

News from Switzerland

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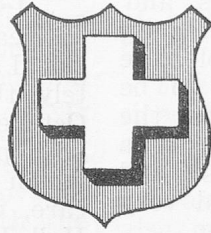
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19th YEAR.

OCTOBER, 1955.

AUCKLAND.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Swiss Club Holds Ball at Manaia

Switzerland's National Day was celebrated at Manaia with a Ball in the Town Hall, organized by the Taranaki Swiss Social Club. Swiss from all over Taranaki and some from the Waikato area attended and there were about 240 people present, some of whom wore national costumes.

The evening consisted of a dinner, speeches, yodelling, singing and dancing.

The President, Mr. J. Steiner, extended a welcome to Mr. C. Jeromson, Chairman of the Manaia Town Council, and Mrs. Jeromson, and to all Club members and visitors.

Mr. Jeromson congratulated the Club on the successful evening.

Bequest to Swiss Orphanage

The late Mr. Joseph Fridonlin Gabriel, of Red Hill, Henderson, a native of Switzerland, who settled in New Zealand some years ago, has bequeathed a legacy of £500 to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland. The residue of the estate, estimated at £3000, was left to the Gemeinde Grosswangen Orphanage, in the Canton of Lucerne.

OBITUARY NOTICES

It is with much regret that we have to announce the death of one of our members, Mr. Ernest Brauchli, who died suddenly at his residence, Te Atatu Road, Henderson, on August 23rd, and we wish to offer our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Brauchli.

We are also very sorry to have to announce the death of another member, Mr. Arthur Kuriger, of Kaponga, and we would like to extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Kuriger and family.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Yodelling

Genuine yodelling, as heard in the mountains of Switzerland, has very little in common with the yodelling songs sung by some of the popular singers of today or "hotted up" by certain jazz bands. In its most recent number "Costumes and Customs," the periodical put out by the National Federation of Swiss Costumes, gives some very interesting information concerning the origin of this custom: "Old texts, the Acta sanctorum, mention the song of the shepherds as long ago as 397. Julian the Apostate, Emperor of Rome from 361 to 363, alludes in his Misopogon to the songs of the Barbarians living along the banks of the Rhine as being "high-pitched like those of birds." We have it from reliable sources that at the end of the Middle Ages there were hundreds of different yodels in the various parts of Switzerland. They enabled the uncommunicative mountaineers to give vent to their feelings; the song was a form of release. Although originating in lonely places, it was soon heard at public gatherings, at village and mountain feasts, fairs and wrestling matches or in the celebrated "benichons" (traditional autumn festivals held in the canton of Fribourg). Then it was sung in unison, the leader intoning the melody, which was taken up by the chorus. The theme, thus learnt in common, was then taken back to the chalets, the workshops, the cow-sheds and the fields." Paul Budry, author of "La Suisse qui chante," added that "yodellers in music halls usually give quite a wrong idea of how it should be done. Sweetening and sentimentalizing it, whereas in actual fact the yodel is virile, sharp, caustic and aggressive like the temperaments high up there in the mountains, where love is a challenge, where friendships are forged in a wrestling match fought stripped to the waist on the grass and the joy of living is expressed in uproarious drinking matches. There are different types of yodelling, ranging from what might be called the "hot yodel," a form of pure improvisation and vocal acrobatics, to the yodelled

song for four voices. Lobe, Leckler Chuedreckler, Rugguusser each have their own rules and liberties. There is the competition yodel sung in turn by a group of people round a table, the group yodel, the thaler yodel that has to be held as long as a coin spins on a plate, the danced yodel and the "ranz des vaches," a Swiss cowherd's melody interspersed with calls and shouts that the cows seem to understand very well."

Swiss Emigration in July

In July last, the number of persons to leave Switzerland amounted to 183, this being a slight increase in comparison with the corresponding month for last year. Nevertheless, as a result of the economic prosperity which prevails in this country, emigration shows a definite decline, as the number of emigrants for the period covering the first seven months of this year is lower by 200 to that for the same period of last year.

Searching for Natural Gas in Switzerland

Traces of natural gas, known as methane, have been discovered in the Tessin, which is the most southern of the Swiss Cantons and is adjacent to Italy. The work of prospecting is being carried out actively, with the support of the authorities. This gas would form an appreciable source of revenue for one of the Swiss Cantons which is one of the least privileged from the economic point of view. In neighbouring Italy, methane gas covers one-fifth of the national consumption of gas.

Maurice Ravel a native of Geneva?

