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HOME NEWS

A lawsuit brought against the Confederation has just been decided by the Federal Tribunal in favour of the plaintiff. Towards the end of 1918 a Swiss residing in Russia—Mr. Bächli, from Zofingen—had offered and paid to the Swiss Legation in Petrograd 125,000 roubles for the relief of his compatriots in Russia. The judgement of the Lausanne tribunal is to the effect that this payment is to be considered as a loan to be refunded to the plaintiff plus accrued interest from the date on which he lodged his claim for repayment.

The commune of Stein a.Rh. is, with the financial aid of the Gottfried Keller Foundation and the Cantonal Treasury of Schaffhausen, acquiring the old monastery of St. Georgen, at a price of Frs. 210,000; it is to be converted into a public museum.

The imposition of an amusement tax is being proposed by the Cantonal Government of Aargau.

A new bridge—Pont Butin—was officially opened to traffic last Saturday in Geneva; the construction was begun as far back as 1916, but was several times interrupted on account of technical difficulties. The cost exceeds eleven million francs.

The joinery works of Alois Ziegler in Siebnen (Schwytz) have been destroyed by fire; a similar fate overtook the show and stockrooms of Leon Rochat, a large house decorating undertaking in St. Imier (Berne).

REFLEXIONS SUR LE SALON SUISSE DE L'AUTOMOBILE.

Au même titre que nous-mêmes, vous pouvez être fiers, Suisses d'outre... Manche, du magnifique résultat que représente le nouveau Salon de l'automobile qui vient de s'ouvrir à Genève. S'il ne peut évidemment se comparer avec ce que vous avez l'habitude de voir chaque année, à l'Olympia, quant à l'étendue kilométrique; il rivalise sur tous les autres points avec celui de Londres et celui du Grand Palais à Paris. Pour la joie de notre orgueil il se classe, en Europe, comme importance, directement après les deux que nous venons de mentionner.

Sachez donc, que dans le tout neuf encore, Palais des Expositions, huit nations se sont fait représenter, avec un total de 83 marques. La France en présente 30, les Etats-Unis 28, l'Italie 10, l'Allemagne 6, la Suisse 3, l'Angleterre 3, la Belgique 2 et l'Autriche 1. Si dans le tourisme notre industrie nationale n'est pas ce qu'elle pourrait être, nous brillons par contre d'une façon particulière dans le poids lourd et le véhicule industriel, ou sur 18 exposants on en trouve 4 suisses, et fort remarquables je vous l'assure!

Vu l'affluence qui va grandissant chaque année, il va falloir songer dès 1928 à commencer la seconde tranche prévue, pour l'agrandissement du Palais actuel. Elle aura 5,000 mètres carrés de base et 3,000 mètres de galeries, ce qui permettra alors de mettre à la disposition des exposants une surface totale supérieure à celle que vous leur offrez à Londres! Oui, Messieurs, et à en croire certaines rumeurs, ce jour n'est plus très éloigné.

Inutile de dire que le public d'où que ce soit, se rue à la manifestation. Des trains spéciaux et billets de faveur permettent à tous les Confédérés de venir à Genève se rendre par eux-mêmes compte de l'effort accompli. Ainsi hier dimanche, malgré un temps épouvantable on a délivré plus de 18,000 entrées payantes, et autour de certains stands, il était impossible de se frayer un passage. De plus les informations commerciales que j'ai pu recueillir sont fort réjouissantes. Les années précédentes, s'il y avait beaucoup de curieux les premières journées, les ventes ne commençaient réellement que le 8ème, le 9ème, et le dernier jour. Cette fois-ci, la plupart des firmes ont déjà passé des contrats et certaines, même, ont contracté davantage le premier jour que durant tout le Salon de 1926. Il y a là une indication précieuse à retenir et qui s'accorde assez bien le sentiment de détente qui se manifeste dans toutes les branches économiques.

