

# Letter from Switzerland

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Proprietor of the Hotel Bellvue, Engelberg. The Editor of the British Ski Year Book and Honorary Member of the Ski Club of Great Britain, Mr. Arnold Lunn, has personally presented him with a medallion in recognition of his great merits in strengthening the Anglo-Swiss ski friendship.

#### **Death of Well-known Swiss Composer, Carlo Boller.**

One of the best-known—and best-loved—composers in French-speaking Switzerland, Carlo Boller, has died suddenly. He was in charge of many choral societies, and his passing has been a loss to singers throughout the whole of Switzerland. He founded and directed, among many others, the celebrated "Chanson de Montreux," with which he has made many successful tours of Europe. Carlo Boller studied composition and conducting in Paris, under Vincent d'Indy, and won first prize for conducting at the "Schola Cantorum." Last winter he was invited to conduct the Nice-Cote d'Azur Orchestra.

Carlo Boller has an important place in the history of Swiss music: he wrote and adapted numerous songs and ballads for young and old, and for mixed choirs, he composed many festivals (the music of the last Narcissus Festival at Montreux, "Hades et Core," on a poem by R. L. Piachaud, with Clotilde Sakharoff, was his), and oratorios. His melodious and harmonious style fitted in perfectly with the need for musical expression so typically Swiss, and after the deaths of Jaques-Dalcroze and Gustave Doret—and, more recently the Abbe Bovet—Carlo Boller had become the most famed interpreter of folklore in French Switzerland.

#### **Travel Agencies in Britain can now Sell Tickets for Funiculars, Ski Lifts and Other Transport in Switzerland.**

The Swiss tourist and hotel organisations have arranged that tickets for funiculars, ski lifts and other transport in Switzerland can be bought at travel agencies in Britain and paid for in sterling. This would save the average British skier at least £1 a day of his basic £25 allowance.

#### **The "Gotthard White Arrow."**

A new Swiss express train called the "Gotthard White Arrow" will run every Sunday from Milan to the Gotthard. This will facilitate the trip of skiing resorts on the Gotthard for Italian sports enthusiasts. The trip was made possible through the courtesy of the Italian National Railways. It will take four hours from Milan to Andermatt.

#### **The Motorisation of the Swiss Agriculture.**

Agriculture in Switzerland is becoming more mechanised. There are now three times as many agricultural machines as there were in 1939.

At present, approximately 50,000 tractors and reaping machines are in use. These numbers become still more significant if one considers the fact that Switzerland is a very small country and that its productive surface is only a little more than six million acres.

#### **The Part Played by Swiss Reinsurance Societies in the World.**

About one-fourth of all contracts for reinsurance in the world are made with Swiss insurance companies. This places Switzerland second only to England. Payments on premiums to Swiss insurance companies amount every year to more than two billion francs, half of which are premiums for reinsurance. It is significant that 60 per cent. of this amount comes from foreign countries.

#### **An Interesting Experiment in Zurich.**

A new experiment in Zurich may avoid many accidents caused by ice and snow on the streets, and involves the heating of the street surface. A heating surface was installed three centimetres below the surface of a sidewalk which melted all snow and ice on the surface. Insulation was not necessary since the voltage was very low. The electricity used was 50 to 100 watts per square metre, and it seemed that any surface could be heated in such a manner.

### **LETTER FROM SWITZERLAND**

*(Continued from last issue)*

Moreover, about half of Switzerland's industrial concerns make a contribution to the expenses incurred by the birth of a child, either in the form of financial help or the gift of the layette. Nursery schools have been set up in many places, as well as class-rooms where school children may come and do their homework while waiting for their parents to finish work. These day-nurseries are very pleasant in appearance and run on the most modern lines.

Firms give particular attention to the training of apprentices. The theoretical and practical instruction given to future workers is very complete, and the running of special workshops, the salaries of the instructors and the training are not negligible items in the budgets of firms.

Let us also draw attention to the important role played by welfare officers in the lives of Swiss workers. At the present moment, almost all firms of a certain standing employ one or more welfare officers. The sums placed at their disposal vary according to the factories; one well-known Swiss firm, for example, allots 40,000 Swiss francs annually to welfare work.

#### **Holidays and Recreation**

At the present moment, almost all men and women workers enjoy holidays with pay, gener-

ally for a period of two weeks. With regard to spare-time activities, many firms also set aside large sums to provide entertainment and sports facilities for their workers.

Moreover, certain firms allow their women workers who have homes to run in addition to their work at the factory, to go home half an hour and sometimes even an hour before noon in order to prepare the mid-day meal for the family. The same favour is granted to the older members of the staff, whose working day is shortened by half an hour without there being any corresponding decrease in pay.

A great number of firms possess a canteen, or a clubroom, where meals are served at reasonable prices, the management contributing to a large extent to their financing. In the metal and machinery industry, for example, there are about a hundred of these establishments. Sometimes they even constitute an additional source of income for the workers, who sell the vegetables and fruits from their gardens to these canteens.

Naturally not all employers make use of all these possibilities for the welfare of their workers. But in most cases, they form a whole, a sure guarantee of the social peace which reigns throughout Switzerland.

Finally let us point out that the wages of workers and employees are comparatively high and consequently allow them a relatively high purchasing power. It is generally estimated that the effective salary of the Swiss worker is about 25 per cent. greater than it was before the war.

### NOTICE CONCERNING SWISS CALENDARS FOR 1953

To enable our compatriots to procure a pictorial calendar from Switzerland for 1953, the Consulate is prepared to pass a collective order. Applicants are asked to write to the Swiss Consulate, P.O. Box 386, Wellington, C.1, and to remit at the same time the amount in question. The following calendars are offered:—

- (a) THE ALPINE CALENDAR, 1953 (Stehli), price 9/-. Size 11½ in. x 11 in., with twelve monthly sheets, each showing a fine Swiss scene in natural colour lithography. This calendar is also published in German under the title "Berge and Taeler der Schweiz."
- (b) SWITZERLAND, 1953 (Novos), price 10/-. This calendar can also be had in German, "Die Schweiz," and in French, "Ma Patrie."

Orders for these calendars will be received until August 15th, 1952.

Last year, unfortunately, the traditional "Alpine Calendar" could not be furnished because it had been sold out in Switzerland before the order arrived there. Consequently, the orders and remittances must be received at this Consulate by **August 15th**; later requests could not be taken into consideration.

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