

The Week at home

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Zurich — Heidi, the little Swiss girl made world-famous by Johanna Spyri, Switzerland's favourite writer for young people, and her playmate, Goat Peter, recently arrived here via Swissair directly from Tokyo. The tiny Japanese schoolgirl, Kazue Saito, 12, and her 12 year old companion, Ichizo Kato, as a matter of fact, came not out of Frau Spyri's book but merely posed as Heidi fans. When "Heidi and Peter", a production by the Swiss film company Praesens, made its appearance in Japan's cinemas they entered a nation-wide essay contest for school-children. Their nicely written pieces on Heidi and the Swiss Alps won them a Swissair flight to Zurich and a holiday trip through Heidi's own homeland. Accompanied by a Tokyo news reporter they visited the hamlet of Hirzel in the Canton of Zurich where Johanna Spyri spent most of her life, the picturesque winegrowers' town of Maienfeld near Ragaz Spa in the foothills of the Grisons mountains, where the author of "Heidi" is said to have modelled her heroine after a local peasant girl, and the Diavolezza above Pontresina which was one of the scenic locations of the Heidi film. Before returning to Tokyo by air the two Japanese children spent a day at the Pestalozzi Children's Village near Trogen where orphans from all over the world have been given a happy home and upbringing.

* * *

Pontresina — At the upper fringe of the Languard Forest, overlooking Pontresina from an altitude of over 6000 ft above sea-level, stands the quaint little mountain church of Santa Maria which in recent months has been carefully restored and equipped with special protective devices against frost, snow and humidity. It has been known for some time that this Marian chapel contained precious art works some of which were discovered only a few decades ago.

It has now been established that the murals which will henceforth be protected from weather-beatings, include priceless frescoes of the early 12th century and 19 paintings depicting the Mary Magdalene legend and dating back to the second half of the 15th century.

A new "Mot-Hotel" has been opened recently by the Touring Club of Switzerland at Ragaz Spa. The so-called "castle" of Ragaz has been transformed into a hotel and sixteen motel bungalows situated in a wonderful park have been added. The "mot-hotel" also boasts a comfortable camping site.

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THE WEEK AT HOME.

By MAX NEF

The Autumn Session of the Federal Parliament came to an end, in October, and with it, also, the 35th present legislative period. On the first Monday, in December, the new Lower Chamber resulting from the October elections, will be sworn in, for a new period of office, extending over four years. This means a new period of office, also, for the Federal Government, which will have to be elected by the new Parliament. It is still too early to make any surmises regarding the possibilities of new replacements in the Cabinet. Although — when compared with similar conditions

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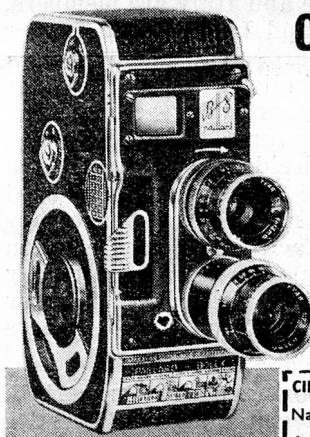


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abroad — the position of our Federal Authorities is very stable, nevertheless, when Parliament proceeds with a general re-election of the Federal Government, one may reckon on a change occurring in respect of about one-quarter of its members. At the same time, only insignificant variations take place in regard to the strength of the various Parties represented therein.

The retiring Parliament dealt with a large number of individual desires and questions on the part of the deputies, during the two weeks of its Autumn Session. Among these were questions relating to Switzerland's foreign policy, which gave the Federal Government the opportunity to sketch a rough outline of the international situation and, above all, to lay before Parliament, and thus also before the Swiss Public, the views held by the Federal Government in regard to the important problem of European integration.

Switzerland's participation in the union of seven countries for the purpose of forming a common Free Trade Area is intended as an answer and as a counterweight to the already effective union of the six countries which constitute the so-called Common Market. Both these groups comprise countries which belong to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, known as the O.E.E.C., which has established effective and appropriate practical conditions for the reconstruction of Europe after the war and has striven to overcome the lack of union, which threatened it.

