

"Our fatherland" [continued]

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This trade fair, which is national in character, regularly invites one foreign country to participate with a display of its own. After France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Morocco, the Belgian Congo and Tunisia, the Swiss Comptoir will have the privilege this year of welcoming as its official guest the Republic of the United States of Brazil.

From September 12th to 27th, Lausanne will be the centre of attraction for all those wishing to see the achievements of Swiss workmanship, at this trade fair which, moreover, constitutes one of the most noble and authentic traditions of the country.

SWISS INDUSTRY AND PROSPECTS OF USING ATOMIC ENERGY

Switzerland possesses no uranium ore, the only natural fissile material making possible a nuclear chain reaction, that is a reaction which, in given conditions, maintains itself. The lack of materials indispensable to the construction of a reactor or nuclear pile has not however prevented this country from devoting all its attention to the theoretical and experimental study of the fundamental problems raised by the industrial use of atomic energy.

Extensive research work has been undertaken by university institutes and Swiss industry. The Swiss Commission for Atomic Energy (C.S.A.), set up in 1946, immediately organised several teams of research workers who have done some very useful work under its expert guidance. Basic research remains the prerogative of the universities and institutions such as the Geneva Laboratory recently set up by the European Council for Nuclear Research. Industry, for its part, founded, in December, 1948, the Industrial Commission for Atomic Energy, an institution which will be called upon to take some important decisions.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the Swiss firm of Brown, Boveri and Co. gathered together a group of young physicists who took an active part in the work of the university institutes. Some years later, the physicists were joined by some engineers in order to work out a project for an atomic power plant. The preliminary work done so far has shown clearly that the machines of a thermal power station using nuclear fuel would not be very different from the usual steam or hot gas turbines.

This did not in any way lessen the interest shown in the problems of nuclear energy and a wish for closer collaboration led, in March, 1951, to an agreement between the Swiss firms of Brown, Boveri and Co., Sulzer Bros., and Escher Wyss.

The original team which had been joined by a theoretical physicist from the C.S.A. and a chemist from Ciba, manufacturers of chemical

products, has been increased in size. Working in close collaboration with C.S.A. it is undertaking preliminary studies for a power plant in which a nuclear reactor would take over the functions of a boiler. This may appear simple enough at first sight, but the difficulties to be overcome are such that there can be no question of reaching this final stage by rushing through a development which can only be long and costly.

A first decision on a matter of principle was taken by C.S.A. in July, 1952, when it was decided to build a reactor in Switzerland in order to make possible the experimental study of the elements of an industrial pile of high power. The problem of obtaining supplies of materials in which trade is not free will however be less difficult to solve than that of financing the project, for the minimum dimensions of the plant, determined by the laws of nuclear physics, will call for the investment of several tens of millions francs.

Experts abroad are unanimous in predicting the commercial application of nuclear energy by the end of the century, i.e., at a time when it might be more economical to produce nuclear fuel than to mechanise coal mining any further. By taking an active part in this development and the study of numerous technical and physical problems not yet solved, Switzerland is making sure that it will not be left behind in the production of all the many apparatuses that will be required by the new thermal power plants.

OUR FATHERLAND (Continuation)

Lucerne: The earliest record of Lucerne is as a tiny fishing village where, before the invasion by the Romans, a little church was built close to the spot where the Reuss flows out of the lake. From these small beginnings gradually emerged the medieval town, whose ancient walls with their towers and battlements still stand, as silent witnesses of the old times. Through storm and stress the citizens fought their way to make it an assured place in a more modern world.

Lucerne combines so many attractions in itself, its situation and its views, that volumes might be filled with its praises. The Ruess is spanned by a fine modern concrete bridge and by two old wooden covered bridges which are highly picturesque and curious. Inside these bridges, on the sides and the roofing, are well preserved paintings of local city history and biblical scenes, all executed in native style. Nearby is the old town hall with its unique collection of weapons and banners.

