

News at random

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NEWS AT RANDOM

Federal

The Federal Council has announced that Mr. Victor Nef, former Ambassador to Canada, will retire on 1st April. He will be replaced in Ottawa by Mr. Alfred Zehnder.

The Federal Council has also announced the nomination of Mr. Max Troendle, who was formerly in Tokyo, as Swiss Ambassador in Moscow. Mr. Troendle's successor in Japan has been chosen in the person of Mr. Jean de Rham.

Despite a slight reduction in our exports to the United States, last year our watch industry maintained its prosperous position. Our watch exportation still represents 15 per cent of our total exports.

The Federal Council has approved a project opening a global credit of 1,016 million francs over a number of years to come, for buying war armaments.

Mr. Albert Morant, born in St. Gall in 1912, has been elected general secretary of the P.T.T.

The Swiss Government has emphatically denied the rumour that Mr. Max Petitpierre has the intention of handing in his resignation.

The Federal Council has decided to carry on its help to the Congo. A sum of one million francs will be spent to cover the cost of the Swiss medical mission to that country.

After having been more than two years in New York as Swiss observer at the UN, Mr. Felix Schnyder has returned to Geneva to take up new duties as the UN high commissioner for the refugees.

A big spy scandal is currently raging in Berne, where several Czech citizens are rumoured to have been spying in Switzerland, the investigations continue.

Two of President Kennedy's sisters, Mrs. Lawford and Mrs. Smith, recently arrived in Switzerland to spend winter holidays.

The Federal Council had lately to look into another spying affair. Two Swiss have since been arrested. They apparently tried to obtain military information for a country behind the Iron Curtain.

An agreement will soon be signed by our Ambassador in Madrid and the Spanish Foreign Minister regarding the question of Spanish labour in Switzerland, which has been discussed recently by Swiss and Spanish delegations.

During the "British Week" in Basel Mr. Rudolf Speich, chairman of the Swiss Bank Corporation, and Sir James Hutchinson, president of the British Association of Chambers of Commerce in London, gave lectures about their respective countries' attitudes

CITY SWISS CLUB

Dinner

Tuesday, 7th March 1961 at 6.30 for 7 p.m.

at the

Dorchester Hotel (Orchid Suite), Park Lane,
W.1.

After Dinner The Rt. Hon. Lord Nathan, P.C.,
T.D., F.B.A., will give an address on:

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towards the problem of European integration. They explained why Switzerland has not joined the European Community because of its neutrality status and that Great Britain has also not joined because of its interests in the Commonwealth.

Cantonal

The State Council of Lucerne has submitted to the Grand Council a Message in which plans are included for a complete transformation of the cantonal hospital.

For several days now the famous "Kunstmuseum" in Bern has been exhibiting an enormous display of works by the French artist Maurice Vlaminck. No less than seventy paintings and over a hundred and forty graphic works by "le fauve des fauves" — as he used to be called — are on show.

Believe it or not, the last rainy summer has still been favourable to Zurich's tourist trade, which has once more shown an increase. Zurich seems to be mainly patronised by Germans, Americans and British — in that order.

A tragic fire has completely destroyed the Grand Hotel on the Rigi-Kaltbad, where there were 180 guests and 60 employees. Panic rapidly spread and many people escaped by jumping through the windows into the thick snow. Unfortunately eight people at least lost their lives, but thanks to the firemen the rest were safely rescued.

A few years ago the Bible Society of Basel-Land published in local dialect some extracts from the Gospels. The book met with so much success that it is now to be reprinted.

The Solothurn national orchestra has celebrated its 25th anniversary. [A.T.S.]

A woman, Doktor Margrit Tobler, of St. Gall, has undertaken a mission in Nepal, advising on the building of a new hospital which will be located 100 km. from Kathmandou. [A.T.S.]

All four editors of the weekly "Zuercher Woche" — James Schwarzenbach, Walter Blickenstorfer, Ernst Prodolliet and Hans Streuli — have handed in their resignations following differences of opinion with the managing director. [A.T.S.]

The annual Swiss automobile show opens for ten days in Geneva on 16th March. [A.T.S.]

