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TOURIST NEWS

BERNE INTRODUCES LATE-NIGHT SHOPPING

Berne has introduced late-night shopping for a whole year. From 15 May until the end of April 1976, shops in Berne will remain open every Thursday evening until 21.00.

Participation in the scheme is voluntary, but those shops taking part will display a special sign. Until now, there has been late-night shopping in Berne only during the weeks before Christmas.

RENOVATION OF THE SCHAUSPIELHAUS

The City Council of Zurich has asked for authority to spend 19.7 million francs on renovating Zurich's famed theatre, the Schauspielhaus.

It is planned to enlarge the foyer, to install a new air conditioning system and improve the acoustics.

EVENING MUSIC AT BERNE'S CATHEDRAL

This summer will again see the annual series of evening concerts in Berne's cathedral.

Introduced more than 50 years ago, this popular series has for long been an important contribution to the musical life of Berne.

This year's concerts — which started on 3 June — again feature leading Swiss and foreign soloists, choirs and orchestras, and will be held every Tuesday evening.

On the first evening — 3 June at 20.15 — the soloist was the organist Montserrat Torrent from Barcelona, playing works by 16th and 17th century Spanish composers as well as by Mozart and Bach.

The second concert on 10 June featured the Radio Berne Chamber Ensemble with Roberto Michelucci (violin) and conducted by Theo Loosli, performing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, Vivaldi's "Il favorito" Concerto in C minor for Violin and Orchestra, and

Mozart's Violin Concert No 2 in C major (K 211).

Yet another treat for lovers of good music will be the final concert on 2 September, devoted to Bach. The artists on this occasion will be Swiss violinist Hansheinz Schneeberger and the organist of Berne Cathedral, Heinrich Gurtner.

A CITY CALLED BERNE

"A City Called Berne" is the name

of an exhibition being held at the Gewerbemuseum at the Kornhaus from 21 June to 17 August.

Organised by the Association for Berne, the exhibition will offer summer visitors a glimpse into the federal capital's architectural beauty, its cultural, political and economic life and its colourful history.

The exhibition has been provided by, among others, Berne's Amateur Photographic Club, and the display is compiled in such a way that it can be staged again at a later date.

It is already planned to present the exhibition during the autumn of 1976 at the Comptoir de Fribourg fair.

SOFTENING THE DOLE!

The Federal Council has set the administrative machinery moving to institute a compulsory federal unemployment insurance scheme.

Without wasting any time, the Government has submitted the outline of this scheme to Cantons and various interested bodies and it is expected that Parliament will be asked, during its June session, to discuss an urgent federal decree.

In the longer term, a new Federal law on the matter will be voted, but this will have to wait for an amendment to the Constitution.

As yet, all unemployment insurance funds are run by Cantons, trade unions and companies and subscriptions to these funds can only be made obligatory by the Cantons.

All federalisation of the issue must first be ratified by the Constitution.

Switzerland is rather badly equipped to deal with unemployment. With the deteriorating economic situation, the Swiss have suddenly been faced with a problem alien to them since the thirties.

There were various attempts in 1971-72 to activate existing unemployment institutions, but no one took particular interest as Switzerland was

enjoying an unprecedented economic boom. But situations change dramatically and, with a fall in export orders, the number of people threatened with unemployment is rising steadily.

But only one worker in five is covered by an unemployment insurance policy, and only in Geneva and Zug is such a policy mandatory.

In at least five cantons, the communes are responsible for problems of unemployment.

The Government has already raised, by 50 per cent, the upper limit (80 francs) of daily allowance and is expected to act fast to make up for the absence of federal provisions in this field.

Defending the idea of a federal unemployment insurance in a speech at the last Basle Trade Fair, Mr Willy Ritschard, Head of the Department of Transport and Telecommunications, stressed that the difficulties that would be faced by unemployed workers today would be far worse than those in the thirties. He said that with the habit of comfort and security, countless Swiss workers were committed with mortgages and cars being bought on hire-purchase. The material affluence of the Swiss people would sharpen the impact of an economic crisis.



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