The Lion of Lucerne, erected in 1821 to the memory of twenty-six officers and 760 soldiers of the Swiss guard who fell to a man, defending Louis XV at the Tuileries on August 10th, 1792, is a monument 26 feet in length, chiselled in the face of the rocky cliff 60 feet in height. It repre-

sents, due to its romantic and natural surroundings, a most impressive picture. A spring flows down one side of the rock, gathering in a pool, filled with lilies and water grasses, at the base. In a recess occupying the centre of this cliff lies the lion, pierced by a broken lance, but still protecting the Burbon shield with its right paw. Its facial expression is most realistic.

The glacier gardens, with the strangely grooved and hollowed bed of a prehistoric glacier, was accidentally discovered very close to the centre of the city. It is a curiosity and worth a visit, made more attractive still, by getting completely lost in the "Labyrinth" built for the benefit of visitors.

The great American poet, Mark Twain, has left us one of the finest descriptions of Lucerne and its lake: "Lucerne is a charming place. It begins at the water's edge, with a fringe of hotels and scrambles up and spreads itself over two or three sharp hills in a crowded, disorderly but picturesque way, offering to the eye a heaped up confusion of red rooftops, quaint gables, dormer windows, toothpick steeples, here and there a bit of ancient embattled wall bending itself over the ridges, and here and there an old square tower of heavy masonry. The lake front is walled with masonry like a pier, and has a railing to keep people from walking overboard. All day long the vehicles dash along the avenue, and nurses, children, and tourists sit in the shade of the chestnut trees, or lean on the railing and watch the schools of fish darting about in the clear water, or gaze out over the lake at the stately border of snow-hooded mountain peaks. Pleasure steamers, black with people, are coming and going all the time; and everywhere one sees young girls and men paddling about in fanciful row boats, or skimming along by the help of sails when there is any wind. The front rooms of the hotels have little railed balconies, where one may take his private luncheon in calm, cool comfort, and look down upon this busy and pretty scene and enjoy it without having to do any of the work connected with it. The commerce of Lucerne consists mainly of the souvenir sort; the shops are packed with Alpine crystals, photographs of scenery and wooden and ivory carvings. I will not conceal the fact that miniature figures of the Lion of Lucerne are offered by the millions. There is a subtle something about the majestic pathos of the original which copyists unfortunately cannot reproduce. Even the sun fails to get it; both the photographer and the carver give you a dying lion and that it all."

In the last twenty to thirty years, Lucerne has endeavoured, and with marked success, to present cultural treasures to visitors as well as their own citizens. Its brilliant musical festivals and popular art exhibitions have achieved international success. Lucerne is also well known

for its sports events and traditional popular festivals.

(To be continued)

ZURICH AND ITS MUSEUMS

(Continued from August issue)

Zurich is thus youthful and modern in appearance, but the visitor to whom things historical appeal will find in the two picturesque old quarters along either bank of the river Limmat many a medieval building worthy of his interest, venerable churches and the superb guild-houses dating from the eighteenth century. In the

Swiss National Museum,

which affords, with its priceless collections, a general survey of the cultural development of Switzerland from the Stone Age to the end of the eighteenth century, he will be able to examine the external influences—either from the north or from the south—which have been exercised on the oldest works of art discovered in Switzerland. The prehistoric collections, of which that devoted to the Lake-dwelling Age is the richest in existence, include amongst their exhibits the celebrated sacred goblet of Zurich, which dates from the eighth century B.C. and, made of pure gold and weighing two pounds, forms a unique piece of its kind. The room in which the altars, sculpture, paintings and ecclesiastical antiquities from the Carolingian period (ninth century) to the Renaissance (thirteenth century) are arranged is altogether remarkable. Besides a fine series of display rooms and historic interiors illustrating five centuries of history, the National Museum also possesses a magnificent collection of stained glass, antique Swiss furniture, tiled stoves of great beauty, as well as artistic curios difficult to find elsewhere, as for example the beautifully carved racing-sledges of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

GILBERT BAUR.

THE NEW LAW ON SWISS CITIZENSHIP

Some important points resulting from this law, which came into force on January 1st, 1953, are the following:—

(a) Loss of Swiss Citizenship Through Marriage (Section 9).

A Swiss woman loses the Swiss citizenship through marriage with an alien if she acquires through the marriage the nationality of her husband, or if she already possesses it, and unless she makes a written declaration stating that she wishes to retain the Swiss citizenship. In the event that a fiancée residing in New Zealand wants to sign such a Declaration, she has to send