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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Switzerland represented at Berlin.

This year Switzerland is officially represented at the traditional agricultural show held in Berlin and known as the "Green Week", which is taking place at the beginning of February. Swiss participation, which has been organised by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, will take the form of a picturesque village common, the surrounding houses being the stands of Swiss producers of food specialities, such as chocolate, "Leckerlies" (i.e., a king of gingerbread), cheese, wines, spirits, etc.

A refinery for mineral oils in Switzerland.

A plan is now being studied for the setting up of a refinery for mineral oils at Aigle, a small Swiss town in the Valley of the Rhône, on the Simplon line. The raw petroleum will be brought from Genua by means of a pipeline, via the Grand Saint Bernard road tunnel, on which construction work has now started. Eventually the pipeline will be extended to Germany.

Death of Swiss pioneer of thermoelectricity.

The death was announced recently of Mr. Samuel Blumer, the founder of the firm "Therma", at Schwanden (Switzerland). Born in 1881, the deceased was a self-taught man. Being obliged at the age of sixteen to provide for his mother and his brothers and sisters, he worked as a sewing-machine and cycle mechanic. Having learnt the mysteries of electricity at the end of the last century, he acquired a dynamo which was driven by means of water-wheel and served to light and heat his workshop. Very soon he proceeded to make hot-plates, electric irons, electrically warmed cushions, boilers, etc. In 1904, at the age of twenty-three, he established a factory for electrical heating and cooking appliances, which, in 1907, became the Therma Company, Ltd., and it was he who, for a long time, undertook its commercial and technical direction. It is to him that we owe a great many inventions and improvements in the domain of thermoelectricity, and it is also partly owing to him that the Swiss industry for the manufacture of electric heating and cooking appliances has attained its present degree of development.

The progress of the Swiss television.

At the end of January 1959 the number of television subscribers in Switzerland had attained 53,000, i.e., nearly 48,000 private subscribers and more than 5,000 collective subscribers — restaurants, hospitals, etc.

Success of a Swiss film.

The last feature film produced by the Praesens Company, of Zurich, the scenario of which has been written by the famous Swiss dramatist, Fritz Dürrenmatt, has been sold for showing in the United States.

Plans for a new dam in Switzerland.

There are plans afoot for the erection of a new big dam by the "Entreprises électriques fribourgeoises" (electric power company of Fribourg) — the company which ten years ago put into service the Rossens Dam, the annual production of which amounts to 120 million kilowatt-hours. This scheme, by stopping the gorge of the Sarine, would result in the establishment of a reservoir of 66 million cubic meters, in the vicinity of the town of Fribourg. The plant which it is intended to build would be capable of supplying more than 131 million kilowatt-hours per year. The cost of construction is estimated at 14.6 million U.S.A. dollars.

A foreign loan in Switzerland.

The "Electricity Supply Commission" of Johannesburg has issued a 50 million Sw. Francs loan in Switzerland, redeemable in 15 years' time, which has been entirely subscribed. These funds are intended for the development of the production of electricity in South Africa. The firm is a highly esteemed client of Swiss industry, to which it has already given orders amounting to 60 per cent of the sum total of the loan.

Nouvelle Société Helvétique (LONDON GROUP)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

and

ANNUAL DINNER

on Tuesday, 10th March, 1959,
at the "Schweizerbund" (Swiss Club)
74, Charlotte Street, W.1.

6.15 p.m. Annual General Meeting

7.30 p.m. Dinner (dress informal)

7.15 p.m. Reception

Members wishing to take part at the dinner, are requested to notify the Manager, "Schweizerbund", by letter reaching the Club not later than Saturday, 7th March. After dinner, about 8.30 p.m., a coloured film, produced by A. Kern and R. Lambert, entitled "Sentes et Rocs au Salève" with French commentary, lasting about fifty minutes, will be shown. It should appeal to all mountain lovers.

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