

# News from Switzerland

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The welcome to visitors and guests was replied to by Dr. E. Russell, of Napier, who said that though he wasn't Swiss, he had spent a considerable time on vacation in Switzerland, and among the Swiss settled overseas, and held them in the highest regard, particularly in respect to their sincerity and hospitality.

At the conclusion of the banquet, the official toast to the Queen was given, and whilst still standing, those present joined in song with the Swiss National Anthem.

Dancing then followed in the gaily bedecked dance hall. Music, typically Swiss, was provided by members of the Social Club, dancing continuing to a late hour. The dance floor reflected a true Swiss atmosphere with many dancers, young and old, in Swiss national costume.

During the evening, the Swiss Consul-General and his Chancellor were afforded the opportunity of meeting and conversing with all present individually.

The opportunity was also taken of presenting the Zurcher Cup for the first time to this year's winner of the card series, Mrs. Josephine Kaiser and Mr. Walter Fluhler. Prizes were also presented for second place to Mrs. J. Schmid and Mr. Martin Steiner, Jr. Third place winners were Mrs. Cyril Riddick and Mr. E. Napflin.

It is worthy of note to mention that this function was one of the first to be held in Kaponga's new War Memorial Hall, because the Swiss community of Kaponga have a particular interest in this hall, in as much that it was as a result of a Queen Carnival to raise the money necessary to build this hall that the Swiss community set up their own committee, elected a Swiss Princess, and set out to win the carnival in a convincing manner, installing their Princess as Queen Pauline (Schupfer) of the Carnival.

This fine hall stands today as testimony to the magnificent effort of the Kaponga and Districts Swiss community in the interests of the people they are living amongst.

JOHN STEINER,

President

Swiss Social Club (Inc.).

## PASSPORTS

The Consulate wishes to draw the attention of all compatriots to the fact that, even if at the present time this document is not needed very often, particularly if no voyage outside of New Zealand is contemplated, a VALID passport is the only legally recognized identification document of a Swiss citizen abroad. Moreover, only a passport, the validity of which has recently expired, can be renewed without difficulty. It is felt that these facts, coupled with experiences

made during the last few months by the Consulate, make it desirable to recommend very strongly that all compatriots take the necessary steps to renew their passports before or immediately after the expiry date.

## NOTICE

A new Law concerning the reparation of damages and prejudices caused by national socialistic persecution has been passed by the Federal Republic of Germany. Swiss citizens interested are invited to get in touch with the Consulate without delay.

## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### "HOME" FOR SWISS NATIONALS LIVING ABROAD—DURRENAESCH

The "Home" for Swiss nationals abroad has now been opened. One thousand eight hundred and fifty-four feet above sea level, it is situated on the idyllic wooded hills between the Wynen Valley and the lake valley (lake of Hallwil). It is easily accessible from Aarau, and Zurich, Basel, Berne and Lucerne are only 20 to 40 miles away. A fruitful idea has thus been transformed into reality with the aim of helping our fellow citizens in foreign countries to maintain and strengthen their close contacts with Switzerland. The "Home" has been established in order to offer many Swiss nationals abroad—there is room for 50 guests—

#### a "pied-a-terre" in the homeland.

It is intended not only as a holiday centre, but also to help further the feelings of solidarity among our countrymen through its "esprit de corps" and the many and varied services that it is capable of rendering.

The "Home" in Durrenaesch is not just a hotel where one can spend one's ordinary holidays at advantageous prices. It is much more than that for it promotes the necessary contact between Swiss nationals abroad and the land of their fathers by arranging a

#### "Home" holiday in the country,

a new type of holiday in a Swiss village. This contact, indeed, forms part of that experience of the homeland which is longed for by all Swiss who live abroad—particularly the young ones—and which mainly helps to keep alive the good Swiss spirit in far-off places.