"Ravel (Maurice), French composer, born at Ciboure (Basses Pyrenees) in 1875. Author of "Heure Espagnole," "Daphnis et Chloe," and other works for the piano or orchestra of a picturesque and ironical modernism." This is what Larousse has to say about him. But what this dictionary does not mention is that although Maurice Ravel was born at Ciboure there is every reason to believe that he was a native of Geneva. It is thought in fact that he came from a family named Ravex, of Collonges-sous-Saleve, which settled at Versoix and became naturalized citizens of Geneva in 1834. On coming to Versoix the family changed its name from Ravex to Ravel. Several members of this family were employed in the typical Geneva industries of watchmaking and its allied crafts. This was the case in particular of Maurice Ravel's grandfather, who made musical boxes. Another member of the Ravels, Edouard-John, was a pupil of the painter Barthelemy Menn and taught at the School of Fine Arts in Geneva.

Fifth Swiss National Exhibition of Philately, Lausanne, 1955

Greatly exceeding the scope of previous national and even international exhibitions of philately, the exhibition to be held at Lausanne from October 15th to 23rd will be a revelation to many, both philatelists and laymen alike. This event, which has been planned and prepared with great care, will take place at the Swiss Comptoir, in Hall V, which covers an area of some 65,000 sq. ft.

Stamp collectors from Switzerland and abroad (France, Italy, Austria, Germany and even the United States) will be showing the fruits of their patient labours on more than 1,300 panels. In the lead come the stamps of European countries (400 panels), followed closely by those of Switzerland (350 panels), then those of countries overseas.

The management of the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services will also be presenting its new moving belt explaining the processes involved in the making of postage stamps from the artist's initial drawing to the finished stamp. In order to appeal to a wider circle of visitors, the management of the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services has turned a willing ear to the requests of the organizers and has promised its assistance even beyond the strict scope of the Swiss PTT Museum. It will thus be giving for the first time a glimpse of some of the treasures to be housed in the future Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne, by displaying documents and apparatuses relating to the history of transport from the beginning of our era to the present day, from the "cursus publicus" of the Romans to the inter-continental flights of the Swiss and foreign airline companies that have regular services to and from Switzerland. A prominent position will be given to long-distance communications which are developing at an ever-increasing pace (visitors will be allowed to work the apparatuses on display or have their working explained to them), as well as old and new telegraph and telephone apparatuses, and those used in the field of wireless telephony, radio and television.

The organizers have also succeeded in persuading ten big airline companies to participate with a special display of their own.

Swiss Agricultural and Dairy Industry Fair (OLMA) St. Gall, October 13th-23rd

OLMA will once again be taking place this year on its usual large scale. The chief attraction will be a big exhibition of brown stock cattle. Cattle shows will be held every day in the market place. In addition to the big traditional sections of agriculture and the dairy industry, OLMA 1955 will include an exhibition of magni-

ficent fruit and produce of the soil, which will bear witness to the diversity of the crops and the intensive cultivation of the soil in Eastern Switzerland. Working in close collaboration with the Agricultural Association of the canton of St. Gall, the Schools of Agriculture of Custerhof and Arenenberg are endeavouring to make OLMA as attractive and interesting as possible and to offer, as in previous years, an overall picture of what man may accomplish with the help of nature.

Switzerland Builds the Highest Dam in the World

Ever since 1950, 1500 workmen have been busy up in the Alpes Valaisannes, at an altitude of 2500 metres, building the highest dam in the world. Once it is finished, the dam of the Grande-Dixence will have the same height as the Eiffel Tower, that is to say, three hundred metres, and it will keep back a mass of water amounting to 400,000,000 cubic metres, proceeding from the surrounding valleys. The construction work is already very advanced and more than 6500 m³ of concrete are mixed each day, an average which represents an European record figure and, indeed, probably a world record. With its five million cubic metres of concrete this dam will be the biggest construction ever realized by man. The Grande-Dixence will furnish each year 1650 million Kwhs; this represents about one-tenth of the consumption of electric power in Switzerland.

Social Welfare in Switzerland

The Confederation's expenses in regard to social welfare have increased considerably during the last few years. The same remark is applicable to the appropriations of the Cantons and the Communes, which, together with those of the Federal State represent a sum of almost one thousand million francs per annum. It is estimated that social contributions on the part of private enterprise represent an annual sum of two thousand million francs, so that, taken together more than three thousand million francs are expended in Switzerland yearly for social welfare schemes. This figure is considerable, if one compares it with the national income of Switzerland, which attains approximately twenty-two thousand million francs.

Radar Being Fitted to Swissair's New Douglas DC-7C Planes

Swissair will be the first European airline company to have radar fitted to some of its planes. The four DC-7C aircraft, which are due to be delivered at the end of 1956 and beginning

of 1957, will be equipped with RCA radar instruments making it possible to detect zones of bad weather at distances greater than 150 miles.

