

Gold and oil in Switzerland

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Then, when introducing new industries, the question arises: should we admit foreign experts? The cantonal, as well as the Federal authorities, consider that expert-managers and others should be dismissed and replaced through native citizens, as soon as the term as instructor is at an end.

To build and permanently establish new undertakings such concessions would not be sufficient. Experts and specialists must be allowed a permanent position. Work of good quality cannot be executed without long experience, and a new industry will never establish itself permanently without quality. Notwithstanding the economical conditions of the present time, the number of new undertakings is gradually increasing, due to the steadily increasing help and activity of the Federal Bureau of Industries.

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GOLD AND OIL IN SWITZERLAND.

Time and again we have pierced and probed our tiny portion of the earth's crust, hoping against hope that one day we should strike upon a hoard of mineral oil. We have chipped and tunnelled our mountains, dreaming that a treasure of coal or iron might be unearthed. We have called in diviners and set them upon the trail with their little hazel rods; but they always returned and reported only traces. Nothing more. Traces! Of what use are traces to our little country, shut in by powerful neighbours and with no road to the sea that we can call our own? Traces, when we are held captive in Central Europe! But it is an old story. Why, even the Helvetians of 2000 years ago realised it: why else did they decide to leave their land and settle in Gaul? Near Geneva they encountered Julius Caesar and his Roman legions, who drove them back again to their native mountains. Which was the best thing that could have happened. No, in Switzerland gold is not dug out of mines: it falls from Heaven like manna. It is the pure sun-gold that glows above the frosts and fogs of winter, and radiates light and health all through the long Swiss mountain summer. Here, on Europe's lofty sun-terrace, man is in direct touch with the God of light, whose rays descend through limpid air unpolluted by the dust and grime of the lowlands. These rays are veins of purest gold — gold that has never caused strife or greed: there is enough and to spare for all, as it pours into our houses and hearts straight from its very source. To lie, remote from life's tiresomeness, on some mountain-side meadow; to turn one's gaze towards the blue vault above; to bask in the liquid warmth of this sun-gold, is to know it worth all the yellow metal ever mined. As yet no geysers have blown their murky streams of oil into our air, though our drills have burrowed down through clay and rock and sand for hundreds and hundreds of feet. The best geologists and oil-seekers in the world have gone forth from our country to discover natural wealth in distant parts of the earth, but, alas, here at home they have never struck oil. And yet strange waters gush up to us from the depths, by what channels we know not. Here they emerge steaming hot, there icy cold; some laden with salt, others with sulphur or with a hundred other minerals. Healing springs are these, miraculous sources of health and strength to the ailing bodies of men. Bathe your way to health! — Even the Romans knew this slogan when they crossed the Alps northward and built their camps and fortifications near the sources of these mineral springs. For them, as for us, Switzerland was famed as a land of healing waters. Truly, with our sun-gold and our health-giving springs, we need not lament our lack of oil-fields.

And what about coal? Poor Switzerland! Yet we have coal. It has been mined in Canton Valais and the Gonzenberg, though indeed people say it is not black enough. Ah, well, one can't always have the best of everything! At any rate, we have a worthy substitute — a white coal, a coal that makes no dust. It tumbles down our mountain-sides, rejoicing in its own deep laughter; pure and fresh it comes to us, surging of its own will on to the blades of our turbines, yielding up its mighty strength in the light-hearted, turbulent way that it has. Serenely then, and in the

best of humours, it ripples along between peaceful Swiss meadows, paying here and there a quiet visit to some tiny blue lake. Ever ready for service, it flows beyond our borders to help our neighbours before losing itself in the oceans of the world. The mountain torrents of Switzerland are our glad messengers and ambassadors to the world. But here at home their services are thousandfold, their strength immeasurable. The supply of Swiss coal will never fail, will never be exhausted. In this, too, we see a wise law of compensation.

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

Berne, Switzerland's progressive capital, has recently inaugurated its new Natural History Museum. The beautiful and ultra modern building rises in the Kirchenfeld district and houses now in a most adequate manner the many remarkable treasures which could no longer be displayed to full advantage in the old building. The collections have long been famous for their admirable portrayal of alpine geology and mineralogy.

The Museum is much indebted to the Colonial authorities and the government of South Africa which have generously given it permission for free hunting of certain rare and otherwise prohibited wild animals which are still lacking in the collection.

Efforts are again being made by the cantons of Uri and Berne for a government subvention for the construction of a highway across the Susten Pass from Innertkirchen, near Meiringen, to Wassen on the St. Gotthard line. The building of this road would entail an expenditure of 20.37 million Swiss Francs: 11.6 million for the Bernese section and 8.77 million for the Uri part. The economic and military importance of this Alpine thoroughfare are highly emphasized.

Historic Soleure in the Jura will be the scene of the Swiss Yodeling Festival on August 8-9 and in addition to the tuneful yodels of various Alpine districts there will be alphorn-playing, singing of folk-songs, flag-swinging, dancing and a fine array of old costumes.

Yodeling dates back to the earliest days when the people of the mountains made up their own melodies and songs. Early in the 19th century some observing Swiss began to take notes of the words and melodies of different yodel lieder, and the Bernese and Lucerne alpine regions are particularly famous for their wide range of music of this kind.

A Swiss Yodelers Association was founded in 1912 and is responsible for the National Yodeling Festivals which are now being held regularly at intervals of three years.

The Municipal Tramway of Zurich inaugurated recently a new device in the form of an apparatus indicating automatically the name of the next stop. This apparatus, visible from every part of the car, indicates in large letters, the next stop, immediately after proceeding. Zurich is the first city testing this new invention, which has been produced and manufactured by a Swiss.