With the setting up of the new European Common Market, of which three of Switzerland's neighbours, namely West Germany, France and Italy are members, as well as Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, a new cleavage is now threatening European economy, which may prove all the more prejudicial in that certain political aspirations are manifesting themselves, within it. If seven further countries which belong to the O.E.E.C. have now decided to unite into a group, this does not mean the achievement of a final solution to the problem, but rather an intermediary stage which it is hoped may facilitate a future union between the two communities. In this way it may prove possible to ban the danger which is now threatening, of a splitting up of Europe into separate economic blocs.

Even should such unions bring with them certain disadvantages and the surrendering of former liberties for the countries concerned, these are outweighed by the expected advantages. Switzerland has most carefully examined the question as to whether her neutrality, as well as the principles of free trade, allow her to participate in such a grouping with other countries. The Federal Government has, however, carefully marked out the limits which must not be over-stepped. The marching orders for the further development of this scheme are clear and explicit, as could be gathered from the statement made by Mr. Petitpierre, the Swiss Minister for Foreign Affairs, before Parliament. His remarks were both clear and convincing.

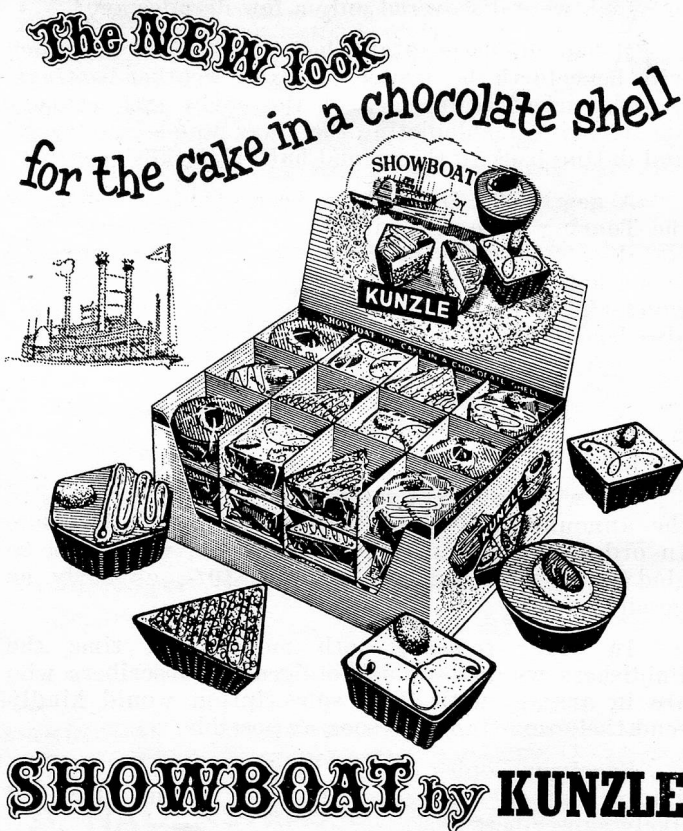
Latterly, the development of Swiss economy has proceeded smoothly along the even tenor of its way. The cost-of-living has become stabilised, to a very large extent, with only occasional fluctuations relating to the seasons. The results of our foreign trade serve as a graduator, among other things, for an estimate of our economic prosperity. They continue to be

characterised by an upward trend. Tourist traffic, also, favoured as it has been by the fine weather, has proved very satisfactory. The turnover in the domestic retail trade shows higher figures, in value, than those in the preceding months. The situation of employment continues to be good. According to the Labour Exchanges, they have fewer than a thousand workers who are looking for jobs. The number of foreign workers, imported in order to fill in those jobs for which the domestic labour was insufficient, is still very considerable. The building trade, fortunately, shows a revival in its activities, but, all the same, there is still a big dearth in housing accommodation.

SWISSAIR AND SAS CONSIDER CHANGE IN JET ORDER

Swissair and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) have stated that they are at present examining the question whether they should change their order for five Convair 880 medium range jets to the new Convair 600 "Coronado". The airlines said that since the joint order was placed in October 1958 it has become evident that the change to turbofan jet engines with which the Convair 600 will be equipped will result in essential improvements regarding payload, speed and specific fuel consumption. Furthermore, data now available have established that the turbofan engines have a lower noise level.

Although the Convair 880 has already successfully completed the major part of its test programme and in some respects exceeded the calculated performance, the improved "Coronado" version appears to promise advantages for the specific route requirements of Swissair and SAS, the airlines stated.



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