

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 19 (1956)
Heft: [2]

Rubrik: News from Switzerland

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>

A brief summary of the most important facts dealing with the subjects taught shows how the Institute keeps pace with the demands of industry and technology. When it was opened, it had six departments: building, engineering, mechanical engineering and chemical engineering, forestry, philosophy and political science. An observatory was built in 1871. A mere six years later saw the foundation of a military science department. In 1879 an institute was established for the testing of building materials and it has developed into the Federal Institute for Testing Materials (EMPA) which is of great importance today. The training of agricultural engineers was begun in 1888. An industrial engineering institute was founded in 1929 and an institute for economic research in 1938. The fact that special institutes, departments or laboratories had to be set up for physics, photography, aerodynamics, applied acoustics, high-frequency radiography, etc., was due to the development of technology. Worthy of special mention is the foundation in 1937 of the industrial research department of the technical physics institute, which is intended to serve in particular the Swiss national economy.

The ETH (the familiar abbreviation for the Federal Institute of Technology) has had the good fortune to possess throughout its entire history experienced and often internationally respected professors and lecturers, as well as extremely competent directors and, later, rectors. The Institute is governed by the seven-man Swiss Educational Board, appointed by the Federal Council and headed by its official chairman.

The Federation subsidises its Institute today to the extent of some 10,000,000 francs a year; over and beyond this it periodically grants credits for any buildings, extensions or equipment that may become necessary. On the last occasion in 1946 credits of 27,000,000 francs were approved by the Federal Assembly. At this very moment a new request for a credit of more than 15,000,000 francs is being examined by the Councillors; of this credit 3,250,000 is intended for a new institute which will carry out forestry experiments. At the same time approval will be sought for a project dealing with the construction and management of an Institute sports ground, because the physical fitness of the students must also be catered for. The project has the backing of the Canton of Zurich.

As can be seen, the Confederation does not neglect its child; but it should be stated here that private economy, too, particularly the industries interested in the Institute's work, has again and again manifested its gratitude and recognition in the form of extremely generous donations and assistance. This is testified by, among other things, the many funds, foundations and legacies which are administered by the

Confederation and total almost 10,000,000 francs. Recently, promising and so far very successful efforts have been made to present the ETH with a new, substantial birthday gift on the occasion of its jubilee.

This close link between the Institute and industry may be described as exemplary. It results quite naturally from Article 1 of the Regulations which defines the Institute's task in these words: "The Federal Institute of Technology's object, in accordance with the law governing its foundation, is to provide the necessary scientific training for technical professions and for specialist teachers of mathematics and natural sciences, as well as to cater for studies of a general educational nature and for scientific research." It is obvious that the Institute, apart from training students, devotes itself primarily to basic research, which directed research is mainly the task of industry; nevertheless, it is quite impossible to draw a definite line of distinction between these two fields and any attempt to do so would necessarily lead to an undesirable rigidity.

There is a mutual and fertile give-and-take between theory and practice. The Institute's high ideal is still the freedom of teaching and learning, as well as the freedom of research except where this is restricted by the regulations governing the award of diplomas.

It would be tempting to enumerate the important and often honoured Institute teachers who have lent their brilliance to the ETH in the course of the last hundred years. The list, however, would be too long, and any curtailment of it would be bound to lead to injustice and might even give the appearance of ingratitude. Also, such an enumeration would not be welcomed by the majority of these prominent men who have fulfilled their high duty.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

Motor Vehicles Set Half-million Mark in Switzerland

Berne, Switzerland.—According to statistical figures, every eighth Swiss today owns a motor vehicle; in the Canton of Geneva one out of every five is motorised. The number of motor vehicles in Switzerland reached an all-time record of 544,000 at the end of September of last year. This equals an increase of 66,000 in the preceding twelve months and mirrors the continued popularisation of motoring. Switzerland's 4.7 million inhabitants share 280,000 passenger cars, 58,000 other motor cars such as trucks and buses, and 217,500 motor-cycles. Not included are agricultural and military vehicles. Swiss imports of automobiles are 37 per cent. from Germany, 19 per cent. from the United States, 16 per cent. from England, 16 per cent. from France and

about 11 per cent. from Italy. Today some 150 different types and makes of automobiles roll on the Swiss highways. Among the three most important makes account for two-fifths of the total amount of cars, is the German "Volkswagen," which recently sold its 50,000th car, thus establishing itself, with a 23 per cent. share in the market as the largest car-dealing enterprise in Switzerland.

