

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The council of the *Party of Labour* (Communists !) meeting at Bienne on the 19th inst., issued a declaration of war against their former friends, the socialists. The latter are accused of disregarding their original fight against capitalists which policy led to the formation of the new party which will strictly adhere to the elementary principles of the movement.

* * *

Under the patronage of Minister Charles de Jenner, well-remembered by his many friends in the London Colony, a Bulgaro-Swiss society has been formed in Sofia.

* * *

The military department published a warning in local papers in the Hasli Valley that the Dakota plane on Gauli Glacier has been taken into custody by military authorities and that it is prohibited to enter or damage the machine or to take objects dropped on the glacier, also that it is highly dangerous to fool around the plane as demolition charges were not removed.

There are still a number of objects strewn on the glacier even silver cutlery dropped by the Americans.

Cantonal

In Lucerne a proposal to increase the members of the inner town council (Engerer Stadtrat) from five to seven was negated by a large majority; this extension was contested by the liberal and conservative parties the other four recommending acceptance.

* * *

Here is a description of the Zurich sports stadium just completed and said to be the largest of its type in Continental Europe; it is taken from the January issue of "*Civil Engineering*":—

"This stadium was intended to serve, in the first place, as a velodrome with an elliptical track 820ft. in length and with a seating capacity of 12,000 (this number was reduced to 11,000 in the actual project).

The stadium is entirely covered. The stepping of the grandstand as well as the several floors are of reinforced concrete. The stadium has the form of an ellipse, of which the two axes measure respectively 395ft. and 347ft. This huge area of 107,000 sq. ft. is roofed over without intermediate supports. The hall is covered by a roof and suspended ceiling. The roof, having a very slight slope, is constructed of lightweight concrete resting on battens and rafters of wood. The suspended ceiling is constructed of asbestos-cement sheets attached to a framework of wood.

The space between the roof and the suspended ceiling enclose most of the steel framework, which is thus hidden from the view of the spectators.

The four main supports are placed at the corners of a 184ft. by 303ft. rectangle. The steel framework is composed of the following members: Two main trusses, 303ft. long and 32ft. 10in. high, each supported on two columns; two connecting trusses, 184ft. long and 32ft. 10in. high, supported by the main trusses; four longitudinal trusses of

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226ft. span and 16ft. in height; 25 lines of beams of 36 to 46ft. span.

The space between the 184ft. by 303ft. rectangle and the exterior walls is taken care of by a system of trusses with spans not exceeding 82ft.

The four main columns rest on bases of cast steel; these bases are circular with a 3ft. 3in. diameter.

The frames, made up of a main truss and the main columns, form an isostatic system for which the necessary flexibility is obtained by a joint at the junction of the columns with the main truss. Thus two isostatic frames are realized in which the vertical loads (dead load and snow) do not produce any horizontal thrust.

Mr. K. Egender was the architect and Messrs. Eisenbaugesellschaft of Zurich, engineers and contractors."

* * *

A fine of 8,000 francs was imposed on a Bernese butcher who during 37 weeks succeeded without detection in selling sausages containing a weighty substance described as "Fegsand."

* * *

The following extract is reproduced from the "Chemical and Engineerings News Washington," November 10th, and calls to mind the 50th anniversary of F. Hoffmann-La Roche & Co which was established in 1896 by Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche and whose pharmaceutical products have probably though unknowingly benefited many of our readers.

A gift of \$250,000 by E. C. Barell, an American chemical engineer and president of Hoffmann-La



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Roche & Co., will enable the Swiss Institute of Technology, Zurich, to inaugurate the first formal training in chemical engineering in Switzerland. The fund, known as the Emil Barell Fund for the Training of Chemical Engineers, will be used to establish a chemical engineering curriculum based on the American pattern. The equivalent of this training does not exist in continental Europe. Dr. Barell established the fund on the occasion of a visit to Switzerland to celebrate his fiftieth year with the firm.

Progressive thinking of its management, and that Hoffmann-La Roche & Co. plans for the future, are shown by the fact that it has also set up funds for the promotion of scientific and technical education in Switzerland in order to help preserve and improve the high level of the nation's scientific standards. The Fund for the Promotion of Scientific Cooperation in Switzerland has a capital of about \$500,000, offering financial aid to scientists throughout the world who attend Swiss university institutes for group research on special problems.