Mais le Salon de l'automobile n'est pas qu'une manifestation commerciale. Il est un excellent prétexte à bien des choses et c'est, pour beaucoup, sa plus grande valeur. Dans le domaine culinaire et vinicole, c'est une débauche de repas succulents, de libations tumultueuses; dans le domaine salta-

toire, c'est le plus "chic" bal de l'année; dans le domaine sportif, c'est un "kilomètre lancé" impressionnant et un rally, du plus haut intérêt. Aussi la politique ne pouvait-elle rester en arrière, c'est où j'en voulais venir.

Vous n'ignorez pas que le Président en charge de la Confédération, comme il a coutume d'ouvrir la Foire d'Echantillons de Bâle, a pris celle d'inaugurer l'Ouverture du Salon. Cette Ouverture n'a pas lieu, comme on pourrait le croire, au Salon, mais bien à l'Hôtel des Bergues, où, au cours d'un fastueux banquet, les discours sont prononcés. Or ces discours revêtent une importance qui sort de l'ordinaire, car les trois éternels protagonistes: Le Président du Comité du Salon, le Président de la Confédération et le Chef du Gouvernement Genevois, apportent sous des aspects mielleux, des revendications et des affirmations. Monsieur Marchand, bien franchement expose les desiderata des automobilistes, Monsieur Motta, non plus nettement, fait entendre la voix de Berne, parle impôts et de dure façon, enfin fait une apologie de la loi sur les automobiles qui va être soumise prochainement au verdict populaire et qui est l'oeuvre du très austère Monsieur Haerberlin. Monsieur Bron enfin fait vibrer à son tour la voix de Genève, clame ses revendications, et si tout se termine en d'aimables sourires, il n'en reste pas moins des discours imprimés qui sont épluchés, soit dans certain département de la bonne ville de Berne, soit dans certain cabinet de l'Automobile Club suisse. Cet inauguration devient une joute oratoire d'un grand intérêt, où sous des phrases voilées, on se lance à la tête tout ce qu'on a pas pu se dire durant l'année écoulée. Cette petite discussion de famille n'a rien de désagréable, elle fait la joie de ceux qui aiment lire entre les lignes, elle est une pâture de prédilection pour les journalistes, elle n'est une souffrance que pour les trois grands "ténors" qui passent des nuits blanches, avant, à trouver la phrase qui convient, et après, devant la crainte d'en avoir trop dit. Bénissons le sort qui nous accorde des nuits paisibles!

L'AUTOMOBILISTE MASQUE.

SUCCESS.

By Sophie Wyss, the Swiss Soprano.

The enterprise shown by the B.B.C. in their series of Albert Hall concerts was not, apparently, appreciated by Londoners. Or so one thought. For though the controlling brains seemed to have arranged the most important and fortunate concerts that one can imagine, London did not seem to respond. Strauss himself, the greatest man of music of our time, was engaged to conduct his Alpine Symphony; we were given the Berlioz Mass, a cumbersome masterpiece which a private Direction could not possibly have afforded to give; and to show the difficult and tangled path which modern music is taking, Scherchen came to illustrate an orchestral work of Schönberg. And yet it seemed that all these thoughtful and ambitious plans had failed, for the great hall was never more than half full. Then, when a young tenor was engaged, who had been hailed as an excellent recruit to Italian Opera in Vienna, we suddenly found the hall as crowded as only half a dozen of the world's great ones could expect to fill it, and the huge audience imbued with an enthusiasm that many tried and beloved artists might well envy. The sight was staggering. 'Au monde, pourquoi... Pourquoi?' one asked. The great Concerts fail, this least considerable of all is a great success!

I suggest that the thing is not as illogical as it seems. The Public upon whose head the B.B.C. has fixed its earphones is a Public new to music. It is in mass a recruit, a child in the matter. It is told that the Alpine Symphony will be directed by the Master himself, and all it has to say is: "All right, we'll hear it at home. That'll be fine!" In its innocence it does not know that the earphones can only give it a *souppon* of the whole thing. "So why," it says, "bother to go to the Albert Hall in this beastly weather (Music's worst enemy in London) when we might just as well stay at home?" They could hear Schönberg, so why go and see him? They would have gone to see Jeritza because they have read of her golden hair; but why bother to see Olczewska, whose hair is dark? Then at last a romantic young man is found, an artist of the *bel canto*, the kind of person who must be *seen* to be believed. Now here is someone the public *must see*, or half the savour would be lost. Hence the crowd!

