

Switzerland and the automatic driving of trains

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MUERREN IN THE SPRING

Just fifty years ago a group of English aviators was interned in the Palace-Hotel at Mürren, highest village in the Bernese Oberland. The sports-minded officers found ski-ing to be a welcome substitute for flying. In 1924, the Kandahar Ski Club was founded in the village, and has kept its headquarters there ever since. Many skiers have displayed their "flying" ability and derring-do on the famous Kandahar slope. This year, the 31st running of the Arlberg-Kandahar Race took place on 11th-13th March, with international participation. — Major innovation in the area is the Schilthorn Cablecar, which goes in steep stages from the valley floor up to Birg, via Gimmelwald and Mürren. Up at Birg, construction is in progress on a continuation of the line up to the summit of the Schilthorn. A well-tended downhill run through the Blattwang leads back down to Mürren. The "Jungfrau Lodge", an American-style hotel, with thirty-five beds, is already open. Nightlife enthusiasts will be glad to hear that, in addition to the Inferno Bar, Mürren will soon boast a new Grill Room. A popular activity in spring-time are the ski flights which take off from the Blumental, above Mürren, and bring spring and summer ski aces up to nearby glaciers and mountain tops in just a few minutes, from which they can ski down runs having an altitude differential of better than 10,000 feet.

[S.N.T.O.]

LUCERNE'S INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

This year's International Music Festival of Lucerne has been set for the period from 13th August to 8th September. It is scheduled to include appearances by the Swiss Festival Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the Festival Strings Lucerne and the Collegium Musicum Zurich, as well as the Lucerne Festival Chorus. Eight symphonic concerts will be supplemented by chamber music concerts and solo recitals. The Lucerne Municipal Theatre will offer a dramatic presentation and the Lucerne Museum of Art will contribute various exhibits to round out this world-famous festival of music and the arts.

[S.N.T.O.]

SWITZERLAND AND THE AUTOMATIC DRIVING OF TRAINS

In spite of the existence of a certain number of experimental devices on the railway lines of various countries, the automatic driving of trains is still a new field. The management of the Bodensee-Toggenburg railway has the merit of being the first in Switzerland to have introduced a regular service of trains driven entirely automatically, which will make it possible to gain invaluable experience in this field and contribute to progress in the running of railways. They are shuttle-trains in which the normal equipment with manually operated switches is partially replaced by an automatic device made by Brown, Boveri & Co., in Baden, carrying out the following operations: speed setting, i.e. maintenance of the pre-set speed whatever the slope and load, with gradual acceleration, deceleration and braking according to a previously set programme, reduction and restoration of speed in accordance with the demands of the journey (magnets placed on the track automatically operate the reduction and restoration of the set speed, in case of work on the line and other factors) and finally automatic braking at the destination. This braking, which is also controlled by magnets on the track, brings the train to a stop in the station at the required spot, without any help at all from the engine-driver. The new equipment frees the driver from a number of manual operations; he can thus devote all his attention to watching the line. In this way the automatic driving device helps greatly to increase the safety of trains, particularly in the case of fog or snow. It represents an important factor in the running of railways, in view of the present tendency to increase speeds and to use main lines to full capacity.

[O.S.E.C.]

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