

British equipment for Swiss studios

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one, though German is the language of road signs and conversation.

There are a number of modern shops in the main streets, displaying the latest fashions and the latest types of electrical and mechanical appliances.

A great centre of attraction is the River Rhine. Crowds walk over the bridges on Sundays and watch the steamers going up and down. The buildings along the banks on either side are picturesque and the whole scene has a peculiar charm of its own. What always fascinates me is to see the brown-skinned boys jumping into this fast-moving river, and swimming at a speed which must approximate, with the help of the tide, ten to fifteen miles an hour. It takes a mighty strong swimmer to swim against the current of the Rhine at this point.

No less important than the railway station is the airport, from which it is possible to fly almost anywhere. There is a direct service to London — or there was, before the war — a straight run through without a halt, to Croydon. Paris, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich, Frankfurt, Berlin, Amsterdam are all in direct communication with Basle.

It is a small airport — in fact, it is too small, to tell you the truth, but it is just about as busy as any in Europe.

An hotel known as Les Trois Rois seemed to be a haunt of royalty at one time or another, and the visitors' book is really worth looking at. It is a very delightful hotel, with a restaurant overlooking the Rhine, and believe me, to sit there on a lovely summer evening, listening to good music and drinking a good Rhine wine, is as pleasant an experience as I know, but if you have a more plebeian taste, I can recommend the beer, which is excellent. All through the town you will find taverns — I call them "taverns" for want of a better name — where a good, lively band plays without a break all the evening, and you drink your beer out of big earthenware mugs and the whole atmosphere is very cheerful.

Basle is a very pleasant town to visit.

BRITISH EQUIPMENT FOR SWISS STUDIOS.

Proposals inaugurated nearly two years ago for the establishment of a Swiss film production industry have received an impetus by reason of Switzerland's relative immunity from international complications, and work is being commenced on an ambitious studio project at Berne.

Known as Betofia (Berner Tonfilmatelier), the studios owe some of their features of design to British studios, and will be equipped under the close supervision of W. Vinten, Ltd. The well-conceived layout shows three separate blocks of buildings, the first and largest comprising the studios proper with all ancillary production departments; the second, the cutting and re-recording departments; and the third, the small but well-equipped laboratory.

Along the main road is a building which houses dressing-rooms and administration offices. Provision is made for the handling of crowds, to whose six dressing-rooms and canteen a staircase leads down directly from the main vestibule. Corridors from this vestibule lead to the wardrobe and make-up departments, to the right to the dressing-rooms for small-part players and the restaurant, and to the left to the

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administration and technical departments. On the top floor are 18 stars' dressing-rooms.

The studios comprise four stages of the following dimensions :—

Stage A, 140 by 72 ft. ; stage B, 72 by 56 ft. ; stage C, 110 by 72 ft. ; stage D, 72 by 56 ft.

The stages are built in two blocks, while between each pair of studios is a lamp-room acoustically isolated. The studios are of steel construction, with brick outside walls and isolated by means of inner walls of sound-proof material. The electric power distribution will be from bridges under the trusses, which also carry rails for travelling cranes between the bridges. The system of suspension of lighting bridges will be the same as at Billancourt, Denham and Pinewood. There will also be a remote controlled switching system, and the equipment will be installed between ceiling and roof. The power supply will total 12,000 amps. D.C. ; it is not yet decided if it is to be two- or three-wire system. Each stage includes a tank.

The power-house, between the two studio blocks, is completely underground. A very large concrete block, with cork isolation, serves as foundation for the motor-generators, each of which will also have its individual damping. The switchboard will be on a gallery 10 ft. above the floor level of the power-house.

The boiler-house adjoining the power-house is also underground. The fans and filters, as well as radiators for heating and cooling the stages, are independent units for each stage, installed on the roofs of the lamp stores.

Behind the stages are large stores and workshops, separated by covered ways along which motor-trucks can enter the stages through the lamp stores, the doors of which will serve as temperature locks, to prevent cold air entering the stages.

The rearmost building houses the main workshops, which will be equipped for the manufacture of all woodwork, furniture and some of the illuminating equipment. No provision is yet made for scene docks, garages, etc., which will be placed where experience shows them to be most convenient.

In the second block of buildings housing the sound departments, the greater part of the area is occupied by a scoring stage, the dimensions and construction of which have been based upon American research. A single monitoring room overlooks both this and a projection theatre, and above it is the projection room.

Eight rooms are provided for the sound department, and also two garages for sound trucks. The

five cutting rooms form a fireproof unit, adjoining but separated from the sound departments. An entirely separate building contains the film vaults.