The firm celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding this spring in Basle, Switzerland, and the celebration coincided with the half-century jubilee with the company of Emil C. Barell, its president and chairman of the board of directors. Hoffmann-La Roche & Co. is the oldest firm of its kind in Switzerland, being founded at a time when the industrial manufacture of drugs and other pharmaceutical products was new. E. C. Barell took over the presidency in 1920 on the death of the founder, Fritz Hoffmann. Dr. Barell is a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and has lived for the past five years in Nutley, N. J., where the New Jersey plant is located. Under his guidance the firm has grown to be the largest in its field in Switzerland, and has affiliates all over the world. The firm has contributed a large share to the evolution in the field of medicine, and in the creation of new pharmaceutical products, such as Digalen, Pantopon, and Prostigmin. In 1933 the company became the first industrial organisation to manufacture a synthetic vitamin, and is now the world's largest manufacturer of most of the vitamins."

* * *

Inns and taverns in the canton Aargau which have become redundant in the view of the Grosse Rat are to be closed for good. A fund has been established for facilitating this action but licence holders have no legal right for compensation which may be granted in deserving cases.

* * *

Reports state that on the 21st inst. gold ingots to the value of three million £ arrived in Geneva on a Lancaster flown from the Northolt aerodrome for account of the Bank of England.

* * *

The budget of the canton Geneva for the present year is computed with a deficit of seven million francs.

Traffic

Particulars which foreshadow the importance which shipping on the Rhine is likely to claim in the near future are given by "Shipbuilding," January 16th:—

"A very interesting series of eleven Rhine cargo ships is being built in our country for the

Basler Rheinschiffahrt A.G., Basle. These ships are of three classes, *viz.*, the *Gandria*, *Glarus* and *Alp* classes, and they comprise thirteen ships, two of which are under construction at the shipyard of Jos. Boel & Sons, Tamise (Belgium). These two ships, which will be named *Locarno* and *Accona*, belong to the *Gandria* class, of six ships, four of which are under construction at the De Groot & Van Vliet yard at Slikerveer. They will be named *Lugano*, *Gandria*, *Morcote* and *Bellinzona*. The principal dimensions will be: length, overall, 219ft. 8 in.; length b.p., 209 ft. 10 in.; breadth, 24 ft. 7 in.; and depth, 9 ft. 2 in. A 6-cylinder two-stroke Sulzer engine with telemotor control from the bridge is installed. Running at 400 r.p.m., this engine develops 400 B.H.P. for a speed of 10 knots. The steering gear is of a new type, and has been designed by Dr. Ir. Adolf I. Rüneker, Basle, with two rudders behind each other in line, and after one of which is a stream-lined balanced rudder. Both rudders operate in the same direction. The *Glarus* class consists of two ships, the *Glarus* and *Graubünden*, respectively being built by Jonker & Stans., Hendrik Ido Ambacht, and Jan Smit Czn., Alblasserdam. These ships have the following principal dimensions: length, overall, 241 ft. 1 in.; length b.p., 229 ft. 6 in.; breadth, 26 ft. 8 in.; and depth, 9 ft. 2 in. In this class the ships will have a four-cylinder Sulzer engine running at 350 r.p.m. and developing 480 B.H.P. This engine is direct reversible and is controlled from the wheel house. The cargo holds, accommodation and equipment are the same as in the *Gandria* class. The *Glarus* has a screw with feathering blades, constructed by Escher Wyss & Company, Zurich. The *Alp* class consists of five ships, which will be named *Riffelalp*, *Belalp*, *Riederalp*, *Wengeralp* and *Gernschnialp*. They are under construction at T. van Duyvendijk's shipyard, Lekkerkerk, and will have the following principal dimensions: length, overall 257 ft. 4½ in.; length b.p., 213 ft. 1½ in.; breadth, 27 ft. 10½ in.; and depth, 9 ft. 2 in. In general, the design is similar to the *Gandria* class. The propelling machinery in the *Alp* class consists of two 4-cylinder Sulzer engines, each developing 300 B.H.P. at 400 r.p.m."

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A bi-weekly return air service is now operated during the season from Northolt aerodrome to Samaden for Suvretta House (in winter) and to Dübendorf for the Park Hotel in Vitznau (in summer). "Suvretta Ltd." is stated to have arranged this extra service with the private aviation company "Airwork Ltd." (London agents: Havas International Service) the return fare being £50 including transport from or to private residence to the door of the respective hotel. The service is not confined to guests of the two hotels mentioned. The plane leaves London at 9 a.m. for lunch at 1 p.m. in the Swiss Alps.

* * *

The new shares of Swissair having been fully subscribed the board of directors has been reconstituted and consists of 27 members of whom ten represent the Confederation, cantons and interested communes. The new President is Dr. Rodolphe Speich, General Manager of the Swiss Bank Corporation in Basle, whose brother is a popular member of the London Colony.

