

# The Lausanne Swiss National Fair and other countries

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## THE LAUSANNE SWISS NATIONAL FAIR AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

On the occasion of the 34th Swiss National Fair at Lausanne which will shortly be opening its gates, from September 12th to 27th, it is perhaps worthwhile calling attention to one of the features of this fair likely to be of particular interest abroad.

Although this fair, eloquent display of the principles and intricate machinery that go to make up Switzerland's economy, is, as is only natural, basically national in character, it nevertheless shows a certain commercial liberalism enabling it to make an exception by inviting one other country to participate.

Thus, one after the other, France, Belgium, Holland and Italy, all countries near to Switzerland, showed themselves to advantage at the Lausanne Fair by putting on display a striking epitome of their main economic wealth. Later, in the same spirit of international goodwill and at the same time illustrating Switzerland's foreign trade with certain countries overseas, Morocco, the Belgian Congo and Tunisia were also invited to exhibit their products in a special pavillion with the added attraction each time of a picturesque display of native folklore.

Switzerland's relations with the South American continent having been extremely close since the second World War, the 34th Lausanne National Fair will this year be welcoming Brazil as its guest of honour. The official nature of this South American contribution means that, like other foreign countries exhibiting before it, its participation will be the occasion for some ceremonies in which the Federal Government will be associated.

In other words the Lausanne Fair, where each year Switzerland's agriculture, industry, trade and craftwork have the opportunity to display their products, goes beyond the usual limits of a national trade fair and, in its twenty halls, gives a clear picture of the position of the country, whose activities it illustrates, in regard to world economy.

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## IBEX RESTORED TO SWISS ALPS.

*(We are reproducing, by courtesy of the Editor, this very interesting article which appeared in the July 20th, issue of "THE TIMES".)*

One of the most remarkable achievements in the revival of a disappearing animal species is the resettlement of ibex in the Swiss Alps.

Ibex or bouquetins were numerous until the sixteenth century, but their number dwindled rapidly, owing probably to the development of portable fire arms which enabled hunters to shoot them more easily. Records show that there was none left in 1550 in Glarus, in 1553 in Canton Uri, in 1770 in Canton Berne, and the last were seen in 1750 in the Grisons and in 1770 in the Bernese mountains, while some still existed just after 1800 in Canton Valais. After that the only reminder was the ibex on the coat of arms of Canton Grisons and of Entremont, in the Valais.

Two attempts at reintroducing ibex in the Alps were made in the Grisons, one in 1879 when 13 animals imported from Austria were released on the Arosa Rothhorn, the other in 1886 when four from the Basle Zoo were let loose on Piz d'Aela, above Filisur, in Canton Grison. Both attempts failed and all the animals died from disease.

In 1914, a new attempt was made to settle some ibex bought from the Aosta National Park, but before being released they were kept some time on special breeding grounds near St. Gallen and later on the Harder, near Interlaken. Some were released in the mountains but they disappeared after a few years.

Some more methodical attempts were then made under the auspices of the Swiss League for the Protection of Nature, which is now responsible for the whole scheme. The animals were at first acclimatized in the lower regions, in special breeding grounds, before being transported in the higher mountains. There were some failures, but as the years passed the rearing of young ibex was improved and in the end all the settlements were more or less successful.

For instance, the 19 ibex released in 1920 in the National Park, in the Engadine, had increased to 170 in 1949, but of 15 settled on Piz d'Aela in 1914 none was left a few years later. A further attempt at settling them on Piz-d'Aela was more successful and last year there were 15 ibex in that district.

There are now altogether 11 settlements districts whose total herd grew from 1,129 animals in 1949 to 1,220 at the end of 1952. The smallest herd is that of the Justistal (Berne), with 10 animals, while the biggest, totalling 500 ibex, is on Piz Albris, in the Engadine. There are now 30 ibex on the Graue Hörner (St. Gallen), from 40 to 50 on the Schwarzer Mönch and the Engelhörner (Berne), 150 on the Augs-matthorn (Berne), 160 (a decrease of 10, these having presumably migrated to the Piz Albris district) in the National Park, 260 on Mont Pleureur (Valais).

The Piz Albris settlement is the most prosperous, its herd increased from 480 to 500 between 1949 and 1952. Anyone climbing on the slopes of Piz Languard, near Pontresina, can easily see ibex roaming among the rocks, and sometimes they even come as low as the Morteratsch glacier. The Swiss League for the Protection of Nature has already devoted a sum of over £20,500 to the settlement of ibex, and its efforts and sacrifices have already not been fruitless.