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THE AMATEUR COLLECTOR'S

STAMP CATALOGUE of SWITZERLAND 1953

Edited by
EDWARD H. SPIRO
Hon. Secretary of the Helvetia Philatelic Society

WILL BE PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 15-th 1952

The 1953 edition has been completely revised and will contain many new features and a number of additional illustrations.

The "Standing Helvetia" issues have been entirely re-edited, and now comprise all important shade and other varieties. The Air Mail section has been greatly enlarged, and includes First Flights with special cancellations, Propaganda and Experimental Flights, Pioneer Flights etc. The Catalogue will include a full listing of Quantities issued from 1907/8 onward.

Many hundreds of PRICE ALTERATIONS !

Last year two editions were rapidly sold out and a further reprint was necessary to full-fill later orders from all the world over —

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TREND OF THE MARKET

PRICES IN Switzerland MARKED UP

By H. L. KATCHER

On my return from my summer buying visit to Switzerland, I have to sound an alert: Prices of many Swiss stamps have surprisingly hardened during recent weeks, and this trend is continuing. My conversations with leading dealers in Berne, Zurich and other places, fully confirmed the impression, which I had won since my previous visit, that not only the rarer stamps and classics, but also many "medium" stamps are getting extremely difficult to come by.

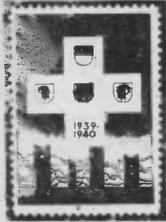
As regards the modern issues, it has become apparent that large quantities put away by speculators during the war have been fully absorbed by the market over the last two or three years, and that speculators' stocks can no more be regarded as a reservoir for replacements. Some of the large dealers frankly admitted to me that their stocks are sadly depleted and that they find it more and more difficult to secure replacement, in the face of growing demand from all the world over. The number of Switzerland collectors is growing and many philatelists, particularly in America are turning to specialisation.



This situation resulted in many drastic price increases. But even so, it is almost impossible to find the 1 franc PAX in fine used condition and the 3 francs green of 1914, must be coax-

ed out from Swiss dealers in single mint copies, at a high premium. The same applies to the Pro Juventute Semi-Official of 1912 with the Italian text. The prices of two Miniature sheets, the National Fete of 1940, and the Pro Juventute of 1941, have been increased drastically. Whole sections of the Tête-bêche and Sé-tenant issues have been marked up by the trade, and among the "medium stamps", all the Standing Helvetia stamps from 1862 to 1881 have again advanced considerably, both mint and used. From this it will be seen that it is mostly among the medium priced items that advances have taken place. The 1953 catalogues, and particularly the new Zumstein, will contain hundreds of price alterations, and nearly all of them will be upwards. I can only advise collectors to fill the gaps in their albums without delay.





An interesting side-line of collecting Swiss stamps is provided by the Soldier stamps, which - although they cannot be regarded as "postage stamps" in the accepted sense, possessed limited postal validity during the two World Wars, and were recognized by the Swiss postal authorities.

To understand the reason for the existence of these semi-official stamps, it is necessary to say a few words about the Swiss military system. Switzerland has no regular army, and her national defence is based entirely on a militia system, which goes back for many centuries. Every able-bodied Swiss citizen on reaching his 19th year of age is called up for military service. For thirteen years he serves in the "Line" (Auszur), doing 60 to 90 days of active training every year. After an initial service for some weeks, the young recruit has to attend "camp", and refresher courses are often spread over week-ends. This drill is akin to that of the Territorial Army in Britain. After 13 years the Swiss soldier is transferred into the Reserve (Landwehr), in which he serves for another eight years, during which his military obligations are less stringent. On reaching 40, the reservist joins the "Landsturm", a Home Guard, which is called up only in times of emergency.

About 1,000 professional officers and N.C.O.s provide the reservoir of full-time instructors. There is also a small number of full-time air force pilots and technicians, and a Fortress Guard, manning the frontier fortifications. During the 1914-1918 war and from 1939 to 1945, Switzerland observed "armed neutrality", and by mobilising her entire military strength, succeeded in discouraging France the Kaiser, and then Hitler to march into Switzerland through Swiss territory.

All Swiss servicemen when on active duty enjoy exemption from paying postage for their mail. But all letters must bear a seal or a rubber stamp of the C.O. to be passed free of charge by the post office. During the first world war tens of thousands of servicemen letters were dealt with in this way.

In June of 1915, Captain Fred Bieri, serving with the 38th Infantry Battalion, had the idea of special adhesive labels or stamps to be used for "franking" the servicemen's mail. Herr Bieri was an artist in his civilian occupation and he designed an attractive label for his unit. This label was then used instead of a rubber stamp to mark the letters as "post free". The soldiers were asked to pay one or two centimes for these labels, and this revenue, after the deduction of the printing cost was used for the benevolent fund of the regiment.

Dr. Stiner, the Medical Officer of the Infantry Regiment No. 11 (Solothurn) took up the idea and introduced labels



SOLDIER STAMPS



for his unit. Soon, other units followed suit, particularly after the issues were approved by the Army Command and the Swiss Post Office. It did not take long until collectors got interested, and the Quartermasters were permitted to sell mint stamps to the general public. Used stamps were, however, not sold, and they can be generally regarded as genuinely used for franking soldiers' mail. They all bear the official Field Post postmarks.

