

News from Switzerland

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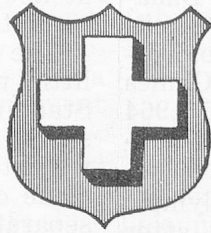
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GROUP NEW ZEALAND OF THE NEW HELVETIC SOCIETY

19th YEAR.

JUNE, 1955.

AUCKLAND.

It is with very much regret that we have to announce that, owing to ill-health, Consul Blanchard, who was in hospital for several weeks, had to leave New Zealand at extremely short notice. He expressly asked to be remembered to all members of the Colony. Unfortunately, due to the state of his health, it is doubtful whether he will return to New Zealand, all the more as he is to be assigned to another Post at the end of this year.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Obituary

It is with regret that we have to announce the death of one of our oldest members, Mr. Benedict Schumacher, who passed away suddenly on April 24th, 1955, at his residence, Luanna Farm, Ngarua, Waitoa. We offer our sincere sympathy to his wife and family.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Final Report on the 39th Swiss Industries Fair, Basle

The 39th Swiss Industries Fair, which took place in Basle from 16th to 26th April, 1955, was favoured by the most beautiful springtime weather for practically the whole eleven days and registered an extraordinarily large number of visitors. Altogether 459,612 admission cards were issued, or 23,795 more than in the previous year. If the repeated visits made by people holding season tickets are taken into account, it is estimated that the total number of entrances was more than 700,000.

Some 30,000 visitors came from abroad. Eleven thousand six hundred and sixty-four from seventy different countries were recorded at the Foreign Visitors' Office, as compared with 12,275 from 78 countries in the preceding year. Germany headed the list with 5723 visitors, followed by France with 3063.

There were 346 visitors from the United Kingdom, as against 272 in 1954, and the number of American visitors was 172 as compared with 283 last year. Canada sent 25 visitors this year and 20 in 1954. These are the actual visitors who applied to the Foreign Visitors' Office, but experience has shown that the real number of foreign visitors is usually considerably more.

The great interest shown by the foreign visitors, and which was reflected in the numbers recorded, was a good indication of the successful business transacted by exhibitors in the traditional export groups such as watchmaking, textiles, machine tools, the electrical industry and general engineering.

In the Watch Fair, which was organised for the 25th time and which has long ago developed into a regular rendezvous for those in the trade, exhibitors reported that turnover was on the whole greater than in the preceding year. In the textile section it was the clothing industry which attracted most attention together with the much admired special exhibit "Madame-Monsieur." Pronounced foreign demand for the products of the electrical and machine tool industries, which were particularly well represented this year at the Fair, corresponds to the general picture of the economic situation in most countries where a great amount of capital investment is taking place.

The business conversations and transactions which took place during the Fair were based in all the groups on optimism and confidence, and it is therefore quite permissible to describe the 39th Swiss Industries Fair as a complete success from every point of view.

The 40th Swiss Industries Fair will take place in Basle from 14th to 24th April, 1956.

Lausanne and the 1960 Olympic Games

Between June 12th and 14th next, at the Inter-allied Club in Paris, the International Olympic Committee, consisting of some sixty members, will be deciding on the allocation of the 1960 Games. Lausanne has applied for the award of the Summer Games, while St. Moritz is trying once more for the Winter Games.

Lausanne's rivals in Europe are Rome, Budapest and Brussels, and outside Europe, Detroit, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Tokio, Mexico, Toronto and Karachi. In principle, the 1960 Games should be held in Europe (and those of 1964 overseas). Lausanne's only serious rivals, therefore, are Budapest, Brussels and Rome.