The laboratory building has been designed to permit of customers supervising the handling of their negatives, without being admitted into the actual laboratory. Negatives are handed through to the control room, where test strips are produced and handed back to the customer, who can check them on special viewing devices, the illumination of which matches that of the grading machines. The customer can thus specify the developing conditions he requires. Printer test strips are similarly checked by the customer.

The control room thus forms the focal point of the laboratory. On one side of it are the developing rooms, and on the other side the printer and optical rooms. Separate positive and negative joining rooms are provided, also a chemical laboratory. Film vaults again form a separate building.

It is not anticipated that more than six or ten prints will generally be needed, but the highest grade of work is essential; the whole of the laboratory is under the control of one supervisor in the control room.

A large proportion of the equipment of the studio is expected to be of British manufacture. W. Vinten, Ltd., have the order for cameras and microphone booms, and in the laboratory for contact printers, optical printer, complete developing plant with temperature control, and recirculation; also the control equipment. The choice of sound equipment is unfortunately still restricted, the war notwithstanding, by the international agreements, and it is probable that Klangfilm equipment will be installed.

(*Kinematograph Weekly.*)

M. PARAVICINI AND THE ENGLISH PRESS.

(From "*The Queen*," 3.1.40.)

It is all very well for Shakespeare to say that "Parting is such sweet sorrow," for though it certainly is sorrow it seldom is also sweet! The Swiss Minister and Madame Paravicini have found this out to the full, for now that the days are very near when they must leave London and go to reside in Switzerland they find parting very hard, for they have lived in London for well over twenty years, and all their three children were born and brought up here, and confirmed in the little Swiss church in Endell Street.

When I went to say good-bye I found the once so hospitable house in Bryanston Square completely denuded of everything save the furniture in a couple of bedrooms and a few pieces in a ground-floor room. The blank spaces on the walls, the carpetless floor, all gave a sense of loneliness which is indescribable. Now that Mr. Vincent Paravicini, the only son of this popular couple, is a naturalised Englishman, they find it doubly hard to go and leave him here, where he is on military duty.

It is difficult to think what diplomatic circles will be without the Oliveiras and Paravicinis, who have been such invaluable representatives of their respective countries, and between them have been the head and fount of social life in the Corps Diplomatique.

When the Paras (as they are affectionately known to their friends) go to Berne they will live in a charming house in the centre of the town, and, as it is next

to the British Legation, they will be able to have English intercourse close at hand. It has a garden and lies close to a wood, which is just across the "Place." To show their appreciation of the long years in which Monsieur Charles Paravicini has been Swiss Minister in London the Swiss colony, which is not, in fact, a very large one, has collected money to give him and his wife a motor-car.

LIVING CHESS.

Living chess has been played recently in the Zurich sports stadium between two Swiss chess champions. The chess-men, impersonated by dancers, moved to the accompaniment of martial music. The pawns wore the picturesque uniform of bear-skinned grenadiers; the knights appeared mounted on real ponies — two of them white and two black; the castles, 12ft. high, were pushed by four soldiers each; and the two kings, in magnificent ermine garb, complete with sceptre and crown, were preceded by heralds and trumpeters whenever they had to move. It was a grand spectacle, and at the same time, the chess fans agreed, an interesting game.

HELFT FINNLAND.

Wir beugen uns über Karten
Und warten . . .
Seht die Gestalt des Landes!
Flatternden Gewandes
Die Göttin der Freiheit mit flehenden Armen
Winkt uns: " Erbarmen!"
Hin über Ozeane
Weht ihre Fahne:
" Gefahr droht euch allen!
Helft, Brüder, eh' sie gefallen
Als Opfer grimmigen Mordens,
Die tapferen Söhn des Nordens —
Helft Finnland!"

O Land der tausend Seen und Auen,
Der blauen Augen und blonden Haare,
Gottnaher Herzen und Altare.
Der kühnen Recken und sanften Frauen,
Uns innig vertraut durch Lied und Gedicht —
Wir leiden mit dir, doch zagen wir nicht!
Der Ruf ward vernommen
In aller Welt,
Ein mächtiges Rauschen und Blühen,
Millionen Seelen erglühen,
Euch Kämpfern der Freiheit gesellt:
" Wir kommen!"

Hört es, ihr Mütter, Kinder und Greise,
Elend irrend durch Sturm und Graus,
Hört die tröstliche Weise —
Bald kehrt ihr wieder nach Haus!
Ob der Feind auch pocht auf die Uebermacht
Mit Eisen und Stahl,
Eure Helden spotten der Zahl
Und zwingen die Schlacht.
Aus Himmelshöhen hört es wehn:
" Die Freiheit wird nicht untergehn!"
Ihr wackern Streiter haltet stand —
Helft Finnland!

(PAUL ILG, in "*Die Tat*.")