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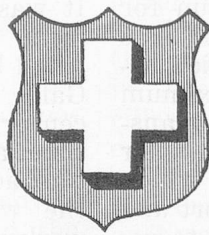
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AUCKLAND.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Retrospective Motor Show in Geneva

On the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the forthcoming "Salon de l'automobile de Geneve," which opens on the 10th of March, will present a retrospective show, in which will be found the most astounding models of cars from the last century and from the beginning of this century. Thanks to the disinterested collaboration of a number of firms who are taking part in the Salon and of our national museums, visitors will be able to see motor vehicles which originate from seven different countries.

An entire showroom will be given up to this retrospective show, which will be an event in itself.

Raymond Lambert in Nepal

This popular guide from Geneva, who may well be called the "pioneer of Everest," since he paved the way to a certain extent for Hilary and Tensing, is preparing to start on a new expedition. With the famous Canon Detry, of the Grand St. Bernard monastery, he will this time be reconnoitring the Langtang-Himal district of Nepal. The expedition is planning to bring back photographs and films and also intends to study the customs of this little known part of the world and carry out scientific observations. Lambert, it will be remembered, recently returned from an expedition with Claude Cogan, the French mountaineer.

A Bright Idea on the Part of the Swiss Railways

Everyone knows how annoying it is to be caught in a storm at the end of one's journey, especially if one happens to be arriving at a small village without taxis. The Federal Railways thought of placing small umbrellas of oiled paper at the disposal of their passengers, for a moderate charge. The experience will be tried out at country stations as from February of this year.

A Treasure Hunt in Chillon Castle

The Swiss News Agency recently reported that excavations had been carried out in Chillon

Castle in the hope of discovering hidden treasure. Hidden treasure! The magic of these words set fire to people's imaginations, and enquiries came pouring into Montreux from everywhere. Unfortunately, it must be confessed that although Chillon must have held many treasures in its day, it certainly contains none now. The whole mystery was explained quite simply as follows. Last year a Swiss firm carried out searches in various castles of the country in an attempt to discover any hidden wealth that might have been abandoned there long ago. Nowadays magnetic detectors of the type that were used during the last war for detecting mines make it possible for searches of this nature to be carried out with great thoroughness and precision. At Chillon these detectors did in fact react and indicate the presence of metallic masses in three separate places. The searchers dug right down to the rock . . . but no sign of any treasure. There are two explanations given by the experts to account for the deceptive reactions of their detectors: either the rock on which Chillon is built contains metallic masses of geological origin or—and this is the one more likely to appeal to popular imagination—treasure was in fact buried at one time but was removed at a later date, leaving behind from its long stay in the ground magnetic radiations sufficiently strong to make the needles of the detectors move—and start the keys of teletype machines buzzing all over the world.

Who removed the treasure, if treasure there was, will always remain a mystery. But the very walls of this historic castle are steeped in mystery, with its rich associations with the past and the tragic tale of Bonnivard, who spied from his barred window, as we may today, placid Leman's mountains with "their thousand years of snow on high—their wide long lake below . . . the white-walled distant town, and whiter sails . . . skimming down"—mystery, beauty and a subtle charm that draws us irresistibly. Chillon Castle, inscrutable as the rock on which it stands, keeps intact the secret of its past.

New Type of Motor-bus

The firm of Adolf Saurer, S.A., of Arbon (Switzerland) has just perfected a new type of articu-

lated motor-bus, which will be called upon to render very useful services and will be run for public transport in the city of Zurich. It was necessary to find a means of assuring traffic during the peak hours, and this with the maximum of efficiency and of rapidity. The public transport services of Zurich, therefore, directed their quest towards a vehicle, not requiring rails, which offered a maximum of capacity for transport and which, at the same time, made it possible to reduce to a practicable extent the number of personnel required for its running. It was thus that they arrived at the idea of a motor-bus composed of two articulated parts, linked up by means of flexible gangway bellows, in this way providing a large single space in the interior of the bus. This vehicle is supported by three axles, of which the first and the last are mobile, thus making it possible for the motor-bus to carry out very sharp turns. Its holding capacity is of 180 seats.

