

Swiss federal institute of technology in Zurich

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SWISS FEDERAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ZURICH.

By A. ROHN, Dr. h. c., President of the Board of Administration of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

In the beginning of November of this year the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich will celebrate its 75th anniversary. On this occasion it sends a cordial invitation to its former students both Swiss and foreign. This jubilee is intended as a family gathering for all of them. It will give them an opportunity of studying all the improvements that have been made during the last 25 years and to become acquainted with those that will be carried out in the near future.

On the 6th November, at 9 p.m., participants will meet at the Dolder Grand Hotel where they will be the guests of the Canton and the Town of Zurich.

On the 7th November the official ceremony will take place at 10 o'clock at the municipal theatre, a banquet will follow at 1 p.m. in the large hall of the Tonhalle and in the evening the students of the S.F.I.T. will arrange a torchlight procession.

On the 8th November all the buildings of the Federal Institute will be open to visitors; at 4 p.m. the inauguration of the new Students' Home will take place and at 9 p.m. an academic festival will unite all the participants in the main building of the S.F.I.T.

The Institute is composed of ten departments: The Faculties of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Mechanics, Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Forestry, Agriculture, Irrigation and Surveying, Mathematics and Natural Science. Besides these it includes a department of Military Science and a Department of Optional Lectures of which it is particularly proud.

This general department which is accessible to a wider public includes courses in Philosophy, Literature, History and Economics and others for Mathematics and Pure and Applied Science; the former are chiefly intended for students of the S.F.I.T., the latter for any person desiring to increase his knowledge in the various branches of science. The first of these two groups of lectures aims at completing the general education of the future engineer, to avoid that professional one-sidedness which is often the consequence of highly specialised studies.

Numerous institutes for scientific research, laboratories and rich collections are attached to the Federal Institute, such as Mechanical, Physical, and Electro-technical Laboratories, a Laboratory for Testing Materials, a Research Institute of Forestry and an Institute for Agricultural Research. There is also an Astronomical Observatory and a Collection of Engravings. The special collections belonging to the various branches of technology do not claim to be museums, but they contain ample materials for teaching science in an up-to-date and competent manner. Only quite recently a new Laboratory for Hydraulic Demonstrations and Research Work has been opened. The Library of the S.F.I.T. contains 110,000 volumes and 460,000 copies of patents not counting the special libraries of the different departments.

Switzerland is nowadays a typically industrial state in spite of the fact that about a quarter of its surface is unproductive and though it possesses no other natural sources of wealth than its glaciers and the "white coal" that comes from them. Our country owes a great part of its industrial progress to the Institute of Technology. Its Departments for Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, as those for Civil Engineering and Chemistry, to mention only the most important, have had a large share in the development of our key industries and the great engineering plants of this country. The Faculties of Agriculture and Forestry play an important part in all questions regarding food production and the cultivation of the soil.

Fully aware of the economic difficulties that Switzerland has to overcome, the S.F.I.T. has at all times tried to fill its students with an ardour for scientific work and to turn out engineers who combine sound theoretical knowledge with a sense for its practical application. Only this determination to produce in every branch work of the best quality will enable a country without natural resources like Switzerland to maintain that high standard of life which it now enjoys.

Students are admitted to the first course on presenting such Swiss or foreign matriculation certificates as are recognised by the regulations. An entrance examination similar to the Swiss matriculation and specially adapted to the requirements of the S.F.I.T. and its international character is held twice a year.

The academic year opens in October. Foreign students are treated in every way like Swiss students. They have to pay the same fees, i.e., 300 frs. a year and a small additional fee for the use of laboratories and library and for insurance against sickness and accident.

A Students' Home is to be opened in autumn to reduce students' expenses during their time at the S.F.I.T.

The duration of studies varies according to the syllabus of the various departments from 7 to 8½ semesters including the examination period for the Diploma.

On the whole students are free to arrange their programme of studies themselves as long as this liberty does not interfere with a rational, well regulated course of studies. The normal syllabus is drawn up so as to enable the student to complete his course in a minimum number of semesters, but it requires on his part a continuous and conscientious effort. The lectures of the first 4 semesters provide for a thorough training in the theoretical side of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Natural Science while during the last 2 years they aim at developing in the student the faculty for the practical application of Science. Special importance is attached to close contact between professors and students in the research laboratories and in drawing office work. This method of instruction tends to produce engineers with a wide outlook on life, capable of filling responsible positions in technical undertakings. It avoids the purely practical work that students will learn much better by experience than at school, but it does not aim at a purely theoretical training either, at least as regards the majority of students.

All the departments (Architecture, Civil Engineering, Mechanics, Electrical Engineering, Chemistry, Agriculture, etc.) with the exception of the Pharmaceutical Dep. confer a Diploma; the title of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) can be awarded by any of the Faculties.

The S.F.I.T. has since its foundation been an international institute in the best sense of the term, thanks to its special position in the heart of Europe and to the traditions of Switzerland. The bonds of friendship that have been formed in the lecture rooms and the laboratories between students from different countries extend over the whole world. The number of students taught in the Federal Institute has always been much greater than that of the engineers that find employment in Switzerland.

The 75th anniversary of its foundation will afford the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology a welcome opportunity to show its gratitude to the Swiss authorities and to Swiss industrialists all of whom have always taken a warm interest in its prosperity and assisted it very generously with their financial support. S.I.T.

FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND GO TO LAW.

By LESLIE R. ALDOUS.

