

Progress of Swiss Watchmaking

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questions, legislation, organization and undertakings.

This group will comprise also the work of the Federal Water Service, that is to say, the hydrographical and limnometrical indications and the gaugings, also the observations of the Federal Meteorological Station on the precipitations and evaporation and its work of research on the determination of the relations existing between water of evaporation and water of gushing streams.

This same group includes the whole of the problems concerning the preservation of the waters in Switzerland, whilst questions of detail and matters of special study will be included in the two other groups.

From the point of view of the generalities we will seek to show the disposabilities of hydraulic power in Switzerland, the actual state of the manufacturing factories that are running, their number, their average power, their maximum capacity, the statistics per head of the population and their comparison with those of other countries, briefly everything which presents any interest in this line of thought. It will be important to bring out the degree of utilization of the different works as much from the point of view of the maximum power as of the yearly power.

The work of infrastructure and superstructure of the factories and the hydraulic work will constitute a second group in the Exhibition.

It comprises the problems of installation of the works in their entirety. On this subject it will be interesting to make a comparative study of the evolution of the general arrangements of the stations.

In Switzerland we possess a series of factories either with a high or a low fall, working independently, others on the contrary, or groups of factories, of one or the other type, working in parallel. It would therefore be possible, on the basis of examples, to point out the improvements that we could introduce to the work in parallel of the factories having different hydraulic systems and influence, in their working, of daily, weekly or annual accumulations.

There will be included in this group the different stations which will show their installations in a complete way; from two points of view, commercial and technical, and if possible by the presentation of models.

It is also intended to give a view of the whole of the work of regulating, of rectifying and of the maintenance of inland waters in view of their hydraulic utilization.

Several regulatings of the lakes have already been undertaken in Switzerland, others are being studied.

Another subdivision of the second group includes details of installations, such as works below the soil (infrastructure), dams, buildings, entrance and exit works, storage reservoirs, canals, galleries, high-pressure pipes, the development of these different constructions during these last years will be shown. By the help of a systematic grouping, it would be possible, on the basis of existing examples chosen among the factory-types, to show the evolution of the different parts of hydro-electrical installations in Switzerland.

The sluice-valves, the winches belong to another subdivision of the same group. We are waiting for Swiss industry to present plans and models of her constructions, or better still, to exhibit, if it is possible, material or certain finished pieces destined for the fitting out of large installations. It would be, for example, very interesting to see some check-valves of different modern conceptions exhibited.

The third group comprises mechanical and electrical installations and includes, in the first place, turbines and generators of modern construction. The greatest space available will be reserved for these kinds of machines.

In the scientific part will be grouped, among others, the results of the researches in the domain of machines, the experiments on the models by our technical colleges and by the great industries, all the questions relating to hydraulics, strictly speaking, etc.

The products of our industry and particularly of material having any relation to the production of power as far as and including primary transformers and the high-tension network will enter into the practical part of this programme. (B.I.S.)

PROGRESS OF SWISS WATCHMAKING.

In the course of the first six months of the present year, the Swiss watchmaking industry has beaten all its previous records. Never before had so many watches and movements been exported within six months. Altogether, what with finished watches, movements, unfinished movements, spare parts, alarm-clocks and clocks, the total value of its exports amounted to 157 million francs, as against 112 millions during the corresponding period last year. The number of finished watches and movements was 11½ millions, as compared with 8 millions last year. The increase in exportation affected all categories of articles, including the fine gold pocket-watches, the almost complete disappearance of which had been at one time considered as inevitable during the recent years of crisis.

As is generally the case, the cause of such an exceptionally high export trade is to be found mainly in accidental circumstances, the recurrence of which is not to be expected for a long time. It is no indication that under its various aspects the watchmaking industry is as thriving as one might imagine. The fact is that the circumstances were quite exceptional, for this amazing increase in exportation is to be ascribed in the first place to the intense demand on the English market, where the McKenna duties were re-established on the 1st July. During the months which preceded that fateful date, there was a continuous flow of exports to Great Britain, where both wholesale and retail merchants are now overstocked. In a word, England's purchases in the course of this half-year are seven times as high as during the corresponding period last year. One may conclude hence that so considerable an exportation is not to be expected during the next half-year.

The efforts made by the Watchmakers' Federation are now producing their first results, and prices remain high as regards articles of superior quality. Nevertheless, the profit made by manufacturers is still very moderate when there is any profit at all. As the watchmaking industry is about the only one in Switzerland where the cost-price is practically identical with the cost of labour (this remark does not apply to gold or silver watch-cases, but to the essential part of the watch—its movement) one will readily understand that it is affected, more than any other industry, by the cost of living, which still remains very high in Switzerland. Wages, which cannot be reduced as long as all commodities are dear, constitute the irreducible element in the cost-price. Moreover, most of the foreign markets, impoverished as they are in consequence of the war, would no longer buy a single watch of extra quality were the price of it raised in the proportions that were customary before the war. Hence the straitened circumstances in which even the best watchmaking firms are placed in Switzerland, in spite of their seeming prosperity. They have plenty of work, but the profits are very much below normal. As long as foreign customers have not recovered their former purchasing power, which means an improvement in the exchanges, there will be no alteration in the present precarious situation.

