

Scottish workmen in Switzerland

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SCOTTISH WORKMEN IN SWITZERLAND

On 20th February, twenty-three young Scotsmen arrived in Folkestone, having left their jobs on a building site in Switzerland. Their story was that they had been dismissed on the first day for protesting about working and living conditions. They maintained that they had been badly treated, and the newspapers in this country carried stories which did not look good for the Swiss employer.

The facts as reported from Switzerland are as follows. A Bernese building contractor decided to engage at his own expense Scottish labourers instead of Italians for a change. Twice he travelled to Scotland before the contract was made. A Scottish representative went to Switzerland to see about working conditions. The twenty-five Scotsmen had been working on building sites in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee and seemed to be pleased with the arrangements which would have allowed them to earn several pounds a week more than at home.

What they did not seem to know was that work started at 7 a.m. and that any building labourer was expected to do any kind of work on the site. The Scotsmen turned up towards 9 o'clock and, being bricklayers, they refused to do foundation work. Those who were willing to start were dissuaded by their pals, and in the end the employer called in a representative of the British Embassy. It was then decided to send the Scotsmen back again. Only two remained who were willing to adapt themselves.

As regards living conditions, it has been confirmed by a representative of the Swiss Builders' Federation that the huts put at the disposal of the Scotsmen were clean and adequate and had running cold water. They were in any case only temporary accommodation of the kind customary in Switzerland. As the official news report stated, the huts were left in a bad state on the Scotsmen's departure. The employer had already said that the private lives of the workmen was none of his concern, as long as they kept to their side of the bargain regarding work.

It must be said in all fairness that a good number of British workers are employed in the Swiss catering trade, and they do their job to the full satisfaction of their employers.

The wish has been expressed that this misfired experiment should not prejudice any future undertaking of this nature.

[A.T.S.]

SALON DE L'AUTOMOBILE

Geneva 12th to 22nd March 1964

The thirty-fourth "Salon de l'Automobile" will take place in Geneva from 12th to 22nd March. The show will have international character as twenty-one nations have applied. Last year was a record year when over eleven hundred exhibitors took part, and a thousand journalists and 380,000 visitors came to see the show.

This year the exhibition area has been enlarged by 10,000 square metres, and a special exhibition within the "Salon" has been organised on the green lawns of the Plainpalais, where all kinds of transport instruments, building machines and utility vehicles will be on show.

DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

The following deaths have been reported from Switzerland:

Jean-Pierre Schoenholzer, Geneva, one of the oldest members of the International Red Cross Committee.

Dr. iur. Paul Corrodi (71), Meilen (Zch.), former member of the Zurich government and Federal Judge.

Albert Helbling (85), Grenchen, National Councillor from 1931-1947; member of the Solothurn Cantonal Council from 1921-1946.

Karl von Weber (84), Schwyz, former "Landammann" and National Councillor from 1925-1943.

Dr. Adrien Miéville (74), Vevey, former National Councillor, at one time in trouble because of Communist activities.

Ernest Fischer (81), Lausanne, former Vaudois State Councillor.

Heinrich Widmer (89), St. Gall, former Commune and Municipal Councillor

Alfred Cornamusaz (49), Commune President of Payerne since 1955.

Dr. Heinrich Bertschinger (83), Zurich, Town Clerk from 1924-1945.

Henri Chappot (73), Martigny, Commune President of Batiaz for twenty-five years; member of the Valais Parliament.

Piero Barchi (69), Lugano, member of the Ticino Grand Council for more than thirty years; Commune President of Gravesano.

Emil Bernhard (83), Winterthur, Municipal Councillor from 1921 to 1946.

John Piaget (82), watch manufacturer and Commune President of La Côte-aux Féés (Ne).

Dr. Bernhard Kobler (85), St. Gall, veterinary surgeon and writer on nature reserves.

Prof. Charles Baehni (56), director of the Botanical Gardens and professor of botany at the University of Geneva.

Dr. Charles Bonsack (67), Bienne, dentist and editor of the Swiss monthly paper on dentistry; honorary degree from the University of Geneva.

Pierre Thomas (87), Lausanne, former professor of medicine at Lausanne University, one of the pioneers of modern biochemistry

Dr. med. vet. Franz X. Weissenrieder (70), Altstaetten, cantonal veterinary surgeon of St. Gall from 1943-1959.

Dr. Heinz Helmerking (63), St. Gall, teacher and author.

Prof. Henri Miéville (86), Nyon, theologian and philosopher, professor at Lausanne University and author.

Samuel May (95), Lausanne, former headmaster and mathematician.

Albert Steinegger (70), Neuhausen am Rheinfall, teacher and historian.

Fritz Kummer (50), Winterthur, engineer and teacher at the cantonal "Technikum".

J. B. Masueger (84), teacher at the cantonal school and sports journalist.

Jean Violette, Geneva, author and Poet.

Lola Lorme (80), Berne, author and translator from the Italian.

Jules Surdez (86), Berne, well-known Jura dialect author, honorary degree of the University of Berne.

Lucien de Dardel (60), Pully, prominent journalist.

Paul Hindemith, Blonay, famous composer.

[A.T.S.]