

Recent events in Switzerland

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RECENT EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND

One of the most interesting events of national importance was the opening of a public information centre for the Swiss National Park at Zerne. Federal Councillor Tschudi gave an address, and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe handed over a Nature Preservation Diploma of the Council of Europe. 200,000 visitors came to this unique nature reserve in 1967; the Park also serves research in natural sciences. In 1909, an agreement between the "Naturschutzkommission der Schweizerischen Naturforschenden Gesellschaft" and Zerne secured the area to be devoted to natural growth of flora and fauna. The 1st August 1914 was the official foundation date of the National Park, and in January 1961, the Park was put on a firm legal basis. The inauguration of the National Park House was the fourth important date in the history of this beautiful nature reserve in the Engadine. The "Schweizerischer Naturschutzbund" which counts 52,000 members, had met in Lucerne a couple of weeks earlier.

In May, the Swiss Trade Union Congress in Zurich discussed various problems of Swiss life, and Prof. Dr. Karl Schmid (ETH) gave the main address on "Switzerland faces European Reality". The Swiss lawyers met in Geneva, and in Berne, the Swiss United Nations Association discussed the Atomic Proliferation Treaty. The Swiss writer Maurice Zermatten chaired the General Meeting of the Swiss Authors' Association in Solothurn, Federal President Spuehler laid the foundation stone of the new building of the World Postal Union in Berne, whose membership comprises 135 countries, and the former West German Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ludwig Erhard spoke to the Europa Union in Basle, after having given a pessimistic speech in Zurich.

250 delegates of the Federation of Swiss Women's Organisations met in Basle. The Swiss Social Democrats gathered in the same town and listened to a great number of talks and lectures (the main address was given by the President of the Confederation), but devoted very little time to useful discussion. The Liberals held their Party Conference at Montreux; Federal Councillor Schaffner addressed the delegates.

The new and most modern airport installations at Geneva-Cointrin were inaugurated in May, in the presence of Federal Councillor Gnaegi. Several long-distance marches were successfully arranged — 3,900 civilians and 1,300 soldiers took part in the 4th event of this kind in Western Switzerland. 188 patrols participated in the 11th Army Summer Championships in the Eigenthal and on the Krienseregg (Lucerne), and at Duebendorf, the 12th Championship of the Air Force was held at the end of June. An Alpine balloon flight at Muerren was organised in aid of the Pestalozzi Foundation for the promotion of training young people from mountain districts.

A discussion group met in Zurich — "Jews and Christians talk". The Evangelical Church Federation met in St. Gall to discuss burning Church questions and how to help suffering countries like Biafra. At Einsiedeln, the R.C. Bishops' Conference concerned themselves with similar questions.

Young African diplomats were given an opportunity to get to know Switzerland and discussed common problems at a meeting at Castle Lenzburg. Various symposia on science, trade and other subjects were held at the Gottlieb Duttweiler — Institute at Rueschlikon. Other problems were discussed at a holiday course of the Swiss "Staatsbürgerliche Gesellschaft" at Arosa, where the

total revision of the Federal Constitution was one of the subjects. The first diplomas for social work were awarded at the "Evangelische Heimstätte" Gwatt (Berne). A few weeks earlier, 16 leaders in lay training from Asia, Africa and South America had taken part in a course there.

Federal Chancellor Dr. Karl Huber gave an official address at the 14th Federal Yodelling Festival in Winterthur in June. About half the 12,000 members of the Swiss "Jodlerverband" competed, men and women yodellers, alphorn blowers and flag tossers. At the 69th Swiss "Tonkünstlerfest", in Zurich, the Composer's Prize was awarded to Robert Blum from Bellikon (Aargau). 7,000 harmonica players met in Lucerne for the second World Festival, many from Eastern European countries. At the "Golden Rose of Montreux" TV Festival, Spain was first, followed by Bulgaria and France. The special prize for the most comic performance went to the BBC programme "The World of Charlie Drake". A week later, the Swiss "Knabenmusiktage" were held at Interlaken, attended by enthusiastic youngsters; unfortunately, much of the picturesque part of every Swiss festival, including the procession, had to be dropped because of very bad weather.

A Heinrich Federer Commemoration Ceremony was held in Zurich in memory of the 40th anniversary of his death. For the 50th anniversary of Ferdinand Hodler's death, and exhibition is being shown in Berne. After the 18th August, the fine collection of the painter's work will be shown in Geneva, his town of adoption. Pablo Picasso's graphic art is on show in Zurich and has found an interested public.

Amongst various jubilees, we mention the 30th anniversary of the Moral Rearmament movement, attended by 500 delegates from all parts of the world (at Caux), and the Golden Jubilees of SUVA (Swiss Accident Insurance) in Lucerne, the Federal Orchestra Federation in Berne, the Swiss Bank Personnel Federation, also in Berne, the Swiss Railwaymen in Lucerne, the Swiss Women's Alpine Club at Montreux and the Women Members of the Swiss Mercantile Society (SKV) in Lucerne. Federal Councillor Tschudi attended the 125th anniversary of the Swiss Pharmacists' organisation in Basle.

Several European meetings took place in Switzerland: members of the working group on dental decay met in Basle early in July, the European Carton Makers' Association and the heads of European departmental stores in Zurich, whilst the European Cattle and Meat Traders gathered at Montreux.

At international level, Zurich was the venue for the Puppet Festival, the 21st Congress of the International Metalworkers' Federation (at which it was resolved that the worker should have more to say in the running of affairs), and the Kiwani Clubs. In Berne met the Young Baptists from all over the world, the Federation of Socialist and Democratic Press, and the 9th Congress for Genealogic and Heraldic Sciences was organised there early in July. Applied geology was the subject of a symposium in Sion, and protection from nuclear rays of one held in Interlaken. The "Fédération Internationale de Centres Touristiques" met in St. Gall, and experts on high tension from 31 countries attended a demonstration at Brown Boveri's at Baden. The "vets" met at Appenzell, and the "medicos" on the Buergenstock. 600 delegates from 25 countries attended the 37th Wool Conference at Montreux, and 30 countries were represented at the Jewish World Congress in Geneva from 8th to 11th July.

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