

News from Switzerland

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Hamilton Swiss Club members please note that, due to the picnic being held on the 25th of this month, there will be no Social in the Riverlea. Next Social will be held again on the third Sunday (February 15th).

Taranaki Swiss Social Club Picnic February 15th. Keep this date clear.

HASELNUSS CREME

Now that hazelnuts are occasionally procured in grocery shops, here is a Creme with a difference:

1oz cornflour, 1½ pints milk, 13oz sugar, 3 egg yolks, 2 whole eggs, vanilla flavouring, ¼lb roasted, peeled and grated hazelnuts, ½ pint whipped cream. Make custard with milk, sugar, cornflour and vanilla essence. Add beaten eggs, just bring to boil and remove quickly. Add hazelnuts and whipped cream and chill. —H.B.

CORRECTION TO PICNIC DATE

Please note that the Combined Picnic at Mercer will now be held on 25th January next and not on 31st January as previously advertised in the December issue of Helvetia.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

SLIGHT FALL IN COST OF LIVING IN SWITZERLAND

At the end of October, the Swiss Index of prices for consumer goods stood at 182.8 (100 in August, 1939), thus showing a decline of 0.1% as compared with the end of September, but an increase of 1.3% in comparison with the end of October, 1957. This evolution is due principally to a decrease in the price of clothing for men and women. In so far as wholesale prices are concerned, the Index stood at 214.5 points at the end of October, as against 214.9 at the end of the previous month, thus registering a decline of 0.2%.

CONSUMPTION OF BEER IN SWITZERLAND

During the business year of 1957-58, the Swiss breweries produced 3.15 million hectolitres of beer, as against 2.96 million hectolitres during the corresponding period for the preceding business year. In 1911, the consumption of beer amounted to 81.16 litres per year and per head of the population, this figure going down to 63 litres in 1957-58. At the present time, it has been observed that the sale of bottled beer is increasing to the detriment of beer drawn from the tap. Taxation on beer during the past year brought in 33 million Swiss francs to the Swiss Confederation. Thus, since 1927, when a tax was first imposed on beer in Switzerland, this beverage has procured 588 million Swiss francs for the Federal Treasury.

A PRIZE-WINNING SWISS FILM

At the Festival of the Mountain and Exploration Film, held at Trento, a Swiss film was awarded two prizes. This was a documentary entitled "Footpaths and rocks on the Saleve . . ." which was shot by André Kern and Raymond Lambert, the famous Swiss alpinist; it obtained a prize of 250,000 lire, which it shared with an Italian film, and it also got the prize of the "Deutscher Alpenverein."

THE INGENUITY OF SWISS ENGINEERS

In Switzerland, the very uneven configuration of the mountainous regions forces the engineers to have recourse, sometimes, to some extremely original methods for solving certain problems in respect of equipment and of transport. In this way, a helicopter has just been employed for the purpose of laying a line for the transmission of electricity, in the mountainous region of the Domleschg, in the Canton of Grisons. The helicopter, trailing a light but strong cord made of nylon, placed it on one pylon after another. Afterwards, this nylon cord served to pull a metallic cable along the pylons, with the aid of which the conductor was finally put into position.

In another mountainous part, this time in the Valais, a plastic conduit for drinking water has been installed in a very difficult terrain, where the placing of a metal pipe would not only have been too costly, but even quite impossible in some places. For instance, in order to span a very steep gorge, a plastic pipe was used, made in one piece, measuring 1,080 feet, having a diameter of 2.5 inches, steel-plated in order to protect it from damages caused by lightning, and suspended from a steel cable. As the transportation of this tube, made of "Somoflex," presented some difficulties in certain places, it was simply rolled out and carried by the local children, who were delighted to be able to escape for a few hours from the discipline of school. By placing a child at every two or three meters, the weight to be carried by each one of them amounted to only 4.5 to 6.5 pounds.

