

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 16 (1951)
Heft: [3]

Rubrik: Switzerland as seen by foreigners

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 17.05.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

The products displayed by the Swiss Electrotechnical Industry, with its manifold goods intended for the construction of power stations and electric plant of all kinds, enjoy world renown. The exhibition of motors, generators, transformers, switchgear, etc., is concentrated in Hall V, whilst electric measuring instruments are to be found in Hall III/b and everything connected with illumination in Gallery III.

The exhibit which requires most space of all for itself is the Machinery Display. Metal-working and wood-working machines are to be found in Halls VI and VII and part of Hall XIII, where, in addition, the allied group embracing tools and industrial accessories is also accommodated. Considerable attention is aroused by the much sought after Textile Machines, which have been placed in Hall IX.

Some of the exhibits appeal more to the Swiss home market where interesting novelties, opportunities for comparison and for absorbing new suggestions are provided by the groups covering buildings and dwellings, transport and traffic, office requisites, applied art, domestic science, chemical and foodstuffs industry.

Thus the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle does not only provide excellent opportunities for purchasing goods but, over and above that, it offers valuable insight into the economic life and aspirations of a small nation.

To Commemorate the 600th anniversary of the entry of Zurich into the Swiss Confederation, the Committee of Zurich Guilds has decided to organise a great historical procession on the 22nd April next. Consequently, the Procession arranged for the following Monday and the "Sechselauten" Children's Procession will not take place.

The historical procession will include some 2,800 participants, practically entirely recruited from the Zurich Guilds, and will illustrate the development of Zurich during its 600 years' association with the Confederation. It will recall the Alliance of 1351 of the four original cantons, the participation of Zurich with Hans Waldmann at the Battle of Morat, the great Shooting Matches of 1504, the Reformation led by Ulrich Zwingli and the famous boat journey to Strasbourg with a pot of millet. Other groups will depict the Zurich fortifications of 1640, the perpetual alliance with France under Louis XIV, tableaux of life in, and the campaign of, the 18th century, the aid given to Berne in 1798, and finally the new Federal Constitution with two large groups of banners of the canton and the Guilds.

The Swiss Finance Minister has announced in Parliament that the question of a renewal of gold sales to the public was being considered within the framework of comprehensive measures to combat inflation.

SWITZERLAND AS SEEN BY FOREIGNERS

Throughout the world the press publishes articles about our country. It will certainly interest you to know what it says, and we have translated for you a few extracts:

On January 20th, the Canadian newspaper "Le Devoir" wrote: "Switzerland is an oasis of peace. As soon as you land you feel that this country escaped from the horrors of the war. Everything gives the impression of wellbeing, of quietness, of happiness. The houses are newly painted, people are well dressed, the

food is abundant and the Swiss franc is a solid currency. Switzerland is the only country in Europe which can compare with America. The standard of living is as high as on this side of the Atlantic. The Swiss franc is as much sought after as the dollar. Switzerland devotes herself to peace work. Geneva, as we remember, was the city of the League of Nations. She has retained various international institutions, and has even attracted new ones. Organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross are solely financed by Swiss subsidies. It is the traditional neutrality of the country and its geographical position that allow Switzerland to play such an eminent part in better understanding and international welfare. Neutrality is not necessarily egoistic. It often requires more courage to remain neutral than to start conflict. Past experience has shown that Switzerland has known how to fully utilize her neutrality and at the same time make it serve humanity."

An Italian newspaper proceeds: "All the ladies use the tramcars; even those with baby carriages. The conductor helps them, makes jokes with the baby, enquires about its age, weight and sex. What a nice institution those Zurich tram conductors are! They must possess a rich repertoire of jokes. As soon as they open their mouths all the passengers burst out laughing. But it is difficult for a stranger, even if he knows the language of Goethe, to understand what is said, as the tongue spoken is different. It is why the Swiss are generally very distrustful towards people who are speaking pure German."

Another Italian newspaper, "Nuova Stampa," writes about Berne: "I stopped on the bridge which dominates the Aar, and from there I admired the old town and the modern quarters. My sentiments were shared between admiration and incredulity. So there exists in the world, in Europe, a spectacle such as the one that I can see now: A capital which has the atmosphere of a small town, a small town which has the rhythm of a metropolis, a metropolis cordial as a village of which the inhabitants have the spirit of city men. To young people of twenty years, too young to remember Europe before 1939, but who would like to know her, I would say: 'Go to Berne; walk in the streets and observe. You will see an existence made to fit the human scale. A mysterious mixture of old customs and modernism, of traditions and progress. You will hear the echoes of the life made of wisdom and common sense. The reasons for this existence can be found first of all in the reciprocal tolerance which is the very essence of the Swiss spirit.'"

Mr. Emanuell concludes his article by regretting that Europe had not wanted to live like the Swiss.

