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AN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS CENTRE IN LAUSANNE

The board of directors of the Swiss Comptoir Co-operative Society in Lausanne (National Autumn Fair) have agreed to a plan for the transformation of the central hall of the Palace of Beaulieu which will make it possible to organise a congress centre there, fully answering the exacting demands of big international congresses. Designed originally to house fairs and exhibitions, and completed during the last fifteen years by a theatre, a cinema, a ballroom and four committee rooms, the Palace of Beaulieu is already equipped to hold meetings and congresses in between its traditional autumn fairs. But its facilities do not as yet answer the requirements of big international meetings. Therefore, in accordance with the wishes of the Municipal Council which aims to give the town of Lausanne a congress centre allowing it to rank among the leading European congress towns and to house certain international conferences, the Swiss Comptoir will be converting its central hall. In this way it will be possible first of all to create an additional 37,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space; for congresses, there will be added a big new congress hall with seating for 700 to 800, a big hall with 200 to 250 seats, two committee rooms each with 100 to 150 seats, and thirty-eight offices for secretarial needs. These halls will be air-conditioned, sound-proof and provided with all the latest equipment required by modern congress technique. In addition, the big new congress hall will be equipped with cabins for projecting standard and small films as well as slides, six cabins for simultaneous translation together with all the equipment required, premises for press, radio and TV, reception lounges and finally a gallery with 100 seats for officials and guests at plenary sessions. Work will probably be starting this autumn, once the 48th Lausanne Fair is over; the estimated cost is in the neighbourhood of 11 million Swiss francs.

[O.S.E.C.]

SUCCESS OF A SWISS GRAPHIC ARTIST ABROAD

The Swiss graphic artist Emil O. Biemann has made a brilliant career for himself in the United States after completing his studies in his own country, in particular at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich, and working in a number of photogravure firms, both at home and abroad, as well as in graphic arts and advertising. Since settling in the United States in 1952, he has worked as a freelance graphic artist as well as for a number of big firms, in various capacities and in particular as a poster artist. In this last capacity, he designed, among other things, twenty-four posters for the First National City Bank and in 1960 and 1962 was awarded the AIGA prize (American Institute of Graphic Art). E. O. Biemann recently came into the public eye by his creation of new income tax forms for the State of New York as well as for the United States government, an achievement that led to his receiving the congratulations of the Head of State. The clear conception and neat presentation of these forms are a credit to Swiss graphic arts, which E. O. Biemann represents so brilliantly abroad.

[O.S.E.C.]

WITH THE STEAM-ENGINE THROUGH THE STREETS OF BERNE

" . . . there they were, standing next and behind each other, these shiny and clean locomotives, with whitish smoke rising up from the funnels and ready for departure, while the large carriages were an invitation to passengers to get on board."

With these words in print, the "Berner Tagblatt" newspaper reported the start of the new streetcar line Laenggasse — Wabern, on 18th May 1894. But already eight years later, those "shiny locomotives" had disappeared from the streets of Berne to be replaced with electric traction. The almost new engines were shipped abroad, or sold to some Swiss small-gauge railway company. Only engine No. 18 finally came to the Stansstad-Engelberg RR for service and is now on exhibit at the **Swiss Museum of Transport, Lucerne**. This locomotive together with a restored 4-axles trailer car recalls the short but glorious time of steam operation of the Bernese Streetcar Service which ended some 65 years ago.

SEVENTY YEARS AGO: THE FIRST SWISS AUTOMOBILE

In Switzerland, the first vehicles propelled by internal combustion engines were built in 1897, by three Swiss engineers quite independently of each other: Dufour at Nyon, Martini at Frauentald and St. Blaise, and Saurer at Arbon. Only the Saurer factory, known throughout the world for its trucks and motor coaches, has continued to manufacture automobiles throughout the last seventy years. At the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne visitors can see the chassis of a Saurer truck dating back to 1903, as well as a Martini chassis dated 1913, with a sectional view of the engine.

[O.S.E.C.]

THE SWISS FLEET: A FEW FIGURES

At the end of last year, the Swiss merchant fleet numbered thirty-two vessels with a total capacity of 281,615 DWT (Dead weight tons) as opposed to thirty-one vessels and 267,297 DWT at the end of 1965. It comprised nine ships between one and five years old, eight from five to ten years old, ten from ten to fifteen years old, and five from fifteen to twenty years old. At the same time, the total crew of all these ships numbered 973 men, of whom 589 or 60.54% were Swiss citizens (1965: 963, of whom 600 = 62.31% Swiss). Since the institution of the Swiss maritime register in Basle in 1941, eighty ships have been registered, forty-eight of which have been removed from the register down through the years, either because of being sold abroad or through loss. Finally, it is interesting to know at which European ports Swiss ships load and unload their cargoes. Below we give the number of Swiss ships that called at the ports mentioned in 1965, with the corresponding figure for 1950 when the Swiss fleet comprised twenty vessels only, indicated in brackets. In decreasing order of importance, the ports were as follows: Genoa 82 (49), Marseilles 62 (69), Rotterdam 48 (12), Bremen 32 (0), Antwerp 31 (21), Hamburg 28 (10), Dunkirk 11 (1), Amsterdam 5 (6) and Trieste 1 (0).

[O.S.E.C.]