

The Berne aerodrome

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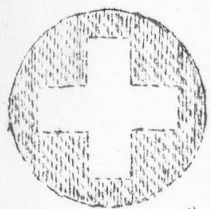
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TOURIST TRAFFIC IN SWITZERLAND.

Recent news from Switzerland indicates exceptionally heavy influx of tourists during Christmas and New Year holidays. Most of the well known resorts had record numbers of visitors, which fact is mainly attributable to the devaluation of the franc, besides the better economic position of most countries. The tourists came chiefly from England, Holland, Belgium, France and U.S.A.; very few from Germany due to arbitrary restrictions imposed by the Government and the prevailing poverty existing there.

Basle, the "Northern Gate" of Switzerland, experienced enormous activities both at the railway terminus and for through traffic of motor-cars. Express trains arrived incessantly across the borders; the heavy French locomotives had to be re-directed back to St. Louis instantly after arrival to allow following trains prompt entrance. Customs and passport control was arranged between Mulhouse and Basle to prevent blockage at the terminus.

The day before Christmas a total of 60 Express trains, in addition to the ordinary schedule-trains, left the Basle railway station to transport the tourists to the various alpine resorts, and on Christmas Day the number had to be increased to 87. The great revival of our Hotel and Tourist trade can thus easily be visualized and all sections rejoice at the good fortune. St. Moritz, Davos, Engelberg, the Toggenburg, the entire Bernese Oberland, etc., are taxed to maximum capacity. Davos, for instance, had a record number of 7100 tourists; the comparatively small Grindelwald had 2000 of which 500 had to be lodged in private houses. Such numbers have not been known to arrive during the best boom years, and what is considered of yet greater importance, are reports from everywhere that the winter months 1937 promise to be exceedingly busy for our great Hotels.

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THE BERNE AERODROME.

The Berne Aerodrome, one of the most beautifully situated aviation stations in Europe, lies some six kilometres south-east of the centre of the City. Its proportions, ground conditions and technical equipment are such as to satisfy the most exacting demands, whilst its favourable geographical situation renders it essentially suitable as a starting point for alpine flights.

Berne is connected by daily air services with all the principal cities of Europe, such as Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Barcelona and others. The Bernese Air

Navigation Company (Alpar), which carries out flights throughout Switzerland, is also in a position to convey passengers, at the cheapest possible rates, to any European air-port they may desire to visit. This Company's pilots and machines are particularly adapted, however, for the carrying out of flights over the Alps. An hour's flight from the Federal Capital is sufficient in order to be able to look down from above upon the marvellous beauty of the icy giants of the Bernese Oberland; a two hours trip enables one to fly over the mightiest and most impressive of all the mountains -- the Matterhorn. Even a short joy ride in an aeroplane over the City of Berne offers far more interest than a longer, and perhaps monotonous, flight over the plains of neighbouring countries. With all confidence it may be asserted that whoever leaves Berne without having first indulged in a flight, has only half seen its manifold beauties.

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AS OTHERS SEE SWITZERLAND.

A very interesting article about our country appeared the other day in the N.Z.Herald. To repeat the full article would require too much space, but a few extracts will no doubt raise a smile amongst the Swiss Ladies in this country.

The article impresses upon readers the fact "that the average traveller or tourist imagines all people to be exclusively engaged in tourist and traffic trade, and as an afterthought he might vaguely murmur something about cheese chocolate - and, oh yes, watches. Yet the majority of Swiss people have little or no direct contact with tourists and live lives of greater simplicity than ours." - - It states that the farmhouses or chalets of Switzerland are roofed with shingles weighed down with heavy stones, that the basement contains the cellar and the stables for animals in winter, as well as the threshing floor. "It would seem to be very difficult for the housewife to keep the place even moderately clean; yet everything is spotless."

The author of this article has quite a lot to say about the Domestic problem and the daily meals; some of it is worth repeating :-

"Delicious honey or jam (cherry if you are lucky) is served with the usual Continental coffee and rolls breakfast. The main meal of the day is the mid-day dinner, and at about six there is a light supper. The Swiss are very fond of soup, which they make well, and which they always serve at dinner. Only a very little meat is eaten. In the peasant families Sunday is often the only day of the week when meat is served. Vegetables, usually very dull things at an English table, are in Switzerland cooked often with cheese, in a variety of ways, all of them interesting. The housewife may not have heard a great deal about vitamins, but no dinner is considered complete without a salad and plenty of fruit. Puddings and pies, so dear to us, are here unknown.

"September 16 is a day of national thanksgiving, and although it is nominally a fast day, in most homes it is kept as a feast day. In honour of this day Swiss women make huge "gateaux a pruneaux," which are something like plum tarts. A very thin pastry is rolled out, and on it are placed slices of plums sprinkled with sugar. Delicious as these are, it is wise to approach them warily as they are difficult to eat politely.

"The coffee is naturally very good and is served at all meals. Tea, which is very expensive, is neither liked nor