An Italian newspaper, "L'Italia," writes on the 20th of January, an article about the "look" of Zurich: "The elegant shop windows of Bahnhofstrasse are dazzling, and foreigners look at them with perplexed admiration. The fashion houses exhibit everything to rave about, but it is seldom that you see 'Zurichoise' who wear these models of perfect taste, and the strangers ask 'Who buys these beautiful frocks and furs? Surely not sympathetic and practical Swiss women.' Here the women do not seem to be very interested in the international fashions which are exhibited in the centre of the town. In Zurich, the good housewife, moreover, has not to go out for shopping. Certain commercial firms have organized mobile shops; customs are called with a bugle. The interior of the Swiss home is most pleasant. The windows are ornamented with beautiful immaculate stretched curtains, the floors are covered with woollen carpets, soft armchairs and lovely furniture grace the rooms, not to speak of a washing machine and all kinds

of highly perfected kitchen utensils; in fact, everything which makes the Swiss home a paradise for a housewife. Everything is practical and useful."

In the English newspaper "Tablet," the journalist Reginald Langford compared the Swiss and the English systems of Government. He finds the English system old fashioned and undemocratic and confronting the British "one party government" and the permanent coalition of the Swiss Government, he says: "The Swiss system is not new or revolutionary. It has been applied with success for over 100 years in the oldest democracy of the world. In Switzerland, where even different races live together in peace and harmony, a cabinet crisis is an unknown event, although the proposals of the Government are rejected from time to time by the public vote. Only a pressure of the public opinion can force a federal councillor to resign against his will and all important decisions are brought to the public vote, the voice of the people being its law. Switzerland is not a Utopia and the discussions over internal affairs are sometimes very heated. But the Government is stable, effective and democratic and the Swiss democracy functions as well as it possibly can without restricting the liberty of the citizens."

In the Japanese newspaper "The Mainichi Shimbun," a journalist wrote an article about Switzerland's defence. He says that generally the Japanese think of Switzerland as a nice little country situated in the Alps: the world-famous land for sight-seeing. Moreover, one remembers that Switzerland is the country of the watch industry and the oldest democracy that follows a policy of everlasting neutrality. The Japanese readers will certainly be surprised to hear that Switzerland is the most powerful European military State on the western side of the Iron Curtain. This is a fact and military experts in Europe reckon that Switzerland would be the only country able to resist effectively a Russian invasion.

The Swiss army consists only of citizens, with the exception of a few instructors. Each soldier keeps his uniform and arms at home. How extremely well trained the Swiss army is, results from the words of the Chancellor of the German Republic, who manifested his intention to invite Swiss officers as instructors in case of a re-armament of Germany.

Swiss neutrality is armed neutrality. In the last world war the Nazis abstained from attacking this completely isolated country. Why? It is said because the Germans were afraid of the exasperated resistance of the Swiss people who would have fought to the last man in the so-called "reduit," a natural fortress in the Alps. Switzerland is making every effort to prevent a new invasion. A thorough preparation, excellent arms, and a patriotic spirit of resistance will protect the country.

In the Mexican newspaper "Revista Internacional y Diplomática," appeared an article about the Swiss emigration.

The Swiss emigrants living in all the five parts of the world constitute the strongest ties uniting Switzerland with the world's economy. Mostly before the first world war, when the atmosphere was friendlier and people more open-minded, Swiss of all classes and professions have gone to near and far away countries to find a new existence. In many cases they attained important posts and generally it can be said that the Swiss abroad

are highly appreciated because of their efficiency in work, their trustworthiness and their loyalty towards the land that received them.

There has been published in the "Christian Science Monitor" an article regarding the Swissair. It draws attention to the fact that this Swiss Airways Company will employ new DC-6-B machines for its transatlantic service. Moreover, this newspaper gives credit to the excellent work done by this small but extremely well-organized company which has had no fatal accidents for more than ten years. The service functions with a precision that has no equal in other companies.

Michael Goldsmith wrote in the "New York Long Island Press" and other American newspapers about the structure of the Swiss defence. "If a future aggressor ever attacks Switzerland, he will be surprised to meet the strongest European military power outside the Iron Curtain. Switzerland, although not participating in any military alliance with Western Europe, is building up a defence of extraordinary measure. Most Swiss are convinced that it was only the strong and powerful Swiss army that held off Hitler from invading Switzerland during the second world war. Assuming that the Russians or any other aggressor will abstain from attacking Switzerland for the same reasons, the Swiss Government has worked out a five-year plan in order to fortify the national defence." In this connection the writer reminds us that Switzerland has spent 320,000,000 dollars to buy arms, planes, and munitions and to strengthen the defence system.

NOTICE

The Swiss Consulate would be grateful to anyone who could give the present whereabouts of MR. JOHANN JOSEF ANTON HAGENBUCH, born 11/12/1871.

MR. FRANK IMHOF,

42 Vogel Street,

HAWERA.

Is Agent of the

SOUTHERN CROSS ASSURANCE CO., LTD.

CORRESPONDENCE: Please address to the Secretary,

MR. E. MERZ,

P.O. Box 85, Auckland.

Printed by McKenzie, Thornton, Cooper Ltd., 126 Cuba St., Wellington, for the Swiss Benevolent Society in New Zealand (Inc.).