This new motor-bus has been the subject of research carried over a number of years, in an effort to make it perfectly adapted to topographical conditions in Switzerland. Equipped, as it is, with a Diesel engine of 240 h.p., it is capable of being adapted easily to the traffic in big cities, in spite of the 25 tons which represent its load, when complete.

Growth of Swiss Towns

Between the census taken in 1941 and that taken in 1950, Switzerland's population increased by 450,000 inhabitants, i.e., by a little less than 11 per cent. The rate of increase varies considerably from one town to another. Whereas at Chiasso it has not exceeded 2.1 per cent., it has attained 67.3 per cent. at Riehen, which, so to speak, forms part of the suburbs of Basle. In the big towns, this increase is, in general, above the average, exceeding it by 1.7 per cent. in Berne, by 2.5 per cent. in Basle, by 4.7 per cent. in Lausanne, by 5.2 per cent. in Zurich and by 6.2 per cent. in Geneva. These figures do not, however, take into account the increase in the neighbouring Communes, which is often a multiple of that in the town itself.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE IN SWITZERLAND

"La Vie Economique," a monthly review published by the Federal Department of Public Economy, which is the equivalent in Switzerland of a Ministry of Economy, presents in its last issue a study of the development which has taken place in this country in regard to unemployment insurance.

Its beginnings go back to the end of the last century. The first Unemployment Insurance Funds were founded, at that time, by trade union organisations, the first to do so being the Swiss

Federation of Typographers. This was in 1884. It was at that time that the public Unemployment Insurance Funds began to appear, instituted by the towns, namely by Berne and by St. Gall. Then, at the beginning of the twentieth century there came into being, for the first time, a Joint Fund, that is to say, a Fund which was administered jointly by the employers and the workers and was for the benefit of the workers in the embroidery industry. Soon after that, these insurance funds received subsidies from the public authorities, namely, the Cantonal authorities, but it was only when the First World War broke out that the system was extended to the whole of the Confederation. During the war, that is to say, between 1914 and 1918, the rate of employment declined markedly in several branches of industry, and clamours arose from various sides asking for bigger allocations, and calling for the aid of the Confederation.

These requests were heard, and, as from 1919, important allocations were paid out, in which the Confederation, the Cantons and the Communes, all participated.

Taking into account all that had been learned from experience, the Federal Parliament edicted, in 1924, a law which was to remain in force for twenty-six years. The Confederation subsidised, to an appreciable extent, not on the Public Insurance Funds, but also the Paritary Funds and the Trade Union Funds. Later on, a Compensation Fund was created for the purpose of coming to the assistance of funds which were particularly heavily burdened. And the system was still further improved by the coming into force of a new law on this matter, on the 1st of January, 1952.

Throughout the whole of her territory, Switzerland possesses 192 Unemployment Insurance Funds. The greatest number of these are paritary. Out of a total of one million seven hundred thousand workers in Switzerland, there are 613,000 persons insured against unemployment, that is to say, 35 per cent. of the total. But, whereas the proportion of insured persons is very high in the industrial or urban Cantons, it is very feeble in the agricultural Cantons, where unemployment is not feared. Insurance is only obligatory in some of the Cantons, and even then it does not extend to all the categories of workers. The amount of the average daily benefit paid to insured persons throughout Switzerland was 11 francs 49 centimes, in 1953. It has increased by 123 per cent. since 1939, whilst the cost of living figure has gone up by 70 per cent. In 1953, rather more than 13 per cent. of insured workers had recourse to benefits from their fund, whereas during the crisis years of 1935-36, the proportion exceeded 45 per cent.

As for the subsidies granted by the public authorities, they attained as much as 86 per cent. of the expenditure, during those years, whereas in 1953 they declined to below 40 per cent.