This ideal aim is served by the practical arrangement of a stay at the "Home" which is open to all Swiss nationals abroad irrespective of origin, language or religion. In addition to plenty of free time during which each guest may

do as he pleases, he will also contribute his share by co-operating in the work involved in sustaining the "Home." Property, self-supporting establishments, buildings, furnishings, etc., are put at the disposal of the "Home" free of charge, and in addition, a large sum of money is constantly provided by private interests to serve Swiss patriotism abroad. But these donations must be complemented by services on the part of the guests in order that the "Home" may endure. These services consist normally in paying Sw.Fr. 5 — per day of stay, and in co-operating under skilful guidance in the self-supporting establishments of the "Home" (housework, gardening, agriculture, forestry, maintenance of buildings and furnishings, etc.). The "Home" is ready to assist its guests in planning their free time, and the study of languages ("Schweizerdeutsch" and the other languages of the country), Swiss customs, sports and national pastimes, lectures and pleasant entertainment are to be encouraged; small and large trips and excursions will also be arranged according to the season and where possible.

In this way it should be made possible for all Swiss nationals abroad who wish to return to their homeland temporarily or for those having the intention of remaining permanently, to renew or take up cultural and human relations with their native country without consideration of financial conditions. The main goal is that all the guests should be inspired by a friendly, patriotic spirit of solidarity and a feeling for their homeland. We are convinced that the "Home" in Durrenaesch will become a real by-word for Swiss abroad who will carry back with them more than just travel memories of their experiences in their home country.

This new institution is available for all services that may prove useful in encouraging Swiss patriotism among our fellow citizens abroad. It also possesses separate accommodation for Swiss holiday campers, hikers, etc., from abroad, for whom special arrangements will be made as the case arises.

The "Home" invites our compatriots abroad to make use of the possibilities offered, and requests them also to inform their acquaintances of this new institution. **Guests can only be admitted upon application and corresponding confirmation from the "Home."** (Postal address, Durrenaesch, Aargau, Switzerland.)

### Swiss Mountaineers do the Hat-Trick

The news that members of the Swiss Himalayan Expedition, consisting of eleven men, and led by Dr. Albert Eggler, a lawyer, have not only climbed Mount Everest twice, but also the Lhotse peak (27,890 ft.), the world's highest unclimbed mountain, has been received with enthusiasm.

Mount Everest was climbed by Ernest Schmidt, Jurg Marmet, Ernst Reiss and H. R. von Gunten. The Lhotse peak by Fritz Luchsinger and Ernst Reiss.

As this remarkable feat has been widely reported in the daily Press, we do not propose at present to go into further details, but have much pleasure in reproducing a few short comments from English papers:

"The Times":

"A magnificent show."

"The Daily Mail":

"It is the greatest day in our centuries-old history of mountaineering."

"Glasgow Herald":

"The Swiss success is eminently deserved."

"Manchester Guardian":

"The Swiss were disappointed of Everest in 1952, they have done themselves ample justice this time."

"Yorkshire Observer":

"This triple victory is a record for a Himalayan expedition."

Colonel Sir John Hunt:

"It is a very fine show that they managed to climb both mountains. I am glad it was the Swiss."

Sir Edmund Hillary:

"That's a jolly good thing. It's about time somebody else climbed it."

### Switzerland's Foreign Trade During the First Six Months of this Year

Swiss foreign trade, during the first six months of 1956, has increased by more than 10 per cent. as compared with the corresponding period in 1955, attaining, as it has, in absolute figures, the value of five and a half thousand million Swiss francs. All the traditional branches of the Swiss export industry participate in this upward trend, and it is noted with satisfaction that both the Swiss textile and watchmaking industries are once more to be found in a good position. Trade with Switzerland's European customers has gone up to a more marked extent than that with the overseas countries. Thus, Switzerland buys nearly three-quarters of her foreign goods in Europe, whilst about two-thirds of her exports also go to these countries. During the course of the last few years, Switzerland has succeeded in assuring for herself new market possibilities in a number of overseas countries, and she is devoting particular attention to her relations with economically under-developed countries.