Boy Scouts Camp in Switzerland's "Wild West"

Saignelegier, Switzerland.—More than 12,000 Boy Scouts will pitch tents at Saignelegier in the "Franche-Comte," the well-known horse-breeding "Wild West" of Switzerland, on July 24th, till August 2nd. As early as 1938 Boy Scout groups were organised in all the cantons of Switzerland, and today there are only a few villages which do not have their own small bands of Boy Scouts in the familiar khaki uniforms. The forest-fringed pasture land between the villages of Saignelegier and Tramelan offers a perfect background for the campers. This fifth Swiss Boy Scouts' meeting is expected to stimulate a surge of tourists towards the "Franche-Comte," with many Boy Scouts and their parents and visitors getting acquainted with this unique region.

A New Casino in Switzerland

Heiden, Switzerland.—The one-time "whey-cure" resort of Heiden, nestled on a sunny mountain terrace high above the Swiss shores of Lake Constance, will be able to boast Switzerland's newest casino in the summer of 1957. The old casino, which was built in 1874 in the dusk of the once fashionable dairy cure era, is to be replaced by an ultra-modern structure which will gracefully fit into the landscaped surroundings of public gardens. It is designed as a social centre and convention site, its main hall seating 400 persons. Dining rooms and open-air restaurants will also be main features. Heiden, at an altitude of 2640 ft. a.s.l., is twenty minutes by train from Rorschach, an ex-press-train stop on the international trunk lines Hamburg-Coire and Zurich-Munich. The Rorschach-Heiden railway, other narrow-gauge rail lines and a network of excellent paved motor roads make Heiden a gratifying starting point for excursions throughout the quaint Cantons of Appenzell and St. Gall dominated by 8500 ft. high Mt. Santis.

The Simplon Tunnel Anniversary Anecdote

Brigue, Switzerland.—The inauguration festivities for the Simplon Tunnel in 1906 were marked by several military inspections by the King of Italy and the President of Switzerland at Domodossola and Brigue. The Swiss honour guard,

which perhaps could not compete with the resplendent and rather pompous attire of the Italians, made nevertheless a faultless impression. It was raining and cold. The Swiss officers demonstrating their foresight, shortly before the arrival of the Italian King gave a brisk order unique in the annals of military history: "Blow your noses!" What a sight when the disciplined soldiers pulled their handkerchiefs from their pockets! And what an unprecedented, expedient measure of caution! It is to be hoped that this order will not be necessary on May 19th when the Italian President, Signor Gronchi, and the Swiss President, Dr. Feldmann, will meet for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Simplon tunnel in Brigue, since on this memorable day in the Rhone Valley the sun—the symbol of the Canton of Valais—should welcome the festival crowd.

The Swiss Guards at the Vatican recently commemorated their 450th year. In 1506 Pope Julius II hired Swiss mercenaries to guarantee his personal safety and the security of the Vatican State. Today's Swiss Guards are composed of six officers and 105 men.

There is One Telephone for Every Four Inhabitants in Switzerland

In 1955, the number of telephone subscribers increased by 50,000, and reached the total of 795,000. The number of telephones in use has increased by 3,000 and now totals more than 1.2 million. The proportion for the whole of Switzerland is therefore very high, as now there exists a telephonic subscription in respect of every six inhabitants. It should also be mentioned that there are more than 8,000 public call-boxes and telephone stations in Switzerland.

The 39th Swiss Industries Fair at Basle

The 39th Swiss Industries Fair, which was held at Basle from April 16th to 26th last year, was attended by some 700,000 visitors. The number of visitors from abroad is estimated to be 30,000, the number of buyers from 70 countries who registered at the reception service being 11,664.

The transactions concluded at the Fair for both the home and foreign market bore witness to a confident optimism in the development of the economic situation. There was great foreign demand for watches as well as for the products of the electrical industry, machines in general and machine tools. The textile industry too met with great success in the field of exports, particularly with regard to clothing.

The 40th Basle Fair will be held from April 14th to 24th, 1956.