The Soldier Stamps Catalogue (published by Paul Locher, Speiz), lists 390 different issues during the 1914-18 war, but in addition there is a number of interesting varieties, plate flaws and imperforates, which the catalogue also enumerates, and which provide a wide field of interest to the specialist. On the other hand a very fine and colourful collection can be assembled without any regard to the varieties. As soon as the Swiss Government ordered the general mobilisation in the autumn of 1939, and army units took stations at the frontiers,

in many camps and in the alpine fortifications, a new series of Soldier Stamps made its appearance. During the second world war, with the Swiss Army much stronger than in 1914-18, and with a large number of special units, including an Air Force, Ack-Ack units, military A.R.P. units, Women's auxiliary units, radio-telegraph units and so on, many hundreds of Soldier Stamps were issued. They too are fully listed in the second volume of the Locher Catalogue, with each stamp beautifully illustrated by offset photographs. Many noted artists, including some of the well known draughtsmen and engravers who produced the designs for Swiss postage stamps, gave their services to the good cause, as the net revenue from the sales of the Soldier Stamps went, as in the first world war, to benevolent funds of the military units.

Thus, nearly all these stamps are extremely attractive, and most of them - partly owing to the improvements in the printing processes - better produced than their predecessors of 1914/18. While there were only five Soldier Stamps issued in the first world war showing designs of "monoplanes" and "bi-planes", the enormous progress in military aviation obviously resulted in a large number of "Airmen Stamps" during the second world war. Most of them depict aircraft of many types.

The Soldier Stamps of the two world wars provide a splendid and most attractive addition to a collection of Switzerland, and thematic collectors find these issues a fount of many different "themes" and subjects.

The Amateur Collector Ltd. has a large stock of Soldier Stamps of all issues. Inexpensive collections from

25 to 100 different can be supplied. Approval selections are being sent out, and wants lists executed. The Soldier Stamps are growing in popularity, and will appeal to everyone interested in Swiss postal history.



Girls at a
fête in the
Canton of
Valais.

Visitors to Switzerland often take the shortest route to their mountain resorts without stopping in the valleys, let alone in the smaller towns. Many of them, coming year after year, have acquired a first-rate knowledge of the Swiss Alps, but are unaware of the creations of native art. And yet, we can observe in Switzerland, as in no other country, how closely artistic production is bound up with ancient customs and time-honoured crafts.



VAUD BERNE TICINO APPENZELL

Painted house fronts, beautiful wood carving, interior panelling, fine plaster ceilings, stained glass windows, carved furniture, exquisite pottery and metal work can be found everywhere. Swiss national costumes provide yet another expression of native art and fine craftsmanship. They add beauty and solemnity to the Sunday "church walk", and enhance the dignity of bearing of the Swiss womenfolk. The people of each Canton vie with each other in showing their attractive costumes and splendid bonnets, the intricate lace work, gold and silver embroidery, heavy homespun silks, exquisite neckwear and hand carved silver jewellery.



The apron is an important part of the national costume.

Collectors of Swiss stamps are, of course, well acquainted with the beautiful costumes, the designs of which go back for centuries. Already on the early Pro Juventute issues of 1915-17, we find pictures of children in the picturesque attire of

National COSTUMES on Stamps

their home cantons. But the more elaborate presentation of national costumes on Swiss stamps began with the 1933 issue of the Pro Juventute stamps and was continued for eight years. Although no full figure pictures are given, the stamp designs provide interesting details of some of the costumes, and particularly of the bonnets and hats, which form their important part.

The 1933 Pro Juventute set introduces three girls from the three ethnological different parts of Switzerland - the German-speaking Canton of Berne, the French-speaking Canton of Vaud, and the Italian-speaking Canton Ticino.

The "Vaudoise" sports her large straw hat, which is often adorned with elaborately made silk flowers, or grapes. The bodice is of black silk, a flowered neckchief brings gay colour to the costume, and net gloves are worn with it, reaching above the elbow.

The girl from Berne wears the typical black bonnet, with the starched black lace halo. The dress, usual of grey material, is richly embroidered. The girl from the most southerly Swiss canton of Ticino shows the kerchief tightly bound around her head, with a large loop at the back. It is mostly red, but in some valleys the head-wear is of flowered silk, while in other parts of the Canton, for instance in the Val Verzasca very big straw hats are the rule.



VALAIS GRISONS BÂLE-COUNTRY LUCERNE

The pictures on the 1934 issues introduce us to the costumes of North-East Switzerland, the Appenzell area, where the bonnet is akin to the mediaeval "hennin" or coif, steeple-crowned and with two pleated wings in front. Pleats are also a feature of the dress and the collar is large, starched and pleated again. The girl from Valais, where French is spoken in the western part and German in some eastern valleys, shows the large hat of fine felt, adorned with wide velvet ribbons. These ribbons are pierced through the rim of the hat and form part of the costume, being wound round the neck and some time across the chest. The bodice too is of velvet or ribbed corduroy-like material. On the 20 C. value of the 1934 set we see a girl from Graubünden (Grisons), where the ancient Rhaeto-Roman language, with its many purely Latin words, still survives. The bonnet is a small cap, finely embroidered with gold or silver and little silk flower designs. The bodice also has rich embroidery and the design is repeated on the leg-of-mutton sleeves.

