The stamps of Switzerland : international conferences commemorated

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A TRAVERS LA SUISSE.

The " Nouvelle Société Helvétique (London Group) " can be congratulated on the success of their show of Swiss films last Saturday; Kingsway Hall was filled almost to capacity.

The President of the N.S.H., Mr. A. F. Suter, addressed the audience with a few well chosen words, mentioning the 25th anniversary of the N.S.H. in Bern, whose President had sent his greetings to the Swiss Colony in London. Mr. Suter, speaking of his visit to Switzerland from which he had returned the evening before, told us of the fine travel facilities to the beauty spots in our country, of the preparations for the Fair in Zurich, of the carnival time. He also mentioned the military defences in Switzerland of which evidence is seen wherever you go and which just goes to show that our country shares the anxiety of Europe. We all endorse his hopes that these defences will never have to be used.

The first film entitled " Flying Feet " showed us a cheery crowd of skiers climbing the heights through fine mountain scenery. They went through the ABC of a skiing class and some fine close-ups were brought on the screen demonstrating the Christiania stem and other tricky turns and jumps. It all seems so easy. The skiers were next seen cutting graceful curves in the snowy surface and stirring up silvery clouds of snow as they came shooting down those mountain sides. What speed! What fun! In my opinion this was the best film of the lot, the photography was excellent.

" Water Rats " brought us a healthy group of boating and swimming enthusiasts; we followed them paddling their canoes down streams and rivers and along the shores of our lakes. There were parts where I wished the photographer had included more of the lake scenery, and the villages and houses which are so typical and individual in their architecture. These surely deserved a few more feet of film.

The next film opened with an autumn scene and howling winds, snow began to fall and the fun started: children all like the snow, they roll around in it, make a snowman out of it, they bring out their luge, skies or skates. The grown-ups do not lag behind, they too must have their fun and so the picture shows us all the ways of enjoying that gift from heaven, — snow. — Some of the skiing scenes were very good and the daredevilry and speed of the skiers made one catch ones breath at times. There were some fine shots of skating, that most graceful of sports. All this taken amidst brilliant sunshine, which we Londoners know how to appreciate.

During the interval Mr. W. Fischer showed us his own films of last year's summer holiday for the London Swiss children, organised by the Swiss Church Sunday School. I ask you, have you ever seen a happier group of children than those we saw on holiday in Kandersteg under Mr. Fischer's guidance. I noticed the children in the audience looking with envy at those holidaymakers. This short film convinced us of the manifold good such organised holidays do, not only do they strengthen the children's health but they plant that deep love and understanding for their native country. For those who were not present at the Film Show let me repeat Mr. Suter's appeal for help to extend this holiday scheme on a much larger scale this year.

The second part of the program showed us some beautiful scenery of the southern slopes of our Alps. Those pictures of spring in the Ticino were perfect.

A film with endless views of waterfalls followed then, but I thought the effect was lost, because it was mainly a repetition of what we had seen before.

Pasteur Pradervand remarked quite rightly that the choice of the films might have been better balanced, indeed I personally would have welcomed a view of a landmark in my home town.

We wish to thank the organisers for this very interesting and instructive Film Show.

W.S.

THE STAMPS OF SWITZERLAND.

International Conferences Commemorated.

The first Swiss stamps were issued under the Cantonal Administrations of Zurich, Geneva, and Bâle. The Zurich stamps were the first to appear in March, 1843. A four rappen stamp was inscribed " Local Taxe," and a six rappen stamp was inscribed " Cantonal Taxe." These stamps are catalogued up to as much as £100 each in unused condition.

The Geneva stamps were printed in black on yellow-green paper. They had a face value of 10c., and were divided into two portions, each portion having a value of 5c. These stamps are known to collectors as " Double Genevas."

The Bâle stamp was issued in July, 1845. The value was 2½ rappen, and the colours were red, black, and blue.

The first stamps under the Federal Administration appeared on April 5th, 1850. A 2½ rappen stamp was issued on this date and a 5 rappen and a 10 rappen stamp were added on the following October 1st. In January, 1852, a 15 rappen stamp was issued.

Land of Conferences.

In 1900 a series of three stamps commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Postal Union. The figures of value of these stamps as well as other parts of the design were re-engraved. The stamps are catalogued from a few pence up to 12s. 6d., but the re-engraved 25c. stamp, which was not issued to the public costs £8. It appears that a few specimens were given away by Post Office officials to their friends.