Lausanne's Candidature: The Swiss Olympic Committee was formed in Lausanne just after the 1912 Games. In 1913, this city had the honour of being chosen for the meeting of the International Committee which organised here the first International Congress of Sports Education and Psychology. On this occasion, the authorities of Lausanne applied for the first time for the award of future Games. Baron de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games, decided in 1914 to move the headquarters of the I.O.C. to Lausanne, where they were later joined in their premises at Mon Repos by the Olympic Museum and Library. In 1925, when Amsterdam was meeting with some difficulty in its organisation of the Games of the Ninth Olympiad, Lausanne placed itself at the disposal of the I.O.C., but the Games were fortunately able to be held in Amsterdam after all. Since then, Lausanne has contributed with enthusiasm to the Olympic idea by holding various commemorative ceremonies and celebrations. In 1944, the town of Lausanne worthily commemorated the Jubilee of the revival of the Olympic Games, thus expressing its admiration of the splendid work of de Coubertin and its faith in the future of the new Olympism. Baron de Coubertin, who died in 1937 and is buried at Lausanne, was sure that this town was quite capable of organising the Games of an Olympiad without any difficulty whatsoever.

Lausanne has all the necessary facilities: For more than 20 years, Lausanne has continued with the development and modernisation of its sports facilities, so that now it possesses a remarkable series of grounds and installations which have the advantage of all being concentrated within a very small area. Here are some of the main features:

At the sports centre of Pontainse (about 1½ miles from the centre of the town):

An Olympic stadium (a modern construction, opened in 1954) whose present capacity of 60,000 seats could be raised to 100,000 by 1960. All types of athletics may be held there. Within the grounds of the stadium, there are also two training fields, a hockey field, a basketball pitch and ten tennis courts.

Two grounds for football, handball and field hockey. One of these can seat 10,000 spectators. A third ground nearby has been specially set out for athletics.

A cycle track with seating for 15,000 spectators.

A modern shooting range (less than two miles from the Olympic Stadium) for military shooting

at 300 metres and sporting events at all intermediate distances.

The buildings of the Lausanne Fair, situated little more than a quarter of a mile from the Stadium, are ideal for the holding of all indoor sports (gymnastics, boxing, fencing, wrestling, weight-lifting, basketball, etc.). The sports hall alone can hold 15,000 spectators. Several other separate halls can hold from 3000 to 5000 people. Also in the same buildings are a restaurant, the most modern theatre in Switzerland with seats for 2000, a cinema, and other premises.

At the sports centre of Vidy (less than two miles from the centre of the town, on the shores of the lake):

Six playing fields, one of them specially equipped for all athletic and football championships (stands for 8000 spectators), are situated in this district, where there are also ten tennis courts (one of them a centre court). The whole of this area along the natural beaches of the lake is also ideal for equestrian sports as it has a riding track passing through its entire length. A paddock and camping site complete the facilities.

Several yards away is the Municipal Beach, the biggest lakeside beach in Europe, with its own Olympic swimming pool and diving board, basketball pitches, facilities for gymnastics, etc.

On the lake itself, quite near this beach, an Olympic rowing course will soon be constructed.

In addition to these two areas, and nearer the centre of the town:

The Montchoisi swimming pool is also an Olympic pool possessing stands for 12,000 to 15,000 spectators.

A covered pool will shortly be built, meeting all championship requirements. It is planned to build the Olympic Village at Chalet a Gobet, on the edge of the forests of the Jorat, some 3½ miles from the centre of the town (altitude 2820 feet) in a district offering both quiet and wonderful possibilities for training. It will be built entirely in the style of typical Swiss chalets. There will be one village for the men and another for the women. They will be only 2½ miles from the Olympic Stadium by a direct route avoiding the town.

Lausanne possesses an ideal climate for the practice of sports. Lausanne's exceptionally mild climate is due to the sheltered position of the town, protected from the north, as well as to the proximity of the Lake of Geneva, which cools it pleasantly in summer. The air is dry, invigorating and pure. It has as many as 2000 hours of sunshine a year, 290 of them in the month of July alone. From the shores of the lake (altitude 1106 feet), the town rises gradually in tiers to 1736 feet at the centre of the town, and 2123 feet at the Signal de Sauvabelin. The Olympic Stadium is 2034 feet high. Thus Lausanne enjoys an ideal climate, without unbearably hot periods which are detrimental to great sporting feats. Statistics show that out of the 16 days planned for the Games, on an average 13 days should be

free from rain. Moreover, Lausanne is in the centre of a world famous tourist district, extending from Geneva to Montreux, admirably equipped from all points of view and possessing a large number of hotels; at the present moment it has 24,500 beds available for visitors.

