Swiss children's annual Christmas party

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STATESMAN OF MANY TALENTS RISES TO SWISS PRESIDENCY.

The election of Philip Etter, a member of the Swiss Federal Council, to the Presidency, is at least one instance of the smooth function of representative government in a Europe marked by political strife and governmental upsets.

The election, an annual affair and little more than automatic succession to the executive office, is not in itself an event which will have any immediate effect upon Switzerland's internal structure. On the other hand, it marks a milestone in a hitherto consistent policy of maintaining a thoroughly neutral democracy, in spite of ominous thunderings from over its frontiers.

As leader of the seven-membered Federal Council, or "Bundesrat," Mr. Etter will have a controlling hand in formulating both domestic and foreign policy. The political bomb-shells which have been exploding on all sides during the past year have not left Switzerland without a few marks which will require an expert's touch to remove. Racial persecution in neighbouring countries has left many impoverished nationals knocking at Switzerland's door, and political trends within the past few months have made Switzerland ever more aware of the necessity of assuring itself a definitely neutral position.

These problems which will in some degree confront Mr. Etter in his Bern office will be taken into competent hands, as a survey of his experience reveals.

After attending the Cantonal Secondary School at Zug and the College for Men at Einsiedeln, Mr. Etter studied law at the University of Zurich, later practicing in Zug. After acting for five years as head of the Zug Department of Education, he was in 1922 nominated member of that Canton's Government, having already served four years as a member of the Cantonal Assembly. In 1927 and 1928 he was elected Landammann or President of his Canton. In 1930, Mr. Etter entered the Zug State Senate, and in March, 1934, the Federal Council.

Upon his entry into the Cantonal Government Mr. Etter became head of the Department of Education. He is the author of a law on the re-organization of the Cantonal Secondary School, marking him as a leader in that Canton's educational movement.

Mr. Eter, in addition to being a lawyer, statesman, educator, and eloquent speaker, was once editor of the Zuger Nachrichten and president of the Catholic Press Association. Although considered a member of the so-called old-fashioned Swiss, he is a man with distinctly progressive ideas which he set forth in a widely-read brochure entitled "Die Schweizerische Demokratie" ("The Swiss Democracy"), in which he reveals his modern tendencies. This work was published by the Association of Swiss Students.

Mr. Etter is an ardent sponsor of simple and quiet family life. He himself is the father of five sons and five daughters and takes pride in his family responsibilities. A typical illustration of his qualities as a husband and father may be gleaned from the fact that when vacation time came last summer, the President-Elect hired a Federal Postal Motor Coach to take his attractive wife and children to their holiday abode near Unterägeri in his native Canton of Zug.

As an able citizen the President belongs to the Swiss Army, holding the rank of Major of Infantry.

Since his election into the Federal Council, Mr. Etter has done a great deal for the intellectual and artistic development of Switzerland and the preservation of the nation's political and cultural heritage. Young as he is to hold such a distinguished office, he has the full confidence of the Swiss people that he will steer the ship of state with skill and devotion.

The President was born on Dec. 21st, 1891, in the small village of Menzingen, in the canton of Zug. He is the youngest of the seven Swiss Federal Councillors and the first representative in the Federal Council from one of the small cantons.

The Federal Council is the executive power in Switzerland. Its seven members are elected for a term of four years by the Federal Assembly. Their re-election follows automatically.

Two members of this Council of Seven hold, respectively, the office of President and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation for one year.

(Chr. Sc. M.)

Drink delicious "Ovaltine" at every meal—for Health!

SWISS CHILDREN'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY.

At Victoria Hall, Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1. Saturday, December 31st, 1938.

Ever since I attended the Swiss Children's lovely Christmas Party last year I was wondering how I could possibly go there again. Of course, I have a little girl myself but as she is still too young to be taken to parties I really did not know how to get that special "carte d'entrée." And therefore when I was asked to report for the Swiss Observer I thankfully accepted because I knew very well what a marvellous afternoon it would be. There really is nothing like happy children, and those at Victoria Hall last Saturday afternoon had very happy and pleased faces indeed. At the entrance we were met by Pasteur Pradervand, and Pfarrer Bommeli was also there. Santa Claus greeted all the children and I noticed that his voice was not quite as sonorous as last year.

At three o'clock the fun started with the children singing "We're here together again." Mr. Graham Joss was conducting as in previous years and Mr. Steiner accompanied on the piano. There was a tall Christmas tree on one side in front of the stage and the platform was decorated with our own flag and the Union Jack. Two songs came next followed by some games. Mr. Joss is really very good at them and the children were most enthusiastic. The Rev. Pradervand then said a few impressive words and reminded the children of their homeland and their two great friends Pasteur Hoffmann and Pfarrer Hahn who had done their utmost to help them. After these well chosen words Mr. Joss asked the children to call Uncle Charlie which they did very energetically. His name is Mr. Pearson and he put up a wonderful performance as a ventriloquist. He played the part of a teacher and his dummy was a school-boy. The jokes were very good and appreciated by children and grown-ups alike. After another song Uncle Stanley arrived wearing a dashing red silk shirt. His name is Mr. Cable and he is a conjuror. He cooked a cake in Mr. Joss's trilby hat and performed a few amazing tricks with playing cards. The children shouted vivaciously when Uncle Charlie returned as a clown. And together the two uncles did some more astounding tricks and finally ended up by producing a long string of sausages out of a small bit of burning tissue paper. I am sure many of the mothers would have been very glad to know how to perform *this* trick! The children gave the two conjurors three very riotous cheers and then sang the old carol of the shepherd and the flock. Meanwhile the tables had been prepared for tea in the adjoining hall. Most of the children went over and had their tea, munched cakes and pulled crackers. The very tiny ones sat with their parents in the large hall but they all did enjoy the happy atmosphere and the good food. When tea was over each child received a carrier bag with a suitable present and some chocolates (kindly given by Messrs. Kunzle of Birmingham). Very happily they went home, and I even saw a little boy who was quite *unhappy* that the "funny man" had gone for good.

