

The new buildings of the League of Nations in Geneva

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The New Buildings of the League of Nations at Geneva.

The new buildings of the League of Nations in Ariana Park, near Geneva, are approaching completion, and were recently inspected by members of the League Council. The exterior is practically finished, and the internal installations are well in hand. Work on the foundations was begun in March, 1931, and it is hoped that the new buildings may be inaugurated by the Assembly of 1935.

The buildings formed the subject of an international architectural competition in 1926, and 377 designs were received in the early part of 1927. The jury failed to agree on any one design, and awarded nine equal prizes. The Assembly then appointed a committee of five, which finally chose, as the basis of the design for the new buildings, the scheme presented by M. Nenot, the eminent French architect, in collaboration with a Swiss architect, M. Flegenhaimer. Three other architects among the nine prize-winners were chosen to collaborate in the final scheme—namely, Signor Broggi (Italian), M. Lefevre (French), and M. Vago (Hungarian).

BUILDINGS' SIMPLE LINES.

The result of this rather hazardous experiment is more dignified than most people expected. The design presents no strongly marked originality. The lines are simple, with no attempt at external ornamentation, the architects having relied for their effect upon proportions and grouping. The main interest is in the Assembly Hall proper, flanked on either side by a gallery,

giving access to the committee rooms, and leading on one side to the library and on the other to the Council room wing.

The total length of the buildings is approximately 400 yards, the area approximately 18,000 square yards, and the cubic capacity slightly less than that of the Palace of Versailles. The Secretariat building contains some 550 rooms. The Council room wing comprises a large and well-proportioned room for the public meetings of the Council, a smaller room for private meetings, and five committee rooms for the League committees which sit regularly and not merely during the Assembly.

The Assembly Hall will accommodate about 600 delegates, experts, and secretaries, and about 500 journalists. About 800 public seats are provided. The size of the hall obviously called for special attention to acoustical requirements, and the Assembly accepted the British Government's offer to place the resources of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research at the disposal of the architects. The Architectural Acoustics Committee of the Department has collaborated throughout in the design of the Assembly Hall, and it may be confidently expected that the new hall will give every satisfaction in this respect.

No British firm competed for the masonry contract, but British industry has secured a fair share of those contracts for which it has competed. Metal window frames are used through-

out, and practically all are being manufactured by British firms. A British firm also secured the contract for the construction and equipment of the book store in the new library, designed to house more than 1,000,000 volumes.

The cost of the new buildings was fixed by the Assembly in 1932 at 25,277,150 Swiss Francs, or a little more than £1,000,000 sterling at par. The greater part of this sum was already available in the building fund, and at present only about 3,000,000 Swiss francs remain to be met by annual contributions of the States members. These figures exclude the library, of which the entire cost is being met out of the Rockefeller grant of 2,000,000 dollars (£400,000 at par), and therefore represents no charge upon League funds.

As in the case of the International Labour Office, Governments were invited to make contributions in kind towards the decoration and furnishing of the buildings, and several Governments have already responded to this invitation.

Among the gifts already accepted may be mentioned those of the Union of South Africa (panelling for a committee room), New Zealand (panelling of a room), Australia (presidential platform for the Assembly Hall), India (furniture for the office of the President of the Assembly), Holland (decoration and furnishing of the Secretary-General's office), Persia (carpets for the private Council room and for the offices of the President of the Assembly and of the Council).

T. S.

NEWS FROM THE COLONY.

LUNCHEONS AT THE SWISS LEGATION.

Several luncheon parties took place recently at our Legation, in honour of various distinguished *Suisse de passage*.

The Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini entertained amongst others at luncheon: Mme. Rüfenacht, widow of the late Swiss Minister to Germany; M. and Mme. A. J. Tschiffeli, the Swiss delegates to the International Conference "de la Propriété intellectuelle"; Director Kraft, of the Bureau international pour la Propriété Industrielle; Sir Arnold and Lady Theiler, M. and Mme. Schaerer.

National Councillor Adrien Lachenal, as well as a Swiss delegation to the International Tourist Congress, are at present *de passage* in London.

SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS SPECIAL TRAIN.

The Swiss Federal Railways in Switzerland have made arrangement for a special train for London.

About 350 of our countrymen will arrive in London on Sunday, June 10th. A social evening will be held at the Union Helvetia Club, on Monday, June 11th, for members of the party and their friends.