On the 1907 regular series of stamps William Tell's son, holding a cross-bow and an apple pierced by an arrow, appears on Swiss stamps for the first time. This design was redrawn on several occasions. William Tell himself first appeared on the Swiss stamps in 1914.

The first Swiss Air Mail stamps were issued in 1923 and consisted of three rather futuristic designs. In 1924 two stamps commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Postal Union.

In 1932 a series of stamps commemorated the International Disarmament Conference but by 1936 Switzerland was issuing another set of stamps sold at a premium to raise money for her National Defence Fund. These stamps were also issued in miniature sheets inscribed at the top " Pro Patria 1936." A curious looking black and yellow stamp issued in September, 1937, showed a mobile Post Office.

A series of stamps issued last year showed two views of the International Labour Bureau and the Palace of the League of Nations. These stamps were Swiss postage stamps but they were also specially overprinted for the use of the League of Nations and the International Labour Bureau.

Charity and Propaganda.

An article on the stamps of Switzerland would be incomplete without mentioning the Christmas Children's Charity stamps issued every December by the Swiss Post Office. This idea which was originated two years before the War has since been copied by the Post Offices of several other countries, including Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. The first stamp showed the figure of Helvetia with the Matterhorn in the background. There was no issue in 1914 but in the following year two stamps appeared showing a boy from Appenzell and a little girl from Lucerne. The sets issued until 1926 showed either costumes from the different districts of Switzerland or the coat of arms of the different cantons. From this time onwards one sees on these stamps a varied selection of views of Switzerland and the portraits of Switzerland's famous men.

Switzerland has realized the propaganda value of postage stamps and has recently issued a series of stamps to advertise the Swiss Exhibition which is being held in Zurich this year.

(*Times*).

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Chacun se demande ce qui va suivre au grand succès de la Réunion mensuelle de Février! Allons-nous continuer l'ascension - tant au point de vue intéressant que numérique?

Je crois que les membres, accompagnés de leurs amis, se rendront nombreux à notre prochaine séance, pour plusieurs raisons. D'abord pour souhaiter une cordiale bienvenu à leur Président Louis Chapuis, dont chacun a déploré l'absence en Amérique en Février, puis il y aura une conférence des plus intéressante en Anglais cette fois-ci. Un vieil ami qui occupe une importante situation dans une grande entreprise anglaise, Monsieur P. B. Tustin, viendra nous parler de " L'Harmonie dans les Affaires."

Orateur de talent, et bénéficiant d'une expérience mondiale, notre invité d'honneur ne manquera pas de remporter un grand succès. — L'harmonie est à l'ordre du jour!"

Venez donc tous avec vos amis vous êtes sure de passer une excellente soirée. A mardi donc, à 7h. précise, au local chez Pagani. N'oubliez pas de vous inscrire à temps chez notre ami Böhringer pour éviter toute déception au dîner qui précédera la séance.

Bee.

* * *

We wish to direct the attention of our readers to a Dinner and Dance, arranged by the above Club, which will take place on Saturday, March 11th, at the Mayfair Hotel, Berkeley Square, W.1.

The Committee of the City Swiss Club, heartily invites the members and their friends to attend this Dinner and Dance. (Tickets can be obtained from members of the Committee, or at the office of the Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Tel: CLErkenwell 2321-22).

OBITUARY.

Mr. Charles Hanky, one of the oldest members of our Swiss Colony in London, died at Vevey on the 17th of February. He spent in his younger days some years at Manchester and in Paris and about 1905 a very important Paris firm of Fur Skin Merchants sent him as their representative to London. Here his kindly humour, his unfailing devotion to duty, the probity and thoroughness in all his business transactions won him the respect and confidence of all who came in contact with him, and soon he became a prominent figure in his trade. For reasons of health he retired some years ago to Vevey. On the 15th of February he was suddenly taken ill and two days later he expired. He was 74, and a native of Zürich.

All those who have known him in London will ever remember him as a lovable and witty companion, a true friend and a man of character.

E.W.



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COMMERCIAL DIVISION,
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or to:
THE SWISS BANK CORPORATION,
99, Gresham Street, E.C.2.
The Official Agency of
THE SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS,
11b, Regent Street, S.W.1.