Economics

A considerable number of spurious Swiss 1,000 franc notes have made their appearance. An isolated detention of a French railway mechanic has been effected at Porrentruy who carried a few of these notes. It is

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believed that the notes have been forged or circulated by secret agents during the German occupation of France.

* * *

An exchange scheme similar to the one already agreed upon for employees in the hotel trade is now being negotiated for engineering students. The following particulars are taken from the "*British Bulletin of Commerce*," January 11th:—

"The Gauge and Tool Makers' Association is negotiating with the Director of Zurich University, Zurich, Switzerland, for a regular interchange of engineering students on a reciprocal basis.

Under the scheme envisaged, Swiss engineering students will come to England in 1947 during their long vacation and obtain temporary employment in member-firms' workshops; and, where satisfactory arrangements can be made, will live during their stay in England with the families of works personnel in order to get to know the English way of family life.

Similar facilities will be offered by Swiss precision engineering firms to British students.

The Association feels that a scheme of this nature will be useful not only for the technical training of young people but for the development of trade and the promotion of goodwill and understanding between Great Britain and Switzerland.

The Director of Zurich University is coming to England early in the year to discuss the scheme with the Association in further detail."

* * *

A record, even compared with pre-war years, is registered in the import of motor-cars for December last which amounted to about 1,800 (December 1945 no more than 190). Figures of the different makes are not yet available but the predominant position of English and French cars has been captured by America. A newcomer is Italy which sold us last December 60 cars.

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A society comedy in the best French manner, "DOMINO" is a film which should appeal to all who enjoy light-hearted, sensitive acting, and sophisticated, clever and slightly amoral dialogue and situation.

The story of "DOMINO" is taken from the play by Marcel Achard, and the charming and witty dialogue was adapted for the film by the author himself. The title role is played by Fernand Gravey, well-known not only to French but also to American and English audiences. One of his best known American films was "The Great Waltz" which he made in Hollywood under the direction of his fellow-countryman, Julien Duvivier. Blonde Simone Renant, who plays opposite him is a new-comer to audiences over here.

In the programme with "DOMINO" will be "The Adventures of Don Quixote" — a re-edited version of G. W. Pabst's "Don Quixote" with Chaliapine and George Robey.

This new programme at the Academy will commence on Friday, February 1st.

THE STORY OF NESTLÉ.

As told by "*News Review*," January 16th, 1947.

For more than 70 years fat round tins of condensed milk with a "Nest" trademark have been rolling out of Switzerland and going round the world. Red-wrapped packets of milk chocolate, invented by chance, have been tumbling after them. From Saskatoon to Hankow and from Middlesbrough to Melbourne, round-faced babies have thriven on tinned diets from the Swiss condenseries. In a lavishly produced book *This Is Your Company*, the Nestlé organisation tells its workers how it has all happened.

It was an American who first thought of making condensed milk in Switzerland. In 1860, CHARLES PAGE, sent from Washington to Zurich as United States Consul, quickly saw that Switzerland would be fine for developing the newly founded American condensed milk industry.

By 1866, he had formed the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, with his brother George in charge. They built a factory at Cham, a tiny village surrounded by herds of dairy cows.

At about the same time, in the town of Vevey on the shores of Lake Geneva, 120 miles to the south, a chemist named *Henri Nestlé* had his first success after many years of experiments trying to produce a new type of infant food. Local doctors were enthusiastic when shown his discoveries. To the tiny workshop in his hillside house. Nestlé invited a group of his friends. They put up a million Swiss francs to found the Henri Nestlé Company to sell the new milk food to the world's babies.

Next door to the Nestlé factory lived DANIEL PETER, a black-bearded chocolate maker who had long been trying to make milk chocolate, but had never been able to get the right mix. Gossiping over a drink one day, the foreman of the two factories hit on the bright idea of mixing some of Nestlé's milk with some of Peter's chocolate. They made the mix in one of Nestlé's machines, then took it across to Peter's plant for processing. The result was a sensational success. Milk chocolate was born.

By 1905, the Nestlé Company and the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company had amalgamated into a 40,000,000 franc combine. With one tricky period between 1921 and 1926, when the balance-sheets showed losses, it has been growing ever since. Now, headed by Swiss-born Dr. EDOUARD MULLER, it runs milk, chocolate and Nescafé factories all over the world, has agents in Iceland, Khartoum and Addis Ababa, carries supplies of fresh milk on the backs of mules to its Ocotlan factory in Mexico.

Its conclusion: "Like any good milkman, Nestlé's has always had to get up early and go far for its customers."

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