The programme suggested by Lausanne for the 1960 Games includes:

1. Dates: Opening ceremony, Saturday, July 23rd, 1960. Closing ceremony, Sunday, August 7th, 1960.

2. Events: (a) Compulsory sports, athletics, rowing, yachting, equestrian sports, cycling, shooting, pentathlon, swimming, boxing, fencing, gymnastics, weight-lifting and wrestling; (b) optional sports, football (Association and Rugby), polo, water-polo, field hockey, handball, basketball, canoeing, sailing. (If desired by the I.O.C., some of these sports can be eliminated and others added.)

In memory of the composer of the famous song "Le Vieux Chalet"

Some 5000 singers of Fribourg, both religious and lay, will be meeting for a cantonal song festival to take place at Fribourg on May 14th and 15th next, in order to pay tribute to Canon Bovet, who died in 1951. The monument by the sculptor Probst of Geneva will be inaugurated on this occasion. In June, a great popular drama in verse will be acted at Fribourg for the first time. The dramatic poem in question is "La-haut—jeu du noir et du blanc," by Gonzague de Reynold, who takes up and illustrates the theme of the "Vieux Chalet," the well-known song beloved of all. Dr. Reynold has put all his gifts as a poet and thinker into this work. The music is by P. Kaelin. This vast pageant of life, with its work and its play, is a lesson in wisdom and dignity.

The National Festival of Costumes and Shepherds at Unspunnen

In 1805, Frederic de Mulinen, a Bernese lawyer, organised Alpine games in the little hamlet of Unspunnen, near Interlaken. After a procession by the marksmen, trumpet players and singers, the traditional games began: wrestling, throwing the stone, shooting with cross-bows, etc.

The festival, which will be held on the same site this year from September 3rd to 5th (possibly from September 10th to 12th), will commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of this event. Madame de Stael, who attended once with Madame Vigee Le Brun, recorded the vicissitudes of the festival of 1808 in her book "De l'Allemagne" and Madame Vigee Le Brun in a picture which is hung in the Louvre Museum.

The principles of these mountain "Olympics," as defined in the programme of the 1805 Games, still hold good today: "To create better relations

between the classes, stimulate understanding, revive the national games and the old ways and customs, and restore interest in popular songs."

A Train on Tyres

The Vevey-Chexbres-Puidoux line has been given two second and third class carriages mounted on wheels with tyres.

An Ambitious New Plan for a Trans-Alpine Tunnel

During a meeting organised by the Nouvelle Societe Helvetique at Bodio in the Ticino, Mr. Giudici, the engineer, described the ambitious new plan for a road and rail tunnel over 28 miles long (the longest tunnel in the world at present is the Simplon, 12½ miles) connecting Giornico (Ticino 1240 ft height) to Amsteg (Uri, Central Switzerland, at a height of 1713 ft.). The tunnel would be 66 ft. high and 43 ft. wide, and divided horizontally into three sections: the lowest for the railway line would also be used for ventilation purposes; the middle section, some 16 ft. high, would be a road 31 ft. wide for motor vehicles, while the upper part would be used for ventilation and the evacuation of gases. Every four miles or so there would be a petrol station with a snack bar and first-aid post. At the nearest point to Sedrun, the plan envisages an underground railway station connecting the tunnel to the Rhaetian Railways as well as a lift or spiral ramp leading to the roads of the Grisons. Such a plan would cost more than 1,100,000,000 Swiss franc to carry out.

