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TOURIST ITEMS

LATER EVENTS

The castle museum with the highest number of visitors in Switzerland

The picturesque town of Gruyères lies on a hilltop some 4 kilometres away from Bulle. You can see the 13th century castle with its mighty walls and ancient tower from far away. Its museum has a valuable collection of weapons and is one of the most frequently visited museums in Switzerland. A special exhibition, the "Freiburger Zinn" (pewter from Fribourg), is being held in the renovated armoury there this summer. Works of the once flourishing tin-founding trade of Fribourg are being shown there and 59 of the tin-founders who lived from the 15th to the 19th centuries are still well-known today. An unusually fine exhibit is to be found in the "Burgundersaal" which has also been entirely renovated. It is a black choir cloak bearing the coat of arms of the Duke of Burgundy and the emblem of the Golden Fleece. The exhibition which is continuing till the 5th of November is open daily from 8.30 to 18.00.

Gruyères still has a lot more to offer to its visitors: walks through Alpine pastures and woods, swimming in the lake or local swimming pool, excursions by cable railway to the top of the Moléson lying at a height of 2,000 metres. The medieval town has also something special to offer to culinary fans, its fragrant Gruyères and tender Vacherin cheeses and its succulent country ham. An all-in excursion ticket now exists for tourists. This includes entrance to the museum, a visit to a cheese-making plant (plus tasting samples of the cheese), lunch, a trip by aerial cablecar and a small souvenir. The ticket costs Fr.20., and can be obtained at the following address: Office du tourisme, ave. de la Gare 4, Bulle.

The "Aelplerchilbinen" of Central Switzerland

Autumn traditions will be revoked this September in Central Switzerland. The most important of these are the "Aelplerchilbinen" which are partly religious and partly secular festivities. They represent the harvest not only of the farmers but also of the herdsmen who come down then from their high Alpine retreat. Two strange figures called "Wildmaa" and "Wildwyb" entertain the public with jokes at Stans, Buochs and Beckenried. The "Tschämeler" were legendary demons which used to haunt the Alps and these will reappear in Gersau. The Ridli-Kilbi will be taking place on 9-10th September at Beckenried and the "Alpfahrt", a folkloric display with shooting galleries etc., will be going on at Stans on 15th October and at Buochs on 14th and 22nd of October.

Walking in and around the Leventina valley

The "Strada Alta", that marvellous route through the heights of the Leventina valley is very popular among hikers. It begins at Airolo and makes its way down gradually to Biasca via Osso. The SFR have just come out with a new booklet entitled "Strada Alta" giving all sorts of necessary information on walking routes and accommodation possibilities. It costs Fr.2., and can be obtained at all counters and information desks of the SFR. The "Leventina" routes going down towards the right from Airolo to Gionrico are maybe less well-known but just as attractive. The hotel guide "Ticino", one of the 13 regional hotel guides of Switzerland, contains information on accommodation possibilities in this region.

"Martin Bodmer Foundation"— a first-class private Swiss collection

The "Martin Bodmer Foundation" was opened at Cologny near Geneva at the beginning of July. This private collection of the Zurcher humanist, Martin Bodmer, who died in 1971 contains documents on literature, art, music, philosophy, history and natural sciences from all over the world, original manuscripts of Montesquieu, Goethe, Tolstoy, Kafka etc., antique busts, sculptures, Egyptian scrolls, music-scores, gossils, minerals and drawings. The collection is open to the public from 2-6 p.m. on Thursday afternoons. Group visits can be arranged in advance at other times too.

A number of events have intervened between the time our Swiss news were written and the time when this issue of the Swiss Observer was put to press. We shall briefly summarise these events and report them more fully in the following issue.

First the Olympics. After a wonderful harvest at the Winter Olympics at Sapporo, Japan, Switzerland's performance at Munich was disappointing and well short of expectation. We won only three medals, of silver, in fencing, cycling and rowing. This result may have been a little better than that at Mexico in 1968, when we only won a Silver and four Bronze medals. Our athletic hopes Philippe Clerc and Meta Antennen yielded no prizes whatever, ending respectively 21st out of 85, and 15th out of 21, in their categories.

The massacre at the Olympic village and at Fuerstenfeldbruck Airport had repercussions in Switzerland. On a tip-off from Interpol, the Swiss customs and the Army was put on the alert to guard the border and various industrial installations which a gang of Arab guerrillas was allegedly intending to blow up. Nothing has happened so far.

The most important federal development was the decision by the Federal Council to abstain from buying either the Corsair or the Milan as a replacement jet-fighter for the Airforce. We shall be reporting this event in great detail in our next issue. Other items include a decision by the National Council to abrogate the two Constitutional articles banning Jesuits and new religious orders from exercising activities in Switzerland. This vote, confirming a previous one by the Council of States, will now have to be approved by the people in a federal referendum.

Mrs. Edith Irving, wife of hoax-writer Clifford Irving, has arrived in Zurich to stand trial for fraud and forgery of passport. She was released on bail after four days' detention by Mr. Peter Veleff, the Zurich attorney. Mrs. Linda Desramault lingered on in Lausanne as the town's magistrates debated how to handle the tricky legal problems posed by the restitution of her daughter Caroline by her father, who had landed in Lausanne after a month-long flight. A train crashed at Rüperswil caused the death of two people. A trial was held at Martigny of a man accused of having sent his two children to their death by driving his car in a ravine. The 53rd "Comptoire Suisse" in Lausanne was opened by Federal Councillor Nello Celio. The Government received parliamentary support for submitting the Swiss-EEC agreement to the people.

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