The 'Community of interests of the Freie Strasse' in Basel organised a 'British Week' from 6th to 18th February. Under the patronage of the British

Ambassador this event exhibited British goods and offered various spectacular attractions. [A.T.S.]

Last year the traffic accidents in Bern rose by 15.1 per cent. [A.T.S.]

Miss Alzire Robert, who lives in Chardonne above Vevey and is the oldest inhabitant of the Canton de Vaud, has just celebrated her 103rd anniversary.

Two Soviet engineers, Boris Jakovlev and Boris Poliakov, have arrived in Geneva, where they will work for two months in the CERN, at Meyrin. [A.T.S.]

DEATHS

Christopher Edouard Certz, who often conducted the orchestra at the municipal theatre in Bern, died recently at the age of 73.

Former Swiss Minister in Berlin, Hans Froelicher, died in Bern recently at the age of 73.

VARIOUS

For a number of years now, stamp designers have been turning from purely representational pictures to symbolism in an effort to convey ideas.

With to-day's jet-powered communications facilities, this has become necessary. Not everyone who



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receives foreign mail necessarily understands the language of the nation issuing the stamp. This leads to ignorance of the stamp's caption or wording and consequently a lack of understanding of the picture's fullest meaning.

The advance pictures of four stamps to be issued by Switzerland on February 20th, as the 1961 set of the annual "Publicity" series, are excellent examples of this trend.

The five-centime shows a brick wall under construction with a globe superimposed, to symbolize "development aid" and Switzerland's desire to encourage "all private enterprises directed toward the assistance to new nations of the world".

The ten-centime value features the "HYPSA" emblem and calls attention to the Hygiene, Gymnastics and Sports Exposition, whose 30th annual meeting will be held in Bern this year. It represents the sun and its enduring motion and regenerative power.

The 20-centime stamp, issued to advertise the upcoming European Ice Hockey Championships in Lausanne and Geneva, simply shows a hockey stick and puck.

The 50-centime stamp is intended to publicize the Swiss telephone service, first in the world to be fully automated. The stamp shows a map of the country on which a wiring diagram is superimposed.

* * *

Verbier, in Canton Valais, is one of the "youngest" winter sports areas in Switzerland and has attained unprecedented importance in recent years. Only ten years ago a few hotels and one skilift met the needs of

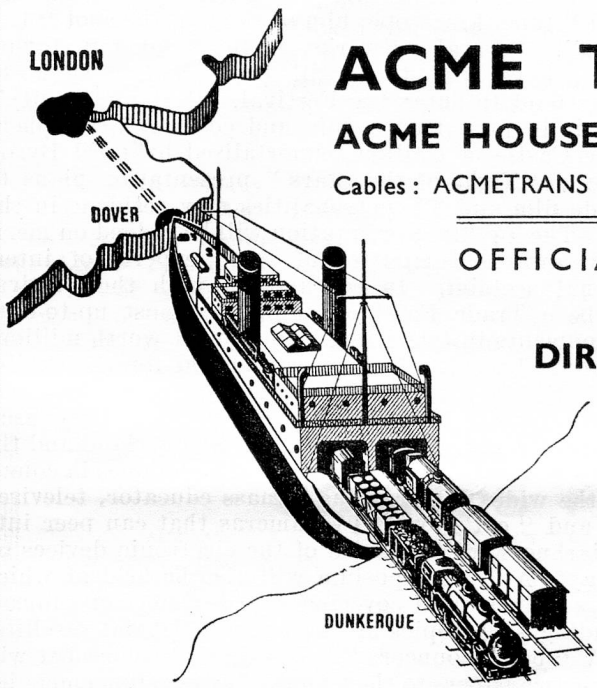
the weekend skiers. Today its guests can enjoy the amenities of what has now become one of the best equipped winter sports centres in the Alps. Eleven skilifts and six aerial cableways and chairlifts are at their disposal. A daily ticket is available for unrestricted trips on all these means of transportation at a price of SFr.15. The newly-opened teleferic to Mont-Gelé (9,900 feet above sea level) throws open magnificent and hitherto unreachable skiing areas between November and the end of May. The materials used in the construction of this audacious aerial railway were transported to the site by Glacier Pilot Hermann Geiger in his helicopter. Five thousand people can be accommodated in twenty-two hotels and over three hundred rentable chalets.