Forgive me if I have laboured the point overmuch in my attempt to prove that all these Concerts of the B.B.C. have been enormously appreci-

ANNIVERSARIES OF SWISS EVENTS.

March 3rd, 1803.—The canton Tessin joins the Confederation. Uri later on abandons her rights in the Livinental.

March, 1815.—Time of the Vienna Congress, which in the first instance was called together to regulate the numerous questions left unsettled in the first peace of Paris; the Congress established the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland. The Swiss Diet was represented by three delegates, namely, Landammann Hans von Reinhard, from Zurich, the patrician Johann von Montenach, from Fribourg, and the Basle Burgomaster Johann Heinrich Wieland. In addition to these there were a number of supplementary envoys appointed by individual cantons and territories, amongst them being the ardent Genevese patriot, Pictet de Rochemont. They each pressed their own particular claims. The Grisons endeavoured to retain their vassal districts (Valtelline, Bormeo, Chiavenna) by suggesting the formation of a new Swiss canton, but they were lost and allotted to Lombardy. Pictet demanded the acquisition of the Pays de Gex so as to put his canton into direct communication with Vaud, but was vigorously and successfully opposed by the French ambassador Talleyrand. Furthermore, a new canton—Canton Jura—was suggested. Berne's claims to the Vaud were put aside. The division amongst and the petty interests of the Swiss delegates made it impossible for Switzerland to secure any great concessions, though Great Britain wholeheartedly supported the Swiss claims.

March 15th, 1424.—Foundation of the "Grauen Bund" (Grey League) at Truns under the maple tree.

March 17th, 1782.—Death of the brilliant Basle mathematician, Daniel Bernoulli.

ated, immensely important as educative factors, and generally very successful. The success was there, though invisible; the interest was hidden beneath a million headphones. Indeed, it only remains to hope that for the sake of music in this country the B.B.C. will continue its policy undisturbed by an unenlightened criticism (for the silliest asses always bray the loudest).

But we must return to the excellent Monsieur Kiepura, who was the innocent means of bringing the popularity of this fine effort in concert giving to the surface. I really believe that the first news of him arrived from a Swiss pen. Some months before I had seen any such announcement in the Press Monsieur Hugh Cuenod, of Vevey and now a resident of Vienna, wrote to me to say that a young Pole had arrived who seemed to be far the most marvellous tenor since Caruso. He was this, he was that! And—Oh well, one must always believe what one's husband tells one, and so, as the English say, I 'swallowed it all,' for I was once the wife of Monsieur Cuenod! True, it was only for an hour or so, on the Opera stage. He was Jean and I was Jeannette in Massé's Opera *Les Noces de Jeannette*, but one does not forget these things, and thus Monsieur Cuenod's hero should be mine... Well, if Jan Kiepura does not look as young as we expected, at least he has young ideas. He is the child of *bel canto*, smiling, attractive, optimistic. If he had not had a sense of humour he would have qualified for the same sentence as Tosca's tortured hero whose aria he sang, namely, to be shot at dawn! For he has acquired to a degree unusual in these days all the tricks of the Italian tenor; he forces his voice just as Caruso used to do, and gives an imitation of many gramophone effects. Nevertheless, one is disarmed and overcome. For here there is the plastic personality, the lightness, the lyric resonance, the lovely qualities that mark the real singer. When all the faults have gone the lovely natural voice will remain, and all who have heard him will mark his subsequent improvements and inevitable conquests with sympathy and pleasure.

At any rate, Jan Kiepura now wears the laurel crown that one fancies should adorn the brow of Mr. Percy Scholes, as being the B.B.C. official chiefly responsible for the series of Concerts. Not that anyone grudges it to Monsieur Kiepura, whose head will soon grow weary of such weights. But the Swiss Colony may always have some particular interest in the achievements of Mr. Scholes, for I understand he passed some time in our country, which has always been beloved of those who love music.