This year there were 274 children and over 80 parents. This is less than last year (311) and considerably below the record of 426 in 1933. But let us hope that there will be many more next year. I myself know a number of children who have never been there. And I think it is such a pity because, as Pasteur Pradervand mentioned in his address, those who organise and help this party love Switzerland and wish these Swiss children in England to realise their connection with their homeland and to be happy at a Swiss party. It is to these untiring workers that the success of these splendid parties is due and thanks to their help and efforts so many children could go home happily on Saturday. I am thinking of all the great lovers of children as those I have already mentioned as well as Mlle. Matthey, the chief organiser, Mlle. Sidler who very ably supervises the catering, Mme. Joss who manages the whole party, well assisted by Mlles. Wyss and Simmen and Mme. Pradervand; also Mmes. Muller, Thomas, Chapuis, Meylan, Barty, Isli, Jobin, Baume, Reber and Mlles. A., I., and Y. Hoffmann; as well as M. Godet as "Father Christmas," Messrs. Zwink (sen. and jun.), Chapuis, Campart, Joss (sen. and jun.), Steiner, Max Schneider, Jaccard, Baume jun., Weber, Nicklaus, Sandoz. I cannot give the names of all the helper as it would lead too far. But they all, old and young, deserve very hearty thanks for their unselfish help.

Mariann.

TO OUR READERS.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer would be greatly obliged if readers would supply him with addresses of likely subscribers, so that specimen copies could be posted to them.

If such addresses supplied should be already included on our mailing list, no extra copies would be sent.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

The first meeting of the year will take place on 10th January, and we understand from Mr. Bingguely that he has been successful in arranging a very interesting conference by a well known French Lady, Madame Champion, who will arrive from Paris on 8th January. She will speak to the members on a most attractive subject "Le rire et l'esprit Français au Théâtre."

Madame Champion's conferences are always exceedingly well attended due to her great sense of humour, and wonderful way in which she recounts the latest episodes of the Paris Theatre, and gives bright details of the amusing side of Paris life. Madame Champion is well known to many of our compatriots who are looking forward to hearing her, and as the meeting will be well attended we suggest that members should make reservation in good time, particularly if they decide, as anticipated, to bring a number of friends with them.

The Secretary asks us to remind the members to try and show at the first meeting that they have made the good resolution of attending in large numbers throughout 1939.

SWITZERLAND AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR.

Preparations for Switzerland's part in the World's Fair are being made with increasing speed as the time between the present day and the opening of the exhibition grows shorter. The Swiss Federal Council has appointed Dr. Victor Nef, Swiss Consul General in New York, as Commissioner General. Dr. Nef consequently took advantage of a holiday spent in Switzerland in the course of last summer to come to an agreement with the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade concerning the programme for the exhibition, and to get into touch with the different Swiss circles whose collaboration is necessary for the carrying out of the said programme. Mr. William Lescaze, one of the two Swiss architects in New York who have been entrusted with the building and the fitting up of the Swiss pavilions, also crossed the Atlantic in order to complete his plans in perfect agreement with these same circles. The contracts have now been drawn up and building has begun. Before long the exterior of the building of the Swiss section will have been erected on the space allotted to them in Flushing Meadow Park, whereupon the winter months will be devoted to the completion of the interior, in order to have everything ready to receive the exhibits by the beginning of spring. The exhibits themselves are being prepared with the utmost care, intense activity prevailing in those branches of trade which are to represent Swiss work and manufactures.

In the parts of the country engaged in watchmaking there is keen competition as to who will be able to produce collections of works and of finished watches that will best illustrate the state of perfection reached by manufactures which have won undisputed fame for the Swiss precision industries during the last 3 centuries. These costly collections will be shown in accordance with a new scheme, arranged in a way that will interest specialists and will, at the same time, attract large numbers of visitors. Every effort will be made to help the uninitiated to understand how the different parts of a watch work and by what technical methods it has been possible to attain absolute precision and reliability.

Specialists, who are at the same time clever artists, have designed cases for these works, which are made of materials of different kinds, with the result that each separate watch, from the simplest to the most luxurious, is a gem in itself.

In close co-operation with the most prominent makers of fashions Swiss textile industries have succeeded in producing tissues that will charm even those that are hardest to please and which will make this irresistibly attractive to women. Side by side with the far-famed goods made by St. Gall weavers and embroiderers there are silks, linens and knitted garments. In addition to these we see articles in leather and braided straw which serve to illustrate the progress made in a branch of Swiss industries less known to the general public.

The group entitled "Facts About Switzerland" aims at making Swiss life in all its aspects more widely known. It will illustrate and explain democratic principles as they are known and applied in Switzerland, and to which this country owes her original institutions and her strength. The character of the nation, its manner of life, the work done by Swiss men and women at home and abroad, will be shown in a series of suggestive pictures, which will form a practical and picturesque treatise on history and geography. The Tourist Section, finally, will not confine itself to praise of the scenic beauty of Switzerland. Its aim will be to give each in-