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Summaries in English

The present issue has been arranged by Jakob Ott, architect FAS/SIA, former Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Works.

The Swiss Confederation Builds

by Jakob Ott

Since 1878 most Federal construction projects have come under the Department of the Interior. The Swiss Federal Office of Works is entrusted with the carrying out of the actual construction and maintenance of all Federal Buildings. Fortifications and the buildings of the Swiss Federal Railways do not fall within this classification. Very frequently it happens that the drafting of the plans and the actual erection of Federal buildings require more time and are more complex than building projects for private owners. The Swiss Federal Office of Works in every case sets up a pilot project. Once this has been accepted, the actual construction can be assigned to firms of architects. Large-scale projects must be submitted to both houses of the Federal Assembly, who have them studied by their expert committees. All these are conditions that have not always resulted in happy architectural solutions and ones that are in keeping with the spirit of the age. Recently, however, there has begun to emerge a better understanding of the State's responsibilities regarding architectural problems.

Telephone Exchange in Lucerne

1950. Architect: Swiss Federal Office of Works, Berne

The urban site of the building required that in the planning the prestige factor be taken into account.

Post, Telegraph and Telephone Building on the Säntis

1961. Architects: Hohl & Rohner, Herisau

At an altitude of 2,500 m a cable-railway station has been combined with a radio transmitting station.

Institutes of Agronomy and of Forestry of the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich

1958. Architect: Prof. William Dunkel FAS/SIA, Zurich

Main building of five stories (plus ground floor) and experimental greenhouses.

Houses for Frontier Police at Castasegna

1958. Architect: Bruno Giacometti FAS/SIA, Zurich

Each house comprises two flats of four rooms; heating by stoves.

Railway Station Post Office at Buchs (St. Gall)

1958. Architect: W. Gantenbein FAS/SIA, Zurich

This frontier post office is well designed to handle postal parcels.

Swiss Confederation Government Building, Papiermühlestrasse, Berne

Plan: Swiss Federal Office of Works, Berne; prefabrication: IGEKO S.A., Etoy, Vaud

The building, which comprises twenty-three construction axes and five stories, was erected and poured in ten weeks.

Frontier Sanitary Inspection Building at Buchs (Canton of St. Gall)

1959. Architects: W. Gantenbein FAS/SIA, Zurich; Scherrer & Moham, Buchs

In addition to housing the routine public health services, this building can, if need be, accommodate refugees.

Weather Observatory of Locarno/Monti

1958. Plan: Swiss Federal Office of Works, Berne

Main building of three stories for laboratories and measuring apparatus.

Radar Tower, Lägern-Hochwacht

1962. Architects: Knecht & Habegger, Bülach

Tower of reinforced concrete with freight lift.

Radar Tower and Television Relay Station, Albis-Felsenegg

1961. Architect: Edwin Schoch, Zurich

Tower of ten stories in reinforced concrete.

Two Government Buildings in the Ticino: Post Office at Airolo, 1950, and District Office of the Customs Bureau in Lugano, 1962

Architect: Rino Tami FAS, Lugano

A small post office designed for multiple functions and a large office building housing the district headquarters of the Customs Bureau and the Federal Office of Highways and Rivers.

Frontier Sanitary Inspection Building at Chiasso

Architects: P. and H. Wenger FAS/SIA, Brig

Three symmetrically inverted floors, plus a hall beneath a roof suspended from four masts.

Embassy of Switzerland in New Delhi

1957-63. Architect: the late Prof. Hans Hofmann, Dr. h.c., FAS/SIA; associate: Walter Rüegg SIA, New Delhi; annexes: architects: Kanvinde & Ray, New Delhi

Except for the annexes, the entire building is accommodated beneath one broadly overhanging roof.

New Interior Renovation in the Federal Palace

Architect: Swiss Federal Office of Works, Berne

The renovation of the Federal Palace also falls within the competence of the Swiss Federal Office of Works.

Modern Ecclesiastical Art in the Jura

by Max Hugger

There were created in the Bernese Jura during the 50's several important examples of church art, which are still not so well known as they deserve: modern church windows in village churches. They were inspired by the churches in Assy (Savoy) and in neighbouring Audincourt and Les Bréseux in the French Jura. For these works we have to thank the initiative of the Delsberg architect Jeanne Bueche, who succeeded in getting Fernand Léger to do the stained-glass windows and Jean Lurçat a large tapestry in the church of Courfaivre enlarged by her. She could also induce Roger Bissière to create the stained-glass windows in the baroque churches she restored in the villages of Cornol and Develier. Finally, Maurice Estève helped her on her new chapel of Berlincourt. There should also be mentioned here the coloured glass compositions created by the Fribourg painter Bernard Schorderet for the new church of Vicques (architect: Fernand Dumas, Romont).

Ceramics of Irma Bamert

by Ursula Isler

Some of the very best Swiss ceramic work has been done by the young Zurich artist, Irma Bamert. Her vases and bowls are not shaped on the potter's wheel but are evolved from spirally wound strips of clay drawn up into shapes with astonishingly thin sides. Their special beauty consists in their coloured glaze, which lifts them above the handicrafts level and makes of them truly expressive works of art.

The Munch Museum in Oslo

by J.P. Hodin

When Edvard Munch died at the age of 80 in 1944, he left to his native city of Oslo 1,026 oils, 4,473 drawings and water-colours and 15,391 graphic works. The Museum, which the municipality of Oslo had built from 1960 to 1963 by the architects Einar Myklebust and Gunnar Fougner, has no intention of displaying the entire enormous bequest at once. New selections from ever differing points of view are to be exhibited. The museum building is distinguished by a combination of simplicity and great precision with regard to the dimensioning, the materials, the colour scheme and the lighting.