A "Motel" at Interlaken

Motels have for a long time been a familiar feature of the American landscape and have recently been started up in Germany and Italy too. The first to be built in Switzerland is expected to be opened at Interlaken at the end of May. It will have 70 beds, and is situated opposite the Interlaken-Ost railway station, on the banks of the Aar overlooking the Brunig Road. Each of the 21 separate dwellings has hot and cold water, showers, etc. A restaurant, a kiosk and a petrol station complete the facilities. Cars can park in front of the entrance to each dwelling on a reserved parking lot. Prices correspond to those of comfortable hotels.

Escher-Wyss Established 150 Years Ago

It is just a hundred and fifty years since the Swiss firm of Escher-Wyss was established. From the small spinning-mill that it used to be, at its beginnings, this concern soon became one of the most important machine manufacturing plants in Switzerland, especially famed for its hydro-electric turbines.

A Remarkable Swiss Tamping Machine for Railways

The network of the Swiss Federal Railways is one of the most dense in the world, and, what is more, one of the most modern and well kept in order. It is therefore not surprising that a number of Swiss firms specialise in the development, the maintenance and the renewal of the railways. In this connection, it is interesting to note that in this particular domain the propagation on a large scale of the most modern methods is due to a firm in Lausanne. Already a great many years ago, this firm perfected an automatic tamping machine for tamping the ballast-bed of the railway lines. Not only the output achieved with this machine, but also the quality of work obtained from its use were such that very soon it was adopted for use on more than a hundred railways, in fifty different countries. Up to the present, this machine is unique of its kind and the hundreds of these machines in service throughout the world testify to the role played by Swiss industry abroad.

Will Switzerland Have Her Model City?

A group of young Swiss has launched the very original idea that the next National Exhibition, which is planned to be held in 1964, should be replaced by the erection of a Model City. This city, inspired by similar ideas already realised in India by the famous Swiss architect known as Le Corbusier, as well as in Great Britain and in the United States, would be created right in the Swiss countryside. The city would extend over an area measuring from four to five square kilometres, and could house from 10 to 15,000 inhabitants; it would be furnished with all the most modern improvements, chief among them a thermic central station which would provide heating for the whole town. Each trade and profession would be represented by model installations, so that the city would constitute a kind of permanent National Exhibition. For the present, all this is merely a project, but it has already aroused great interest in all quarters.

NOTICES

A real good "Schweizer-Tanz" and gathering with "Jassen," etc., will be held on JUNE 21st, in the Manaia Town Hall, Manaia, Taranaki, by the Swiss Club of Taranaki. All members of the Swiss Colony are welcome.

Notes from the Secretary

I should like to thank Mr. T. Riedi, Hikutaia, Thames Valley, Mr. T. Ruegg, Kati Kati, and

Mr. and Mrs. John Meier, Matangi, for the very kind hospitality which they extended to me during my trip at Easter.

On Saturday, April 30th, 1955, I was invited to the lovely wedding of Miss Anna Marie Meier to Mr. Otto Fitzzi, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Hamilton East. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Meier, Matangi. There were about 150 people at the reception, which was held at their residence in Matangi. The wedding cake was a masterpiece of art by Mr. A. Haltmeier, of Auckland. Everybody was as happy as they could be, and I really enjoyed myself very much. I wish the young couple all the best.

There are still subscriptions of 22/6d. arriving without name or address. One from Wellington, and one from Kaponga, according to the postal marks. I regret that it is not possible to forward receipts for these subscriptions unless I receive advice as to who the senders are.

E. GILGEN,
Hon. Secretary.

Notice to Every Member

Our next Annual General Meeting of the S.B.S. will be held on Saturday, July 2nd, at 1 p.m., at the home of our Vice-President, Mr. W. Risi, in Ngaruawahia.

The farm of Mr. Risi is opposite the Hopuhopu Military Camp on the main highway between Hunly and Ngaruawahia.

Would anyone who is intending to come please write to the Secretary? We would like to see as many members as possible.

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