POSTAGE STAMPS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

Messrs Courvoisier, an important Swiss firm belonging to the graphical branch of trade, has just received an order for the re-printing of a Ceylonese postage stamp. As a matter of fact, this is not the first time that this firm has printed stamps for the Government of Ceylon, which has informed it, on several occasions, of its complete satisfaction in the work which has been done for it.

This firm also has a great many other countries for its customers; thus, the Belgian Congo, Haiti, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Philippines, Salvador, Turkey, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and, of course, Switzerland, are among Messrs Courvoisier's regular customers. The firm has also executed orders for Angola, Australia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Portuguese Guinea, India, Iraq, Iran, Iceland, Macao, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, the Saar and Italian Somaliland.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF A SWISS INDUSTRY

It is in consequence of having contracted a tenacious form of rheumatism, whilst on active military service guarding the frontiers during the First World War, that Dr Schaufelberger, who manufactured speed-recording machines in his factory which was established in 1908, began to make electrically-heated cushions. The electric cushion "Solis" was the first to possess an automatic safety current cut-out, which is still being utilised today in its original form. Since then, the firm has enlarged its manufacturing programme and has become particularly renowned for its electrically-heated carpets, blankets, mattresses, etc. In order to ensure the quality of its products, the "Solis" firm itself produces nearly all the detached parts for its apparatuses.

SWISS CHINAWARE TO THE FORE

The new "Nile Hilton" hotel will be opened very shortly, in Cairo. This establishment, which belongs to the chain of Hilton Hotels in the Middle and the Near East, is to be equipped with crockery of Swiss manufacture, as are also the Shephard and the Semiramis Hotels, in Cairo.

Furthermore, two air companies, the Olympic Airways and the Air India International, have also ordered Swiss-made crockery for their aircraft, as a result of the satisfaction experienced by the Swissair Company with this article. It is the shape of the Swiss chinaware, adapted for use on aircraft, which weighed the balance in its favour. This crockery has been perfected during the course of several years' collaboration between the Swissair and the Swiss porcelain industry.

DEATH OF GREAT SWISS CHEMIST

The death occurred recently, near Zurich, of a Swiss chemist to whom the chemical industry of the United States owes a great deal. This was Dr Louis Veillon, who was born in Switzerland in 1875, and who studied chemistry and graduated at the Federal Polytechnical School, at Zurich. He was called to the United States at the beginning of the century, in order to manage a plant, which only existed on paper, and it was he who, owing to his professional capacities and his perseverance, became one of the principal artisans of the development of the firm of Monsanto, of which he had been the first member.

A COURSE ON AUTOMATION AT GENEVA

Automation is the science of the use of automatic machines which are driven and controlled by themselves, such as electronic brains and similar apparatus. The Geneva branch of the Swiss Association for Automation has tabled on its programme of activities for the 1958-59 season courses on automation, one of which is to be devoted to operational research, based on the study of practical examples, this being intended for a large public which is interested in business. This course will be the first of its kind to be held in Switzerland.

SWISS ALTERNATORS FOR UNITED STATES

The "Tennessee Valley Authority," which is the most important State concern for electric energy for artificial irrigation and for the economic development of the South in the United States, has just given an order to a big Swiss firm for the delivery of three vertical alternators of 60,000 kilovolt-amperes and 13,800 volts each. These machines which revolve at the speed of 105 revolutions per minute, represent a sum of U.S.A. \$2,639,000 and are to be installed at the end of 1961 in the electric station of Muscle Shoals, in Alabama.

SWISS HORTICULTURE EXHIBITION IN ZURICH

The First Swiss Exhibition of Horticulture will open its doors in Zurich, in April, 1959. Briefly described, this exhibition, on which work has already started, will have very few buildings, several restaurants and lots and lots of flowers and greenery, gardens, fountains and an open-air theatre. At the Zurichhorn, a number of stands will show the most recent accessories for gardening.

YOUNG Swiss, 21, on way to N.Z. arriving end February, wants job on Dairy Farm. Please contact either the President or Secretary.

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