### A New Swiss Marine Engine

Switzerland, which is an essentially Continental country, is an important producer of marine engines and one of the biggest metallurgical



plants in Switzerland, the firm of Sulzer Brothers, in Winterthur, has equipped **nearly one-fifth** of the motor-boats which are at present sailing on the Seven Seas. The Swiss firm has just completed a new type of two-stroke Diesel engine, super-fed by exhaust-gas turbo-blowers. The originality of this type of engine resides in the fact that it is equipped with three gas turbines, as a result of which there is an appreciable increase in the engine's output. Compared with a similar engine of the ordinary type, this new marine engine offers the advantage of an output which is about 30 per cent. greater, whilst consuming 8 per cent. less of fuel. The first model of this new type of engine is, at present, being subjected to a very severe control and to trials which will last for several weeks. Afterwards, it will be taken to pieces and conveyed to Rotterdam, where it will be installed in a ship belonging to a Dutch company.

### Swiss Industry Abroad

For the last six years, already, the Swiss firm of machine-tool manufacturers, Messrs. Oerlikon Buhrle & Cie, of Zurich, has collaborated with the Indian Government in the construction of a national machine-tool manufacturing plant, at Bangalore. An Indian delegation, headed by the Indian Minister for Production, is in Switzerland at the present time, where it is engaged in pourparlers with the Swiss firm in question, with a view to intensifying technical collaboration with Switzerland. The Indian Government would like, in particular, to acquire the right to produce, under licence, some new types of machine-tools which, up to now, have been manufactured in Switzerland.

Another Zurich firm, of international renown, has just received an important order from the Union of South Africa. The South African railways are pursuing the electrification of their network by introducing direct current, under a tension of 3,000 volts. An international competition was opened for tenders for the delivery of rectifying sub-stations. The entire order has gone to the Ateliers de Construction d'Oerlikon, in Zurich, owing to a new technical particularity in their production.

### Swiss Hotels and Railways Still Have Pre-war Prices

Basel, Switzerland.—Anybody looking for a bargain holiday-land will certainly not be disappointed in Switzerland. Last year the "Schweizer Hotel Revue," a weekly publication of the Swiss Hotel Association, published some interesting figures which are quoted below in condensed form and supplemented by recent price developments. Results of this survey confirm that to-

day's prices in Switzerland are on the same level as in the years 1920 to 1939, or even lower. This is evident from the following comparisons:

#### Hotel Prices (overnight stay plus 3 meals)

	1931.		1956.	
	Min. Sfr.	Max. Sfr.	Min. Sfr.	Max. Sfr.
First Class Hotel	22.10	32.50	22.00	27.00
Second Class Hotel	16.90	20.50	16.00	22.00
Pensions	13.00	15.60	13.50	16.50

These facts reveal the efforts undertaken by Swiss hotels to keep their prices stable and within the reach and means of everyone. Sweeping renovations in the last years have made Swiss hotels even more inviting to the many holiday-makers "invading" this country. However, not only the hotel industry has kept prices surprisingly low; the transportation companies also have successfully maintained the stability in their fares, and their reputation as low-cost public services. In the year 1847 a railway ticket for the Zurich-Baden journey in the "Spanischbrotlibahn," Switzerland's first railway, cost Sfr. 1.60 gold currency, and today, more than 100 years later, only Sfr. 3.70 (about Fr. 2.80 gold currency). The example of 1914, however, is even more revealing. At that time one paid for a railway trip of 250 miles Sfr. 20.80 gold currency—or Sfr. 27.04 of today's value—compared with Sfr. 27.20 in 1956. The year of 1939 represents another important base of comparison:

#### Prices for one-way Tickets.

	1939.	1956.
Zurich-Lugano	Sfr. 18.80	Sfr. 19.60
Lausanne-Rorschach	Sfr. 21.45	Sfr. 24.20

Thanks to the hotel industry and railway companies tourists in Switzerland today spend bargain holidays, as in the "good old days."

