personalities, but an expert ski-runner and his ski form an indivisible unit. The motorist imposes his will through an elaborate mechanism of pedals and levers, but the ski seem to belong to their owner just as wings belong to the bird, so intimate is the connection, so instantaneous their response to the command of mind and body. No form of swift movement gives a sense of personal control so complete.

"Ski-ing is at once simple and subtle. It is simple because the movement owes nothing to machinery; between the ski-runner and the hillside there is nothing but the sensitive ash which responds to every change of rhythm in the slope. It is subtle because the snow is subtle... The hills are never the same, and the snow is never the same. Every run is a new discovery, every snowfall a new creation."

And then there is ski-jumping, the most dramatic and the most spectacular of all forms of athletic sport. The world record stands at over 70 metres, and this is equivalent to 230 feet measured in a straight line from the platform where the jumper launches himself into space, to the steep slope where his ski again strike the ground.

Ski-ing is easy to learn. An active man can pick up sufficient technique in a few days to enjoy short tours, and a novice who has been well taught should be able to carry out any expeditions at the

end of his first season. It is, of course, another matter to become a finished expert, but the great charm of ski-ing is due to the fact that its chief reward is not only for the elect, but for the vast multitude of average runners. For a man need not win the Roberts of Kandahar Race or jump sixty metres to know the joys of wide horizons and the tranquil beauty of winter summits, or the glorious run back to the valley through perfect powder snow.

There is no country in the world which provides better ski-ing than Switzerland. The smooth sloping pasture lands, the grazing grounds of cattle in summer, are ideally adapted to ski-ing. Steep slopes and dense forests are, of course, highly unsuitable, and many a ski-runner who has graduated in America or Canada has hardly been able to contain his astonishment and his envy at his first sight of Alpine ski-ing grounds.

The glaciers provide good ski-ing throughout the summer; indeed, the best glacier ski-ing is to be obtained in May and June, and an increasing number of ski-runners are making a regular habit of visiting the Alps, both at Christmas, Easter and at Whitsun.

I have said nothing about the hotels, for it is unnecessary to praise Swiss hotels. There is no country in the world in which better provision is made for the comfort of guests than Switzerland.

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To CHILDREN OF SWISS PARENTS:

Pleasure, and probably a great deal of fun, would be assured to children desirous of corresponding with pen-friends in Switzerland. If interested, please write a nice little letter, giving age and address, and send it to : AUSLANDSCHWEIZERWERK der N.H.G., Bundesgasse 36 BERN, Switzerland, or else direct to the Secretary, Mr. W. Ungemuth, Clarence Rd., Northcote, Auckland, N4., who will be pleased to re-direct the mail.

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AN APPEAL TO MEMBERS:

The first half of our financial year has already lapsed and we find to our regret, that numerous members have not yet paid their subscription. As stated previously, it is not an easy task to carry on the organisation of the Society successfully, without the necessary co-operation of the members. In fairness to our endeavours we must ask defaulting members to meet the small financial responsibility, and remit as soon as ever possible.

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INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES IN SWITZERLAND (contd.)

Mention should be made of all the different sorts of trimmings for blouses, gowns, underwear, etc. (cotton, silk, woollen, tulle) and of embroidered squares for curtains, bedspreads, table-cloths, etc. Embroidery on tulle and lace of all kinds (cotton, silk, wool or metal threads) are specialities of St. Gall and are employed mainly for lingerie. Nor should the hand embroidery from Appenzell be overlooked.

(d) Woollens: The woollen industry has been seated in Switzerland for several centuries and has attained a great development; some 9,300 hands were employed in 1936. In view of the small importance of the home sheep-rearing industry, the woollen industry relies essentially on foreign countries for its supplies of raw material.

Wool spinning (combed and carded) employs a total of about 240,000 spindles. The industry produces woollen threads for weaving, knitting, the hosiery houses and mills producing other kinds of woollen articles.

Weaving of woollen textiles, which also includes manufacture of combed and carded woollens, cloths, coverings, carpets and felt, employs about 3,800 looms. Manufacture also includes fine weaves for ladies' gowns, light woollen and part-woollen stuffs for women's and men's wear, less fine weaves, "loden" (popular in Germany for sports jackets and coats), coverings, carpets and felts. (TO BE CONTINUED).

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- TONY'S SWISS CAKE SHOP, 205, Fendalton Rd. Christchurch (T. Komminoth) has something quite different in cakes. Basler Leckerli a speciality, 2/-lb. TRY THEM!

CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the Secretary, W. UNGEMUTH, Clarence Rd., Northcote, Auckland, N4.