

News from Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **24 (1961)**

Heft [7]

PDF erstellt am: **13.09.2024**

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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

FRESHENING UP A WORK OF ART

Our grandparents and great-grandparents loved the "Panorama," that artistic representation of vistas, dramatic events of a religious character and famous landscapes. Recently, in the park of the Chateau of Schadau at Lake Thun, new interest has focussed on the 30 feet high Woche Panorama, named after its painter, Marquand Woche. Painted at the beginning of the 19th century, it lovingly depicts the town of Thun as it must have appeared to the famous poets Goethe and Kleist from the roof of one of the town's period houses. A round building specially designed by the Town Architect was harmoniously set in the Chateau grounds for this lifework of the old minor master. In the Chateau of Schadau itself, a permanent exhibition of Swiss minor masters has been opened. The three historic castles of Thun, Spiez and Oberhofen are also open to the public.

MOST UP-TO-DATE HOLIDAY HOTEL

The Beatus Hotel, named after the patron saint of the region, is the latest hotel creation at the "Riviera" of Lake Thun and is regarded as Switzerland's most up-to-date hotel. It is built on the site of its now demolished predecessor of the same name, on a beautifully situated plot by the lake in the holiday village of Merlingen, midway between Thun and Interlaken. Almost all the guest rooms, totalling 130 beds, have a private bath, and all of them have sun balconies with a view of the lake. The common rooms and dining rooms open towards a wide lake terrace giving on to a palm-sheltered lawn along the water's edge. The new hotel naturally has its own beach. Sheltered from the wind by a mountain range in the north, the sunny shore of Lake Thun enjoys the climatic advantages typical of the Riviera.

HOTEL ATTRACTIONS

Small roof-garden villas one and a-half storeys high are the latest type of hotel room offered at the remodelled Carlton-Elite Hotel in Zurich. Another new feature provided for the off-peak season: shopping and theatre weekend in Zurich. The hotel guarantees best seats in any of Zurich's theatres; baby-sitting services and special events for young persons ensures freedom of movement for parents.

OPEN-AIR OPERETTA

A star cast, a flock of sheep and true gypsies provide some of the attractions of the summer open-air performances of the famous Johann Strauss operetta, "The Gipsy Baron." The place of performance is especially charming: a natural stage amid the parklands of St. Jakob on the River Birs, a historic spot before the gates of Basel, Switzerland's second largest city.

CONTRIBUTION TO RUBBISH DISPOSAL

Everyone is well aware today of the acuteness of the problem of rubbish disposal created by the phenomenal growth of towns. As regards the private householder, the coal furnace formerly used for heating the home made the destruction of all combustible refuse a comparatively simple matter; this possibility has since been lost owing to the increasingly widespread use of oil heating. The "Tibolor" incinerator, however, solves this problem: this is a small auxiliary burner, which can easily be fitted on any oil burner so as to enable all combustible refuse to be burnt in the central heating burner or water heater without affecting the working of the main appliance itself, which can moreover be automatically stopped while the refuse is being burnt. This incinerator can also be used even during the months when the main heater is not in use.

BOLD PROJECT IN LAUSANNE

If the project proposed by the management of the Swiss National Fair is put into effect, in a few years' time Lausanne will have a large tower some 920 feet high rising like a giant needle above the Palace of Beaulieu. This bold plan, which the municipal authorities have already approved, could be carried out in 20 months, so that the tower would be ready in time for the opening of the Swiss National Exhibition in 1964. The first fifteen storeys would contain among other things a concert hall and a number of auditoriums and lecture rooms, which could be used for congresses as well as the School of Higher Commercial Studies and Social Political Sciences of the University of Lausanne. At a height of 750 feet a bubble-shaped section would hold a restaurant and a balcony offering a magnificent view. The tower would dominate the halls and gardens of the ultra-modern exhibition buildings and congress centre in which the Lausanne National Fair is held each year.

STARTED AS APRIL FOOL JOKE

The "Neue Zurcher Zeitung," one of Switzerland's leading daily newspapers, recalls an April Fool joke played by one of its staff on April 1, 1886, under the allusive pseudonym of "S. Ch. Windler." This joke was in the form of an apparently fantastic article about plans to build a railway on the Jungfrau. The joke caused a great deal of amusement—but it made Swiss industrialist Adolf Guyer-Zeller think. Year after year from then on he visited the Jungfrau region, studying the feasibility of the project and ten years later work actually began on the Kleine Scheidegg. Slowly the railway crept upwards until in 1912, after seemingly endless tunnel-boring work in the rocky interior of the Eiger, the Jungfrau terminal station (11,340ft above sea level) was reached. It is still the highest point in Europe accessible by rail.

ORDER PLACED WITH SWISS FIRM

The building up of an efficient power supply, whether produced by hydraulic or thermal means, is one of the most important requirements of any country in the process of development. The big Swiss firm of Sulzer Brothers, at Winterthur, has just received an order for two 12 cylinder Diesel engines for a power plant in Costa Rica; each of these engines develops 5420 HP at 257 revs/min, and the first has to be installed by the end of October, 1961. This order is being financed by the World Bank and was awarded to the Swiss firm in the face of keen international competition.

CHEMICAL ACHIEVEMENT

After many years of intensive research, three Swiss chemists working in the Sandoz laboratories at Basle have succeeded in achieving the complete synthesis of ergotamine, the alkaloid of ergot of rye. This marks the successful close of the research distinguished, in 1918, by the discovery of the first homogeneous alkaloid or ergot of rye by the Swiss professor Stoll and, in 1951, by the discovery of the composition of this alkaloid. The complete synthesis that has now been achieved confirms the correctness of the formula worked out ten years ago in the laboratories of this Basle firm. The future will show whether it is possible to make industrial use of the complete synthesis achieved today. It is already obvious though that this process will enable new types of compounds derived from the natural alkaloid to be prepared, thus opening up exciting new possibilities in the medico-biological field.

SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

The building of a private concrete swimming pool always requires considerable excavation work and a correctly proportioned mixture of reinforced concrete. The growing popularity of aquatic sports has given manufacturers of laminated plastics and metal-work an opportunity of considering the problem from a completely new angle, taking into account the characteristics of the new materials now available. This has resulted in the creation of the collapsible "Swiss pool" consisting of a circular vertical wall in corrugated aluminium, further reinforced by light metal struts. This structure, which can be placed on any flat surface, forms the framework for the pool itself, which comprises a laminated plastic flat bottom and cylindrical wall. The fact that the bottom of the pool is made of a thin, supple material allows the weight of the water to be evenly distributed over the whole area of the ground beneath, thus avoiding any need for special foundations. The new Swiss pool is made in three standard diameters of 4, 5½ and 7 metres (approx. 13, 18 and 23 feet) holding 11,400, 26,600 and 50,000 litres of water. Other sizes can be built to order.

PROCESSED CHEESE ANNIVERSARY

Fifty years ago, Gerber Ltd., of Thun, produced the first processed cheese in the world. In this connection it is interesting to note that the 10 Swiss processed cheese factories use yearly in the production of this delicious speciality over 6200 tons of Emmental and Gruyere cheese and over 1200 tons of other dairy products; in 1960 the total output amounted to 10,000 tons, approximately 33 per cent of which was consumed in Switzerland and 67 per cent abroad.

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