

News at Random

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SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR 1963

On 30th April the 47th Swiss Industries Fair in Basle was officially closed. As the "Basler Nachrichten" said in its retrospective review, all records have been broken — 875,000 visitors attended the fair. The weather may have had something to do with the large number of people coming to Basle, for with few exceptions the eleven days were sunny, warm and pleasant and supported the efforts made by hospitable Basle. Twenty-eight specialised groups with a total of 2,456 exhibitors took part. The watch exhibition, which had been re-organised and enlarged, surpassed all expectations and on the fourth day several firms announced that their record turnover of last year had already been surpassed. The furniture manufacturers reported satisfactory business, though slightly under last year's results. Many other branches registered record orders and a great number of new connections with foreign buyers.

Textile and clothing industries attracted a great many visitors. The individual exhibitions, "Création" and "Madame et Monsieur", as well as the knitwear section and the shoe and leather centre were very popular. Prefabricated houses created great interest, the book fair, and the show "Creative Handicraft". The good weather favoured the open-air exhibits, especially "Camping".

The 47th Fair can be called an unqualified success and unique demonstration of Swiss creative productivity.

A few statistics may be interesting. 249,400 visitors arrived by train — 344 special trains were run. Over 37,000 more than last year came by car, bringing the total up to nearly half a million. A thousand cars are estimated to have come from abroad. The Basle Tramway Corporation reckon that 2.3 million passengers were carried to the Fair. Not only were there as many as 22 special trams every day between the main station and the exhibition halls, but also special bus services. This meant that a daily increase of 200 tramdrivers and conductors were needed.

The lost property office of the fair received 273 reports of losses, over half of which could be made good. The statisticians worked very thoroughly, for every article handed in was listed, from the wedding ring and the thirty-three ladies' handbags to a hearing aid and a blueprint worth thousands of francs.

Forty-three thefts were reported and 103 people who had lost their companions could be brought together again. The stewards had to deal with fifteen drunks and took twenty-seven injured visitors to first-aid posts. The fire brigade was on duty for fifteen days and the security organisation had 280 employees on guard on weekdays and 330 on Sundays.

It is reckoned that 44,664 people visited the famous Basle Zoo and that the Nestlé day nursery looked after 6,000 children. The oldest visitor to the Fair was a lady of 101 who had been so impressed last year that she insisted on going again.

A few other interesting items in connection with the Industries Fair are that foreign students and stagiaires at present in Switzerland were invited to a communal visit to the Fair. Approximately 350 accepted the invitation on 26th April. Twenty students of the Belgian watchmakers' training college in Antwerp visited the exhibition two days later. It is considered a modest estimate to put the number of foreign countries represented amongst the visitors at 100.

There were many special days, one was the "official" day at which Federal Councillor Spuehler, the President of the Confederation and Minister of Communications, attended the "Mustermesse". In his speech he reviewed Swiss economy and the continued economic boom. The President of the Fair, Dr. Schaller, and the Director, Dr. Hauswirth, welcomed the prominent guest as well as many personalities including army officers, politicians, diplomats and representatives from foreign chambers of commerce in Switzerland.

Every night a huge "Baslerstab", the escutcheon of the town of Basle, was projected onto a wall of the skyscraper building of the chemical works Hoffmann La Roche with a new extra-powerful projector. From miles away this welcoming symbol could be seen. Its light is now extinguished and the vast halls of the Swiss Industries Fair are deserted. But the repercussions of this great national effort will be felt for a long time to come.

(Based on reports by courtesy of the "Basler Nachrichten" and the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.)

NEWS AT RANDOM

Switzerland's Expenditure on Nuclear Research

From 1946 to 1960, the Swiss Confederation spent S.Fr. 122 million on the peaceful use of atomic energy. In 1961, the Confederation's expenditure for this purpose amounted to S.Fr. 33.3 million; the sum budgeted for 1963 is S.Fr. 46 million. The total for the period from 1961 to 1963 is greater than the total expenditure for the whole 15-year period from 1946 to 1960. The amount set aside for 1963 in favour of nuclear research includes a subsidy of S.Fr. 5 million and a loan for the same amount for the construction of the Lucens experimental underground power station. The Confederation's share in this big project amounts therefore to S.Fr. 23 million, half of which is in the form of subsidies and the other half in the form of loans. The Federal Institute for research in the field of reactors, at Würenlingen, will be allotted S.Fr. 18.4 million in 1963. [O.S.E.C.]

Swiss Participation in a Medical Research Centre in India

In the suburbs of Bombay, in the presence of the Swiss Ambassador, India's Prime Minister Nehru recently inaugurated the biggest basic research centre for chemicals and biology in South-East Asia. The construction and fitting out of this centre cost 25 million rupees, a fifth of which was donated by the well-known Swiss firm of Ciba, whose name the centre will bear. The eighty laboratories will specialize in tropical diseases and the study of Indian medicines and medicinal plants. [O.S.E.C.]

Production of electricity at the Grande-Dixence

During the hydrological year extending from 1st October 1961 to 30th September 1962, the Grande-Dixence power station, work on which is not yet completed but progressing according to plan, has already produced 772 million kWh. [O.S.E.C.]

Newcomer to the Swiss Fleet

The motor ship "Calanda", belonging to the Basle Company Alpina, was recently launched at Bremerhaven. This new addition to the Swiss fleet is approximately 415 feet long by 54 feet wide. It has a displacement of 6,940 tons and is fitted with a 4,100 h.p. diesel engine giving it a cruising speed of 15 knots. Once it has been put into service, this ship will run on the West Africa line.

[O.S.E.C.]