SWISS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

From the annual report of the above Society, which was published recently, we should like to extract a few outstanding facts:—

Last year the total expenditure amounted to £4,536, nearly £500 more than in 1932. Thanks to the generous support of friends and the contributions from the Swiss authorities, it was possible to assist 652 compatriots. Besides donations in kind, £4,103 were distributed, viz.: £53

for repatriations, £2,102 as casual relief, and £1,948 as pensions to 76 poor people aged 62 to 89. As a general basis, pensioners receive a weekly allowance of 10/- over and above their rent, taking into consideration whatever other income they may have, such as old age pension, etc. There is no need to emphasise the smallness of this amount, which has to provide for food, fuel and cover sundry expenses. Much as the committee would like to increase this allowance, the present revenue does unfortunately not permit them to do so as yet.

Full reports and further particulars regarding the activities of the Society will be gladly forwarded on application to the Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society, Swiss House, 34, Fitzroy Square, W.1.

65th FETE SUISSE.

Donnerstag, den 21. Juni 1934

in der

Central Hall, Westminster.

Liebe Landsleute! Etwas Heimweh plagt uns wohl alle bisweilen. Und da gleich und gleich sich gern gesellt, so wollen wir uns auch alle am 21. Juni in der Westminster Central Hall erfinden. Um 6 Uhr schon diejenigen, die gern etwas essen und trinken. Wir können sie versichern, dass am Buffet nach Schweizerart und für den Schweizergaumen gesorgt ist — auch in der grossen Pause von 8—9 Uhr.

Von jeher ist die Fête Suisse ein Familienfest gewesen in unserer Colonie.

Alte, vertraute Weisen aus dem schier unerschöpflichen Liederschatz unserer Heimat, Vorführungen von Solisten, Chören und Kindern wollen unser Herz erfreuen. Dabei wollen wir der fernen Schweiz gedenken, als deren Kinder wir auch in der Fremde ihr unsere Treue bewahren. "Der Bruderliebe Sonnenstrahl verkläre stets den alten Bund." Und diese Bruderliebe findet auch darin ihren Ausdruck, dass unsere Schweizerische Hilfsgesellschaft für ihre Pflegebefohlenen vom Ertrag dieses Festes ihren Teil erhalten wird. Wer sich deshalb recht freuen will, der komme und bereite seinerseits wieder Freunde. Das ist der tiefere Sinn dieser Fête Suisse, zu der wir alle herzlich eingeladen sind.

DISCOVERING GLARUS.

Glarus! It is a refreshing name, full of promise! Yet infinitely sweeter to me sounds the native appellation of "Glarnerland," for in it is expressed the deep affection which the inhabitants cherish for their lovely little country. The canton of Glarus is a charming miniature of Switzerland, and its popularity dates back to those early days when the Rhaeti, the Romans and the Alemanni had successively settled within its fair domains.

To the latter people came in the sixth century Saint Fridolin, an Irish apostle, and up to the present day many of the inhabitants of Glarus fervently believe that this Holy Man, whose likeness adorns the cantonal coat-of-arms, watches over their land.

Glarus is one of the few Swiss cantons where government matters are still decided by the *Landsgemeinde*, or open-air parliament, meeting yearly in spring, and religious tolerance is so generous that in the capital of Glarus and in many villages the same place of worship is used by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike.

Any visitor who entertains an admiration for a people who cling to century-old traditions would be impressed by the so-called *Näfelschifahrt*. This celebration commemorates yearly on the first Thursday in April the glorious victory of 600 men of Glarus against a force of some 6,000 Austrians on April 9, 1388. Eleven memorial stones mark the spots where so many unsuccessful attacks had been made by the enemy, and the procession stops before each to offer a prayer.

Alpine lakes of an incredible transparency and gorgeous hue are scattered like precious jewels over this charming country, and among them the lake of Klöntal, approached from Nostal near Glarus, is probably the most famous. Owing to numerous conflagrations, the little cantonal capital lacks the atmosphere of great old age to which it is entitled, but it really deserves to be better known as an ideal starting point for a multitude of excursions to near-by lakes and mountains. While dairying is one of the prevalent industries, wool-weaving, cotton-spinning and dyeing furnish a livelihood for many, and near the resort of Elm, in the Sernf valley, are slate quarries.