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“SWISS FORTNIGHT”

5th to 17th OCTOBER 1959

The Swiss Ambassador, Dr. Armin Daeniker, has recently invited correspondents of the Swiss Press in London to a Press Conference at the Embassy in connection with the “Swiss Fortnight”, which has been arranged to take place from 5th to 17th October.

The Ambassador and his collaborators, Dr. R. Faessler, Commercial Counsellor, and Dr. E. Bircher, Press Counsellor, gave the correspondents some preliminary information, which we pass on to our readers. We wish to point out, however, that a number of arrangements mentioned are subject to alterations, which will in due course be published in the “Swiss Observer”.

In 1953, when Great Britain staged a most successful “British Week” in Zurich, Mr. Duncan Sandys, a member of H.M. Government, issued an invitation to our country to organise a “Swiss Week” in London. Discussions have taken place between the Swiss Economic Council in London and O.S.E.C. (Office Suisse d'Expansion Commerciale), the Swiss National Tourist Office, Swissair and Pro Helvetia, Zurich, and it was decided to accept the invitation; the period chosen extends from Monday, 5th October, to Saturday, 17th October.

COMMERCIAL.

It has been decided to stage in all or most of the West End shops (Oxford Street, Bond Street, Knightsbridge, etc.) big window displays and special stands advertising Swiss merchandise. The collaboration of many individual shops and organisations, such as the Regent Street Traders' Association, etc., has already been assured. The Secretariat of the “Swiss Fortnight” will supply the participating shops with distinctive posters, banners and signs, as well as other material.

Plans for an overall press campaign as well as the co-ordination of the publicity programmes of the various branches of industry and commerce are under active consideration.

Park Lane House has been reserved, where the participating trades and industries (such as lace, textile, watch, shoe and food industries) will arrange exhibitions and hold receptions. Banking, Insurance and Transport may take part, and it is hoped to install on the ground floor a “Confiserie Suisse”, and to show travel films in the cinema room.

The Dorchester Hotel have already agreed to provide a “Semaine Gastronomique Suisse”. Other hotels and the restaurants in the big department stores like Harrods, Selfridges, etc., may follow suit.

Negotiations are afoot to ensure that all principal tourist agencies will concentrate on Swiss tours and holidays during the “Fortnight”. Messrs. Cook and others have agreed to show continuously Swiss film strips and/or hold Swiss evening gatherings for their clients.

The Tea Centre in Lower Regent Street has been reserved for an exhibition of historical Swiss travel posters.

CULTURAL.

M. Ernest Ansermet has been invited by the B.B.C. to conduct a studio performance of “The

Tempest”, by Frank Martin, with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, on Wednesday, 7th October.

Paul Sacher and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra will give a concert at the Royal Festival Hall on 14th October. They also have been invited by the B.B.C. to give a studio concert, and may possibly go to Liverpool.

Organ recitals, a concert by the Consort of Viols of Basle, and a choral concert are under discussion. In each of these events a major work by a modern Swiss composer will be performed.

Under the sponsorship of the Arts Council of Great Britain a comprehensive Swiss art exhibition will be opened at the Tate Gallery on 12th October. The same exhibition will later be transferred to the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris.

Woodcuts and drawings by the animal painter, Robert Hainard, of Geneva, will be shown in a West End gallery.

The Society of Swiss Women Painters and the “Heimatwerk” hope to arrange an exhibition at the Swiss Hostel for Girls.

The Foyer of the Royal Festival Hall has been reserved for an exhibition of Swiss poster-art, book exhibitions, and a collection of photographs entitled “Glimpses of Switzerland”. It is hoped to include some modern colour transparencies, each covering at least a square metre.

The Royal Institute of British Architects have agreed to accept a Swiss architectural exhibition.

The Royal Geographical Society have put space at our disposal for an exhibition of Swiss maps and the art of map-making in Switzerland.

Negotiations are taking place between the B.B.C. and Pro Helvetia in the hope of making and showing a musical television film entitled “Airs of Switzerland”.

The National Film Institute have agreed to show at the National Film Theatre a series of Swiss documentary and/or feature films.

There is a possibility that the gala première of a Walt Disney Productions film entitled “Third Man on the Mountain”, which was shot last summer at Zermatt, will take place during the “Fortnight”.

The ballroom at the Dorchester Hotel has been reserved for a “Charity Ball” on 6th October in aid of the British Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust. A most prominent Swiss Film personality has been invited. The inclusion of a top quality fashion show is envisaged.

The British Pestalozzi Trust are considering reserving the Royal Albert Hall for Friday, 16th October, and hope to arrange — with the help of the Swiss National Tourist Office and Swissair — a “Schwyzer Chilbi”.

As can be seen, the campaign outlined above is intended to bring home to the British population that Switzerland has cultural as well as commercial values to offer. No such effort has ever been made before and a chance of this kind is unlikely to occur again in the near future.