

News from Switzerland

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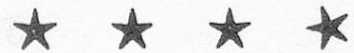
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Hamilton Swiss Club

Our Annual Picnic, in combination with the Society's Shooting Competition, will be held on Sunday, 10th March, at Mr and Mrs Risi's residence in Ngaruawahia. Shooting, kegeln, dance floor, games for children, Swiss music, bratwuerste, Swiss cakes, ice cream, etc., etc.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



THOMAS HOLENSTEIN, 1896-1962

The death has been reported of the former Federal Councillor Dr Thomas Holenstein. He passed away in Locarno on 31st October after a short but severe illness.

Thomas Holenstein was born on 7th February, 1896, in St. Gall, the son of a lawyer and National Councillor. He studied Law at the universities of Basle, Geneva, Rome and Berne, and qualified in the capital in 1920. He entered the firm of his father and from an early age he played an active part in the political life of St. Gall. He was elected National Councillor in 1937 and soon became a prominent parliamentarian. He was also a lecturer on Commercial Law at the University of Commerce in St. Gall and a colonel in the Swiss General Staff.

When Federal Councillor Escher died, in 1954, the Federal Assembly elected Dr Holenstein as his successor. He was a member of the Federal Council for five years and President of the Confederation in 1958. For reasons of health he had to resign in 1959, to the great regret of the Swiss people.

* * *

His body was taken to Berne under escort of a detachment of Ticinese Cantonal Police. The funeral service took place at the basilica of the Trinity Church in Berne on 5th November. All but one of the Federal Councillors and a great number of prominent personalities from all spheres of life were present.

On the following day a memorial service took place at the St. Gall Cathedral, followed by the funeral at the "Feldli" Cemetery.

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS IN SWITZERLAND

According to the Register of Trades and Professions published by the Federal Office of Arts and Crafts, Industry and Labour, there are at present 239 recognised trades in Switzerland that can be learnt by apprentices, by 73 of which the master diploma can also be obtained.

SWISS CHEESE EXPORTS

According to the report issued by the Swiss Cheese Trade Union for the period 1961-62, Swiss exports of cheese amounted to a total of 25,382 tons representing an increase of 9.4%, whereas sales on the home market fell off slightly. The European Economic Community alone accounts for approximately 82% of Switzerland's total cheese exports and, in spite of very keen international competition, sales have increased on all the main markets. Italy, for example, imported 10,271 tons of Swiss cheese, i.e. 11.4% more than during the previous period.

HOME BUILDING

According to the statistics issued by the European Economic Commission of the United Nations, Switzerland comes high among European countries for the building of homes. With 10.8 buildings constructed per 1000 inhabitants in 1961, she was ahead of the German Federal Republic (10) and came immediately after the Soviet Union, where the figure amounted to 12.4. In 1960, the number of homes built per 1000 inhabitants was 14 in the Soviet Union, 10.5 in Western Germany and 9.3 in Switzerland.

NEW RESORT IN THE COUNTRY OF CESAR RITZ

On a sun-flooded terrace which commands a breath-taking view of the upper Rhone valley (Valais) the village of Bellwald (4700ft above sea level) is ready to welcome winter and summer guests. The region is ideal for skiing and offers best snow conditions from the beginning of December to the middle of March. A new hotel, a ski school with own skilift, an aerial cableway, a skating rink, a variety of interesting skiruns and quite a number of comfortable chalets cater to all those who seek a real holiday off the beaten track. This part of the country also offers points of historical interest; a good hour's walk takes one to Muhlebach, the birthplace of Cardinal Matthaeus Schiner (1456-1522) who played an eminent part in European politics of his day when France and Italy were at sword's ends and the Valais held a strategic position.

In Niederwald, neighbouring village to Bellwald, one may visit the house where another simple son of the mountains was born to later make his way to success in the world, Cesar Ritz (1850-1918), the actual founder of the modern hotel, who according to his wish is buried in the humble village of his fathers. Grand Hotels in all the big cities of the world keep up the tradition set by him who shaped the former inn into the luxurious modern hotel, meeting place of fashionable international society. Many of them were founded by him such as the Savoy in London or the delightful Paris Ritz.