**Thirty-one ocean-going Swiss freighters and passenger ships** now ply the Seven Seas while Switzerland's contribution to Europe's inland navigation is no less than 364 barges and other vessels, most of which are on duty on the Rhine. A total of 111 pleasure steamers and large motor-boats perform scheduled passenger services on Swiss lakes and rivers where a mere nine vessels are engaged in the freight traffic.

### American-Swiss Agreement About Atomic Energy

On the 21st of June, an Agreement on the exchange of information relating to the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy was signed in Washington. This agreement provides that the United States shall sell to the Swiss Government up to 500 kilos of enriched uranium, which will entail an expenditure of about fifty million Swiss francs. This agreement on co-operation stipu-

lates expressly that the deliveries made by the United States shall only serve civilian purposes. This agreement will come into force after ratification by the respective Parliaments of the two countries.

#### Switzerland and the Industrialisation of Economically Under-developed Countries

It is a real pioneer's work that has been accomplished by a firm in Argovie, when it succeeded in preparing and then perfecting the industrial utilisation of ramie fibres. The fibre of this plant, which is an Asian perennial of the nettle family, which grows in the Far East, is known for its exceptional resistance. Thus, mixed with other fibres, it can be used for the manufacture of furnishing fabrics, damask linen, etc. The Swiss firm has been commissioned to deliver a complete modern plant for the processing of ramie fibre to the Philippines. This plant, which is unique of its kind, is capable of producing six tons of ramie fibre per day.

#### Egypt Calls for Swiss Industry

The Cairo authorities have decided to replace the trams by a network of trolley-buses. The transformation of the aerial network of electric cables of this town, which possesses more than two million inhabitants, has been entrusted to the Swiss firm of Kummeler & Matter S.A., of Zurich, and this in spite of very strong foreign competition. As a matter of fact, this firm is the only one which, up to the present, has perfected a system for the suspension of the cables, which is entirely elastic. This transformation job will be started upon very shortly and the trolley-buses will be put into service in the autumn of 1957.

#### David and Goliath

In conformity with the legislation in force, the increase in Customs duties on watches, which was decreed two years ago by the American Government, is now being subjected to an examination, in the United States. The Swiss Minister in Washington has seized this opportunity to intervene with the Government of the United States and to request it to have the Customs duties on watchmaking imports brought down to the former level, such as was provided for in the Commercial Treaty of 1936.

In this connection, it is interesting to compare the rates of duty imposed on imports in these two countries. Whereas American products imported into Switzerland are only liable to an average Customs duty of about 8 per cent. ad valorem, Swiss imports in the United States pay, on an average, three times as much, whilst watch imports pay more than 45 per cent., that is to

say, five times as much. We would like to add, also, that in 1955, every Swiss had consumed, on an average, American products to the value of 40 dollars, whereas the consumption of Swiss products in the United States hardly attained one dollar per inhabitant.

#### A Swiss "Floating University"

At the University of Berne, there exists an Institute for Touristic Research, which is attached to the Faculty of Law. This Institute provides practical and theoretical instruction for the future directors of the Swiss Tourist Trade. Every year, it organises a scientific excursion, which helps the students to complete their practical training. This year, the young students from this Institute took part in a cruise, on the Swiss ship "Arosa Sun," thus making themselves familiar with the problems attached to the carrying of passengers across the High Seas, whilst at the same time attending lectures and visiting various European towns.