The date is October 22nd, 1930, and the scene is the Peace Palace at The Hague. Impressively robed judges, representing almost all the chief legal systems of the world, are met together on the bench of an unusual Court of Law. The parties to the dispute are not individuals, but nations—in this case France and Switzerland. Brilliant lawyers will put forward their countries' cases, and after hearing all the arguments on both sides, the judges will hold careful consultations. Finally judgment will be delivered. Before the League of Nations established the Permanent Court of International Justice at the end of 1921, such a proceeding would have seemed almost fantastic.

Little need here be said about the present dispute between France and her neighbour. What really matters is the principle of law, not war, by means of which the Court has already settled more than thirty cases. Suffice to explain that the origins of the trouble can be traced back to after the Napoleonic Wars when, for the benefit of trade and communications along the frontier, "free zones" were established in the regions of Upper Savoy and Gex. In the course of a century, conditions have changed. The Treaty of Versailles declared that the two countries should come to a new arrangement, but it did not suppress the free zones. Friction along the frontier has become intense, owing to the inability of France and Switzerland to reach a friendly agreement. This is not an academical dispute for, owing to the great difference between the values of the French and Swiss francs, the cost of living along the frontier is affected. The time has come for the Court to apply legal principles, in order to get a fair settlement.

No useful purpose can be served by attempting to anticipate the verdict of the judges at The Hague. But this much can be said—no decision of the Court has ever yet been questioned.

That tradition is not likely to be broken in the present instance. France has twice been on the losing side in cases of importance which have come before the Court, the other parties being respectively Great Britain and Turkey. Just after the latter verdict had been delivered, the writer heard it referred to in the course of an impressive speech by M. Briand, the French Foreign Minister. There could be no doubt as to his sincerity when he declared that France's belief in arbitration remained unshaken.

Bayswater Chronicle.

HELVETICA LODGE LADIES' FESTIVAL.

The Helvetica Lodge, which as most people know is the Swiss Masonic Lodge in London under the English constitution, held its Ladies' Festival on Saturday, October 25th, at the Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Avenue, Mr. Max Gerig, accompanied by Mrs. Gerig, being in the Chair.

The festival had been arranged to take place at the May Fair Hotel, but owing to unforeseen circumstances a post haste change had to be made to the Hotel Victoria.

The function started shortly after 6 o'clock with a reception by the President and Mrs. Gerig. Approximately ninety guests sat down to dinner, and Mr. Newman's Band regaled us with exquisite and appropriate "table music" which, combined with the good fare, put everyone at once in the right "Stimmung."

An attractive menu card, bound with a pale blue ribbon formed a very pretty table decoration, the feature being a troubadour in a Venetian gondola serenading his fair lady-love. Besides the menu it contained a list of toasts, etc. with a small quotation after each item, the one following the toast to the Worshipful Master being:

"And send him many years of sunshine days."
—King Richard II.

a toast which was enthusiastically responded to. I have attended a good many functions in the Swiss colony but seldom have I found a gathering which expressed itself in such affectionate terms to its Chairman.

Amongst the participants were many well-known members of the Swiss colony, present and past presidents of Swiss Societies in London, representatives from various London Lodges, and, of course, the bevy of charming ladies to whom this festival was dedicated.

During dinner, various toasts were drunk, which were announced by loud knocks with a wooden hammer by various officers of the lodge; their lusty hammering made my fair companion jump each time and nearly made me waste some of the precious beverage with which the guests were so liberally supplied. I understand that this is a custom held in lodges, but if ever I should be entrusted to hold that little hammer, I might feel inclined to take some cruel revenge on the nasty little instrument which played such havoc with one's tender nerves.

The after dinner speeches were "short and sweet." Mr. R. Marchand paid a high and touching tribute to the Chairman. Mr. M. Gerig in proposing the toast of the evening, "The Ladies" made a charming allusion to the ladies present, full of wit, sprinkled with poetical quotations, and I must confess that this was one of the most pleasant speeches I have had the privilege to listen to for many a day.

It must have been a tremendous inspiration to our ladies in these days of woman's emancipation, and I am afraid I am still suffering from the effect of it without, however, bearing a grudge against its author.

The reply to the toast of the ladies was made by Mrs. A. Saager, the speech being as charming as the deliverer. I only wish that some of our young compatriots could have heard those words full of love and admiration for our dear home land. The "coup" of the evening was no doubt, when Mrs. Saager presented, on behalf of the ladies, a beautiful silk banner to the Helvetica Lodge. This emblem shows the Swiss coat of arms, surrounded by our national flowers, Edelweiss and Alpenrosen and bears the names of the Founders of the Helvetica Lodge.

The Chairman in accepting this generous gift, assured the donors that it will ever be cherished by all the members of the lodge, and that they will try to live up to the lofty ideals by which this present was inspired.

Mr. P. F. Boehringer then rose to address a few words to the charming wife of the Chairman, the witty remarks as well as the sincere admiration which the speaker voiced on behalf of the members of the lodge found confirmation in long and hearty applause, and well did she deserve this praise. He then presented Mrs. M. Gerig with a beautiful silver rose bowl, suitable engraved, and a similar presentation was also made to Mrs. A. Saager on behalf of the members of the Helvetica Lodge. Mrs. M. Gerig acknowledged the gift, choosing just the right words and making everyone realise what a great help she must have been to the Chairman in his high and responsible office.

Dancing then followed under the able direction of Mr. C. Chapuis, and if there is still room on his cap, he may add another feather to it. During the evening an entertainment was provided by the Clown Argo, a Master of Mimics, and Isolde and Alexis in Exhibition Dancing which for a moment made me forget my rheumatics, but when trying to imitate them in the sanctuary of my bedchamber, I was unpleasantly reminded that I belong to the "has been's!" Mr. Conrad, President of the Swiss Choral Society, rendered two songs and his pleasant voice and admirable execution proved to be a welcome item, although it was not listed on the