This instrument made by the Radio Corporation of America has been specially designed for civil aviation. It is installed in the pilot's cockpit and enables him to detect bad weather ahead and avoid it by altering his course. This radar also makes it possible, during night flights or fog, to detect any obstacles such as mountains or hills that might lie in the path of the plane. This device contributes to the safety and well-being of passengers and helps planes keep to their schedules by enabling them to avoid zones of bad weather and fly round zones of low pressure by the shortest route and without any loss of speed. RCA radar is the first commercial screen instrument working on the "C" wave band (5400 megacycles a second), this having proved itself during numerous laboratory tests and experimental flights to be the most effective in detecting zones of bad weather. The total weight of the instrument is 143 lb.

The Centenary of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich

Technology is preparing to commemorate in worthy fashion the hundredth anniversary of its foundation with a series of celebrations lasting from October 17th to 23rd, 1955. In this connection it would be fitting to recall the origin of this institute, which is the only one in Switzerland that is dependent on the Confederation. Founded by virtue of an article of the Federal Constitution of 1848 and the Federal Law of February 7th, 1854, the S.F.I.T. was inaugurated in the autumn of 1855 for the purpose of training engineers and architects, chemists and pharmaceutical chemists, forestry and agricultural experts as well as mathematicians, physicists and natural scientists; it offers opportunities for training in scientific research and at the same time preparation for a profession. At the time of the industrialisation of Switzerland, the start of rail transport and telegraphic communications, it proved expedient to centralise higher technical education. In this way the S.F.I.T. found itself associated with the economic and technical growth of the country, which owes it, both directly and indirectly, a large part of its industrial progress. Its Alpine roads and feats of engineering, its electric railways and hydro-electric power stations, its machinery, electrical, textile and chemical industries all bear witness to the great ability of its engineers and workers; these achievements are all the more remarkable as the country does not possess any raw materials with the exception of "white coal."

During the last hundred years, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology has acquired a world-

wide reputation for itself made even more illustrious by some famous names. Among its professors it has numbered many foreigners such as Chellemel-Lacour, de Sanctis, Narutowicz, an expert on hydraulic constructions who later became a Minister, then President of Poland in 1922, and Stofola, the inventor of steam turbines. Eminent scientists and engineers have added glory to the name of this school, such as for example Culmann, the founder of graphic statics applied to engineering, Tetmajer, who founded the first material testing laboratory, C. Zschokke, who was responsible for important port construction work, Parsil, the promoter of hydraulic machinery, Wysliling, a pioneer in the field of Swiss hydro-electric economy, and Ammann, who directed the construction work in the port of New York. Among the chemists and physicists, let us mention Hamberger, Treadwell, Einstein, Rontgen, Auguste Piccard, Debye, the mathematician Weyl, the geologist Heim and the botanist Schroter.

At present the Federal Institute of Technology numbers some 3000 regular students (among them 400 to 600 foreigners representing 43 countries). The teaching staff consists of approximately 110 professors, 130 outside lecturers and 230 assistants.

Swissair's 1955/56 Winter Time-table . . .

. . . came into force on October 2nd for the period until April 4th, 1956. Among the new services will be noticed the night flights from Basle to London, the starting up of a new direct line from Zurich to Cairo with a connection at Geneva, the running of two daily services to Vienna and Munich and the introduction of the Zurich-Innsbruck line in winter, three times a week, in view of the fact that the Winter Olympic Games will take place at Cortina d'Ampezzo, which is easily reached from the airport at Innsbruck.

During the period from November 1st, 1955, to March 31st, 1956, great reductions will be made on the fares for families on the Switzerland-North America flights. As from December 15th, one or two extra night flights will be run each week between Geneva and London.

There will be a new daily service of DC-4's or Convair liners to Germany on the Frankfurt and Dusseldorf lines during the period from October 30th to December 10th and from March 19th to April 14th.

1955 Course for the Heads of Swiss Ski Schools from December 3rd to 10th and 10th to 17th at Arosa

For twenty years the Swiss Ski Schools Asso-

ciation has been organising courses for the heads of its schools before the beginning of the new ski season. These courses enable them to keep up to date with the latest methods of instruction. This year the two courses will be held at the beautiful resort of Arosa in the Grisons, at an altitude of 5900 feet. As in previous winters, a model ski school will be organised. It will welcome all visitors from Switzerland and abroad who would like to enroll. These visitors will thus be able to benefit by rational training and acquire a perfect ski technique in a minimum of time. Pupils can attend either the excursion classes or those where technique is taught at all levels, from the beginner's first steps to the study of competition skiing. Arosa, whose hotel and sports facilities enjoy a world-wide reputation, is very well suited to such a scheme. Those taking part will be accommodated in the Tschuggen, Kulm and Bellevue Hotels.

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