Home news

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HOME NEWS

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FEDERAL.

OPENING OF SWISS NATIONAL EXHIBITION.

M. Ph. Etter, the President of the Swiss Confederation, the members of the Federal Council and of the Diplomatic Corps, almost all the members of the two Houses of Parliament, the General Staff, and the delegations of the 22 cantons, accompanied by their banners and ushers (Weibels) in coloured robes, arrived from Berne in a special train for the official opening of the National Exhibition.

President Etter, in his opening speech, declared that the exhibition, which was held in the city where the strategic roads leading to German, French, Italian, and Romansch-speaking Switzerland met, was a symbol of the unity of the Confederation. It was a splendid illustration of the effort of Switzerland in all domains, and he saluted the "Unknown Swiss Worker."

The Swiss National Exhibition is the first to be held in our country since that at Berne in 1914.

The exhibition is intended to present comprehensively a mirror of Swiss life. The tourist is accustomed to think of Switzerland as a purely agricultural country, mainly pastoral and devoted to a rather picturesque production of milk and cheese. That is only one aspect of Swiss economy, though a highly important one. Swiss agriculture is in itself, as the exhibition shows, highly varied, ranging from the production of wine in vineyards that come right up to the suburbs of Zürich from the south, to the extensive production of sugar beet in the north. There is an industrial side also, of which the tourist, for obvious reasons, sees much less. In North-eastern Switzerland is a highly-developed industrial life, embracing machine construction, textiles and chemical, electrical and metallurgical production, and in the west there is a vast and well-organised watch-making industry, with its natural accompaniment — the making of optical and scientific instruments of precision.

Switzerland at Work.

The aim of the exhibition is to present something more than a trade fair: to illustrate Switzerland at work. The agricultural section shows a model Swiss village living its daily life — not a reproduction or a sham antique of "ye olde chalet" type, but a modern community going about its daily routine. The purpose of this is partly educative, with the purpose of instructing the rural Swiss themselves in village planning and model farming. The village is complete with town hall, farm buildings, post office, co-operative cheese factory and village inn — the last with its "Stübli," where food and drink are served on country lines in country comfort. A real old chalet — one built in 1790 in the Val d'Herens, off the Rhône Valley — is shown to illustrate the virtue of sound timber building.

The best energies and imagination of Swiss architects and builders and technicians have been enlisted in the design and execution of the industrial section. Extensive use has been made of aluminium fittings, perhaps to emphasise the importance of the oldest Swiss metallurgical industry, in which Swiss research and practice have an honourable record. A pavilion is devoted to illustration of processes in the production of aluminium alloys and the many uses to which they are put. In the Engineering Hall can be seen the new giant electric locomotive, designed and built in Switzerland, for use on the St. Gotthard line. This railway presents peculiar problems for the locomotive engineer, since the track rises by fairly steep gradients on the north side of the Alps to some 2,200 feet above the Lake of Lucerne, and falls on the other side about 2,800 feet to the Italian frontier. The engine develops 12,000 horse-power, and can take trains of 650 to 700 tons up to the St .Gotthard tunnel at some forty miles an hour. Two have been ordered.

The Lighter Side.

The exhibition is not wholly instructive and serious; it has its lighter side. There are cafés, mountain inns and rest-houses reproducing the cantonal styles of Tessin, Engadine, Valais, Oberland, Appenzell and so forth, and displaying the wide range of regional Swiss food and drink, which at their best can be very good indeed. Much space and time is being devoted to sport and athletics. In the Hall of Fashion twelve pretty Swiss girls (they were elected from 600 candidates) will show off Swiss textiles and confections.

Zürich will benefit to some extent permanently, for the exhibition has necessitated the rebuilding of the main bridge across the outlet of the lake and the complete reproduction of some of its old public buildings. And visitors should not fail to explore the quaint corners of the older city set upon the hill, where the medieval past is being saved from extinction by kindly and tactful hands, while the dignified modern city grows round it apace.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

According to figures just published unemployment in Switzerland has greatly diminished, there are at present 32,864 unemployed registered or 28,253 less than twelve months ago.

NEW NESTLE PRODUCT MAY BE MARKETED HERE.

Reference was made at the 72nd Annual General Meeting of Nestle and Anglo-Swiss Holding Co., Ltd., at Cham, Switzerland, recently, to Nescafe, a new product launched on the Swiss market.

It is possible that the product will be introduced into England some time this year.

THE BUCKINGHAM PALACE BROWNIES.

Princess Margaret and two other little girls connected with the Buckingham Palace Brownies have received their "golden bars" (Brownie second class). The presentations were made by Frl. von Herrenschwand, the guider in charge of the international chalet at Adelboden, who had come to show them a film of the chalet and to teach the company some Swiss songs.