Whilst striving all they can to produce their goods in the least unfavourable conditions and reducing at the same time by sheer ingenuity the cost of production, the Swiss chronometer-makers are still coming off most successful at international competitions. At the last competition held at the Royal Observatory, Teddington (England), the principal Swiss firms won all the first prizes, and the best of them, those which each year improve their manufacturing processes and setting departments, are very gradually approaching that theoretical maximum of 100, which is the ambitious aspiration of every highly gifted regulator. Of course, that maximum being a theoretical one will never be attained, for that would mean perfection in the control apparatus as well as in the chronometers. But the most brilliant of our chronometer-makers will be getting nearer and nearer to it in proportion as they gain a better knowledge of the causes of perturbation affecting even the best regulated chronometer. In this respect, the research work carried on by the Swiss Chronometric Association and the Testing Laboratory at the University of Neuchâtel will prove most helpful to chronometer-makers and high-precision regulators; and thus the co-operation of science and industry which is an increasingly imperious need is being admirably realized.

In spite of ever recurring difficulties and crises, the Swiss watchmaking industry is determined to hold the rank it has always held in the past: the first in the world. (B.I.S.)

USEFUL INFORMATION for TRAVELLERS IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Federal Railways are putting into service special Pullman carriages (in American: 'parlor-cars'), divided into two compartments, smokers and non-smokers, and beautifully decorated. Each of these two saloons contains 17 places, sofas and moveable armchairs, permitting an extensive view through the very large plate-glass windows.

They can be heated by either steam or electricity at pleasure, while at both ends of the carriage are toilets and a baggage compartment. These carriages will be put into service from the 4th of July on the line from Basle to Coire. They will be attached to Train 179, which leaves Basle at 8.50 a.m. and arrives at Coire at 12.40 p.m.; and to Train 198, leaving Coire at 7 p.m. and reaching Basle at 10.45 p.m. Travellers with 1st class tickets will be admitted to these carriages if they hold a supplementary ticket, whose price is calculated at the rate of frs. 2.— per 100 kilometres. Seats may be reserved in advance upon payment of 1 franc.

Postal parcels up to 22 lbs. in weight may now be sent from Great Britain to Switzerland and other countries in Europe and Africa. A parcel weighing 22 lbs. sent from Great Britain to Switzerland (including Lichtenstein) will cost

5/3d. Heavy parcels from abroad may be sent to any place in Great Britain. Hitherto the British regulation shipping limit by post was 11 lbs. weight.

The Customs-houses in Interlaken (15th June to 10th September) and St. Moritz (15th June to 10th September) will be reopened for the summer season. Visitors' luggage, including sports goods, can be despatched direct to these offices for examination.

Good walkers coming to Switzerland will appreciate the two charmingly written and well illustrated volumes "Switzerland in Summer" by Will and Carine Cadby (Mills & Boon, London), 5/- each.

The sub-title 'Discursive Information for Visitors' well indicates its practicality. Volume I treats of The Bernese Oberland, Volume II of The Grisons. It is so concise, graphic and informative that one is tempted to quote from it at length. Take this, for example: "Those who have never been to this part of Switzerland seem to have a hazy idea that the Engadine is the Grisons, whereas it is but one valley of the canton, although of much importance, being sixty miles long and one of the most extensive in Europe. It begins at the Maloja Pass (5,900 feet), where the road leads down to Castasegna, the Swiss village on the Italian frontier, and finishes at Martinsbruck (3,400 feet), the old Tyrol border. The river Inn runs through it, and high mountains flank the entire length."

There is also a companion volume by the same authors: "Switzerland in Winter." And they close their Grisons volume with this pithy advice:

1. Book ahead. It is no more trouble, ensures a good room and additional comfort.
2. Travel light. Trunks are a nuisance, but unpacked, unnecessary things are a plague.
3. Take some warm clothing. Remember it may snow in August.
4. Select the quickest route. It is economy in food and nerves.
5. When choosing a room look out of the window. A view makes all the difference.
6. Be careful not to overwalk. The nerves of the stomach tire before those of the legs.
7. For sunburn or chafed skin buy Swiss remedies. They are more effectual than our own.
8. When taking lunch out, ask for anything you want. The hotel staffs are used to considering individual tastes.
9. Luggage of any size can be sent by post. It should be delivered at the post-office an hour before the mail is due to start.
10. When going a trip start early. A little time in hand is never amiss and often a godsend.

"This canton is particularly adapted for walking, for every trip leads on to others, and the quite ordinary walker can have the stimulating experience of travel on foot from one end of the country to the other, with the assurance of comfortable accommodation every night, whether he stops on a pass or in some remote mountain valley." (The Swiss Monthly.)

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To the Editor of The Swiss Observer.

Sir,—There are numerous newspapers at our disposal, so if we take a dislike to one of them, all we need to do is to give it up and adopt another one. This does not apply to a publication like *The Swiss Observer*, which is the sole organ of a community composed of various social, religious and political elements. Such a publication should avoid publishing controversial matters which might tend to produce unpleasantness between sections of its readers.

Most of us, I am sure of it, like to read 'Kyburg's' Notes. I for one enjoy them, and I am grateful to him for the trouble he takes in writing them. When, however, he actually lectures us on the blessings of Free Trade, it is bound mildly to annoy people who, like myself, contend that, having regard to world conditions as they are at present, free trading is pure heresy.

In that particular sense Mr. Hanifin's protest is well taken. The *Observer* is hardly the place to criticize the meaning of a religious practice which is dear to the Catholic heart.

This being said, you will perhaps allow me to venture the following remarks. It can hardly be said that the point was taken up by either side in a manner acceptable to both. It seems clear that the meaning of a procession should not have come up for consideration, whether it be taken by some as advertising a religion, or by others purely as an expression of religious faith. Public streets belong to everybody; they are the property of, and kept up by, the whole community. For this reason and for this reason alone a public thoroughfare in an important city should not be used for the display of a religious practice to which a large number of citizens rightly or wrongly take strong exception.

It might be objected that Socialist or Red elements are at times allowed to parade the streets although the majority of the electorate might dislike it. This, however, is another question which