* * *

Seventy-one new skilifts have been constructed in Switzerland during the last twelve months. From a list prepared by the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone authorities it can be seen that at the end of 1960 there was a total of 289 skilifts, 35 chairlifts, 17 combined ski- and chairlifts, 145 aerial cableways and 8 elevators and other means of passenger transportation. Totals for the end of 1959 were respectively: 218, 32, 18, 136, and 7.

* * *

The St. Gotthard and Forclaz roads will in future be open to motor vehicles (including motor coaches) with an overall width of not more than 98½ inches (2.5 metres), as shown in the latest edition of the special map issued by the Federal Authorities. Copies of this map are obtainable (free) from the Swiss National Tourist Office, 458 Strand, London, W.C.2.



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Practically a million square yards of floor slabs have been laid on the runways, tarmacs and aircraft parking areas of Zuerich Airport during the second stage of an extension programme. With the completion of these cement slabs the ground work is almost finished after a building period of two and a half years. Completion date for the 2-mile instrument runway, the 1½-mile west runway and the extension of the passenger ramp are planned for early 1961.

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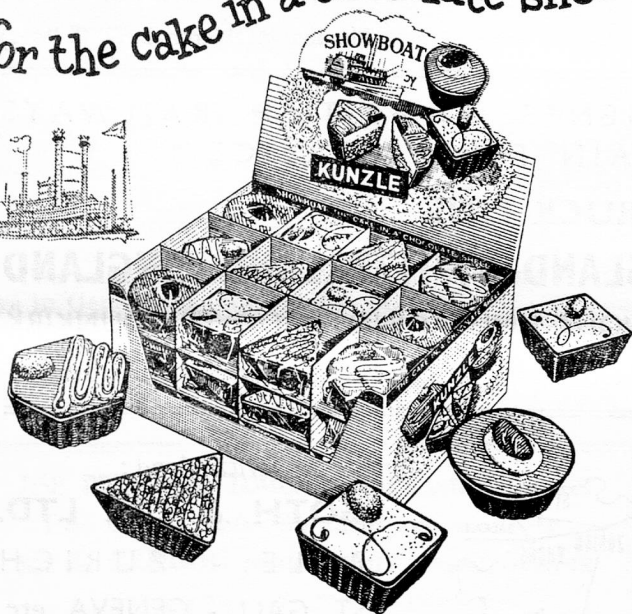
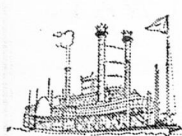
The motor industries of sixteen countries will exhibit their latest products at more than six hundred stands at the Geneva Motor Show, which has now reached an importance which entitles the organisers to call it the world's most comprehensive event of the motor industry. The demand for hotel accommodation is again expected to be extremely heavy and advance booking is strongly advised. Arrangements can be made through: L'Association des Intérêts de Genève, 3 place des Bergues, Geneva, Switzerland.

* * *

Thirty-five nations, including the USSR, representing sixty major TV networks, are expected to participate in the International Festival of Television Arts and Sciences to be held in Montreux from 15th to 27th May 1961. Famous musical show and variety performers will be featured for the prize-winning award of a Golden Rosa and cash prize of SFr.10,000. There will be second and third prizes of silver and bronze roses respectively. Network participation is tailored to meet the requirements of a TV film contest which is one of the highlights of the Festival. The contest is under the official sponsorship of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation. Entries will be submitted on "sight and sound" tape, kinescope, film or even on the spot "live shows". Several networks, including one in far-off Persia, have said they will bring a live show to Switzerland to enter the Festival. Part of the city's effort is in preparing a gala and costume atmosphere in the Castle of Chillon immortalised by Lord Byron where a "Night of the Stars" presentation plans to include film and TV personalities now resident in the area. The TV film presentation will be judged on merit by an awards committee of seven experts of international acclaim. In conjunction with the Festival will be a Trade Fair to exhibit the most up-to-date developments in television. Equipment worth millions of dollars has already been earmarked for the exhibition. So far, industries from six countries have indicated their interest to participate. They are: Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Switzerland and the United States. The most advanced techniques in colour TV, the wide TV screen as a mass educator, televised tape and "cat's eye" TV cameras that can peer into the darkness, will be some of the electronic devices on display. A TV symposium will also be held at which papers will be read covering a wide range of subjects including such topics as the use of artificial satellites as TV "beam bouncers". The USSR disclosed it will submit two papers to the technical symposium embodied in the Festival which has a tripartite character. Russia wants to talk about advancements in colour TV and television progress in city to city link-up. The subjects officially listed by the Soviet Union are:

(1) Organisation of inter-urban television, multi-programme television using radio links or coaxial cables.