ENGLISH FOOTBALLERS TO VISIT SWITZERLAND.

Everton, the Football League champions, are to tour Switzerland during the close season. Matches will be played in Geneva on May 8th, Biel on May 20th and Zurich on May 24th.

INCREASE OF FRONTIER GUARDS.

The Swiss Federal Council has decided to increase the number of frontier guards.

LOCAL.

ZURICH.

Over 89,000 persons have visited the National Exhibition on Sunday last.

BERNE.

On the occasion of the 100th birthday anniversary of M. Adolf Guyer-Zeller, the instigator of the Jungfrau Railway, a monument erected by the "Verkehrsverein" of Interlaken, was inaugurated in the presence of members of the family and the authorities both of the canton of Berne and the town of Interlaken.

* * *

The death is reported from Bienne of M. Karl Albert Leuenberger, President of the Board of the "Vereinigten Drahtwerke A.G." and the "Kettenfabrik Union, A.G. Biel," at the age of 79.

BASLE.

The accounts of the canton of Basle for 1938 closed with a deficit of 3,871,981.39 frs.

* * *

Dr. Hermann Renfer, since 1919 Director of the "Basler Lebensversicherungs Gesellschaft," has celebrated his 65th birthday. Dr. Renfer enjoys a great reputation in the Insurance world. In the Army he held the post as chief of staff of the 3rd Division.

BASEL.

Dr. O. Schär, President of the Board of the "Schweiz. Konsum Verein," has tendered his resignation. Dr. Schär has been connected with this important concern for the last thirty years.

ST. GALL.

The well-known firm of Christian Fischbacher & Co., in St. Gall, has made a donation of Frs. 500,000 to the Federal Council to be used for research work in connection with the Technical University in Zurich.

GRISONS.

The elections for the Grand Council of the canton of Grisons took place last Sunday. The various parties in the new Council are represented as follows: Democrats 40 seats (old Council 35); Conservatives 28 seats (old Council 27); Liberals 21 seats (old Council 29); Socialists 9 seats (old Council 6); Independant 1 seat, (old Council 2); Total of members: 99.

AARGAU.

National-Councillor Dr. Hans Hoppeler, for the last twenty years a member of Parliament (Nat. Council), is not seeking re-election.

* * *

National-Councillor Otto Hunziker has celebrated his 60th birthday. M. Hunziker has been a member of the Grand Council from 1906-1936. In 1911 he entered Parliament. (Nat. Council). M. Hunziker has, during more than thirty years, rendered great services both to his native canton as well as to our country.

TICINO.

Two people were killed and several injured through the explosion of a mine placed in one of the tunnels of the Gandria Road, to block the road in case of war. The military authorities have investigated the matter and a report will be issued later on.

VAUD.

The death is announced from Aigle of M. Jules Borloz, since 1895 editor and publisher of the "Feuilles d'Avis du district d'Aigle," at the age of 71. The deceased was one of the Founders of the Swiss Press Association, he was a member of the Grand Council from 1916-1929.

VALAIS.

M. Hans Schröter, member of the Grand Council of the canton of Valais, and a director of the "Volksbank" in Visp, has died at the age of 72.

NEUCHATEL.

Dr. C. de Marval, Honorary member of the Swiss "Samariterbund" and President of the "Stiftung für das Alter," has died in Neuchâtel at the age of 67. Dr. de Marval some years ago received the Gold medal of the International Red Cross for the many services he had rendered in that cause.

GENEVA.

An International Competition for musical performers will be held at the Conservatoire de Musique, Geneva, from June 26th to July 8th. The competitions are open to both sexes. Money prizes will be given to the best performers, who, if selected ,will play at the concluding orchestral concert. Information and conditions will be sent on application to the Secretary, International Competition for musical performers, Conservatoire de Musique, Geneva, Switzerland.

FOOTBALL.

7th May, 1939.

SWITZERLAND ... 2 HOLLAND 1

A comparatively small crowd of 17,000 witnessed this 14th international match of the two sides at the Wankdorf stadium in Berne, ending in a narrow, yet deserved victory for Switzerland. It is indeed pleasing to be able to dispense with that old formula of "wonders never cease" and similar epithets expressing delight, tempered by surprise and astonishment. But after the good show put up by Switzerland last year in the internationals played, particularly against England at Zurich (of course I am rubbing it in, there might not be another chance in my lifetime!), and against Germany in the world-championship games at Paris, worthily followed this year by that 4:2 win over Portugal at Lisbon and 3:1 over Hungary at Zurich, even the most inveterate pessimist of a reporter has shed the inferiority complex: A Swiss win against the Dutch was a foregone conclusion.

Although proved a correct forecast in the end, the Swiss had to fight for it desperately hard and it was anybody's match right up to the end.