#### Milk Pipe-line in Switzerland

An interesting experiment is now being attempted in the Canton of Valais, which is an essentially agricultural and mountainous region, in the southern part of Switzerland. Dairy producers have had the idea of connecting their Alpine pastures, which are sometimes situated at an altitude of more than 1500 metres, with the milk-collecting centres in the valley, by means of a pipe-line carrying the milk. The first section of this pipe has already been put into position, partly underground, and if this experiment proves successful, it is intended to lengthen it so that the whole pipe-line will extend over a distance of more than seven kilometres. The material used for this purpose is a tube made of "Symalen," a non-corrodible plastic material, through which a streamlet of fresh water passes. The passage of the water is stopped several times a day in accordance with requirements, and the tube, cooled in this manner, can then spout up to seven litres of milk per second. Telephonic communication between the two stations has been established in order to ensure the proper functioning of this system and to prevent any water getting mixed with the milk.

#### Clouds of Smoke in Switzerland

During 1955, the Swiss tobacco industry produced 8.4 thousand million cigarettes, which represents an annual average consumption of nearly 1700 cigarettes per inhabitant. About two-thirds of the cigarettes manufactured in Switzerland are made from American tobacco, approximately one-quarter from Oriental tobacco, whilst one-tenth of the production is covered by the home-grown article.



### Social Insurance in Switzerland

The Swiss Compensation Fund of the Old Age Pension and Survivors' Insurance showed an increase of five hundred million francs in 1955. Total receipts exceeded 850 million francs, whereas expenditure only attained some 300 million francs. If one takes this surplus into account, then the balance-sheet of the Compensation Fund of the Old Age Pension and Survivors' Insurance presents a credit of three thousand and a half million francs, which are placed in State obligations, the average yield from which is close to three per cent.

### Indo-Swiss Economic Co-operation

A new plant for the manufacture of precision-machine-tools is to be built shortly in India, in the proximity of Bangalore. This Indian factory will be organised with the co-operation of a Swiss plant manufacturing precision machines. The agreement concluded between the two firms provides for Indian specialists being trained in Switzerland.

### Switzerland's Economy Expands

The Commission for Economic Research, in its report on the economic situation during the first quarter of this year, states that the economic situation in Switzerland is characterised by a persistence in the factors conducive to expansion. On the labour market, in particular, the number of vacant jobs remains high and the employment of foreign workers has in no way declined. The number of hours worked overtime has increased by 11 per cent., as compared with the preceding year. The development in Swiss export trade persists concurrently with a still more marked increase in imports of consumer goods. A certain stability is to be observed in regard to retail prices, whereas the prices in the wholesale trade show a slight tendency towards a rise.

### Swiss Cooks for Melbourne

Geneva, Switzerland.—The excellent reputation Swiss chefs have enjoyed abroad for many decades was recently confirmed when forty exponents of Swiss gastronomy were chosen in Geneva by an Australian Olympiad representative for the task of preparing the favourite dishes of athletes from all over the world at the forthcoming Olympic Games in Melbourne. The forty cooks were selected from a group of 150 candidates from all over Switzerland. In addition forty other distinguished culinary experts were found of suitable standing, bringing the total of Swiss "Olympic" champions in the gastronomic field up to eighty. More "Olympic" chefs were picked in Italy, England, Germany, Holland, Sweden and

Austria. The representative of the Australian Organizing Committee, however, emphasized that Swiss "chefs de cuisine" are "simply unbeatable."

### Switzerland and the Aid to Under-developed Countries

The Federal Council is submitting to the Swiss Parliament the draft bill of a decree relating to the technical aid which Switzerland is to furnish to the economically under-developed countries, from 1957 to 1959. According to the terms of this decree, the Swiss Government can allocate to the United Nations Organisation a maximum annual contribution amounting to one and a half million Swiss francs. Independently of the multi-lateral technical aid furnished by Switzerland within the framework of the United Nations, the Swiss Government will also be able to take measures in favour of economically backward countries, on a bi-lateral plane, to the extent of 300,000 francs per year.

In this connection, we would like to recall the fact that, during the last five years, Switzerland has placed 124 experts at the disposal of the International Organisations, who have contributed towards improving the economic situation in the economically under-developed countries. During this same period, 440 foundation scholars, from the countries in question, have been received in Switzerland, in order to complete their education.

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