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(2) Requirements to be laid on radio links or coaxial cables for the transmission of colour television.

The 12-day Festival has aroused world-wide response and is the first of its kind on an international level. The three-tiered Festival consists of:

- (a) A TV film contest sponsored by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation at which an international awards committee will judge the best in musical shows and variety entries from networks around the world.
- (b) A TV trade fair which already lists industries from Germany, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Japan and the United States exhibiting equipment worth several million dollars.
- (c) A TV symposium at which leading experts will deliver papers on the progress of the industry and its most up-to-date technical developments.

* * *

Films from numerous countries will compete for the gold and silver "Veils" to be awarded by the jury of the International Film Festival which Locarno is staging for the fourteenth time from 19th to 30th July 1961. This festival will feature the largest screen in Europe, which will be in the 2,500-seat open-air theatre where the gala evenings will be held. In addition, there will be screenings every morning and afternoon in the lakeside resort's various film theatres. During the festival, meetings of an international congress, dealing with films for young people, will be held.

* * *

As in previous years, fourteen Swiss holiday regions will again issue the popular season tickets during the coming summer. The demand for these tickets increases year by year. This is not surprising, as the Swiss Regional Season Tickets allow for the excursion budget to be kept low without curtailing the range of beautiful and unforgettable trips. Holders of the Swiss Holiday Ticket can obtain these season tickets at special prices, incorporating a reduction of 25 per cent. Full details are contained in a special folder, supplies of which will be distributed to travel agents shortly.

* * *

An 11th-century former monastery, the "Chà Granda" or Big House in Tarasp-Plaz, an architecturally unique part of Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, the Alpine resort and spa, has for some time housed the Lower Engadine Folklore Museum. Further sections of the building are still in course of reconstruction. One of the rooms already in use for museum purposes is a costly 1702 Renaissance salon.

A panoramic view of nearly 200 miles in diameter can be admired from the winter sports resort of Les Rasses in the Swiss Jura mountains. Situated at 3,880 feet above sea-level and offering a famous view of the Alps, Le Brassus has an ice rink, a ski-jump, a chairlift and several skilifts. The neighbouring village of Sainte Croix is the world's music-box capital and also produces phonographs, cameras and ski bindings. A 2,500-acre ice rink, the largest in Switzerland, is frozen Lake Joux in the valley of the same name. In the vicinity, at 3,200 feet above sea-level, are the three winter sports resorts of Le Pont, Le Sentier and Le Brassus. The latter, often referred to as the "Holmenkollen of Central Europe", was the scene of the International Nordic Skiing Competitions on 14th and 15th January 1961.

* * *

Travelling to and from Zermatt takes less time to-day and is made more comfortable thanks to recent innovations on the Brig-Visp-Zermatt Railways, which have invested some 4 million Swiss francs in new rolling-stock, such as four express train coaches and two specially designed powerful twin railcars with ninety-two upholstered passenger seats each.

* * *

A fine reproduction of the world-famous Bernina Line, which forms part of the Rhaetian Railway network, has recently been inaugurated at Pontresina. The constructors claim that this model railway has the most extensive lay-out of its kind in the world. Approximately 350 yards of railway track, 150 points, 18 stations, 305 relays and over 2,000 masts for the overhead line have been used.

* * *

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary-General of the U.N., has just received a new hammer, to replace the one that was broken during a stormy meeting. The hammer in question is made of brass, cast in the crucibles of a foundry in Reconville, and ornamented with a dove made by a goldsmith in La Chaux-de-Fonds, one of the centres of the Swiss watchmaking industry.

* * *

On 1st July 1961 the Lucerne Nocturnal Lake Festival will once again commence in the afternoon with a varied programme of events, finishing with the popular huge display of fireworks.

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