One of the most important parts of the national costume is always the apron. Each valley, indeed, each village and hamlet can be recognized by a different apron. These aprons are elaborate affairs, lavishly embroidered, seamed with rich lace; and different aprons are worn on different occasions, such as fêtes, weddings, church parades, funerals, processions and so on.

(To be continued)



Newsreel

PLATE PLAYS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS STAMPS



Our Swiss correspondents have shown us some minor varieties which occur on the Telecommunications stamps issued in February. Most of them consist of tiny dots and lines, which Messrs. Zumstein

do not intend to include in the Special Catalogue, but there are also a few more interesting varieties, such as on the 10c., green, on sheet A 111 (1st, 16th, 36th and 38th stamp), on which the name of the designer GAUCHAT is spelled GAUCHAY, and in sheet A 111 (25th stamp), where it appears to look like GAUCHAT.

SPECIAL POST OFFICE AT COPYRIGHT CONFERENCE

A special post office will function from August 18th to September 6th at the General Council Hall in Geneva on the occasion of the International Conference for Authors' Copyrights. A special postmark will bear the inscription "Conference diplomatique de Genève."

TWO ATTRACTIVE AUTOMOBILE P.O. CANCELLATIONS

were used for franking mail posted at the mobile post offices opened during the annual festival in Geneva (which includes the famous battle of flowers, open-air and fancy dress parades) and for the National Fete in Zurich, a more solemn and dignified occasion, with its processions, bell-ringing, historical displays and festive assemblies of the guilds and liveries.



THE PRO JUVENTUTE SET 1952

will consist again of five values and issued as usual on December 1st. The lowest value will depict a famous Swiss personality, the four others will be devoted to the Alpine fauna. We hope to publish the description and pictures of this new series in the Autumn issue of the "SWISS PHILATELIST".

A POSTMARK WHICH WILL PLEASE ALL DOG LOVERS



was used for cancelling mail posted at the International Dog Show in Burgdorf. It was used by the Automobil Post Office 3. A number of dog breeders

from Britain were among the visitors to the show

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA TO THE 1953 EDITION

OF THE "AMATEUR COLLECTOR'S CATALOGUE OF SWITZERLAND" will be published regularly in "THE SWISS PHILATELIST" from its Winter issue onwards. The Catalogue will be right up to date and will include the Pro Juventute 1952 stamps, but every user of the Catalogue will also need "THE SWISS PHILATELIST" in order to secure the supplements during 1953.



SPECIAL OFFERS OF AIR MAIL



A SMALL SELECTION OF FLIGHT COVERS FROM OUR LARGE STOCK - - -

- 1924 Laufen-Zurich, with Vignette 15/-
- ditto, Error Dos instd. of Des 45/-
- 1925 Basel-Zurich, with Vignette 5/6
- 1926 Basel-Luzern, with Vignette and 35c. Pilot air stamp 32/6
- 1926 Basel Exhnb. of Inland Water Transport with Vignette in block of Four... 16/6
- 1928 Nat. Fête Air Card 25c. Flight Lausanne Zurich..... 7/-
- 1929 Ditto. Geneva-Zurich 7/-
- 1931 Ditto. but unused 10/-
- 1929 Nat. Fête Flight Card 40c., unused.... 8/-
- 1919 Air Mail overprint 30c. superb on cover Strassbourg-Prague. RARE! & 15
- 1919 Ditto, 50c. Zurich-Berne 22/6
- 1936 Cover with rare cachet "No Connection by Air mail" (to Austria) 18/6
- 1937 A similar cover posted to Eastbourne 18/6
- 1923 The rare Flight Meeting at Chur with green postmark 40/-
- 1924 Grenchen-Zurich Card 4/6
- 1924 Lausanne Meeting, 35c. Pilot on official Flight card 13/-
- 1925 Basel-Mannheim First Flight card ... 6/-
- 1927 Lausanne-La Chaux de Fonds-Loche official Flight card 5/-
- 1927 Basel-St. Gall First Flight 9/-
- 1933 Zeppelin Flight Friedrichshafen-Rio de Janeiro. A most attractive cover with six copies Fr. 1.-, two copies Fr. 2.- and one copy 50c. Air mail stamps, all on ordinary paper. Catalogued at 69/- 70/-
- 1940 First Flight Locarno-Barcelona 3/-

Any of the above Covers sent ON APPROVAL !
Space does not permit full description of the attractive stamps used for postage on these covers. We recommend these covers as exceptionally good value. Selections of others sent on request.

APPROVALS

OUR APPROVAL SERVICE NOW COMPRISES THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: National Fetes, Tête Beche, Sé-tenant, Gutter and Language Strips, League of Nations, Officials, Proofs and Essays, Soldier Stamps, Flight Covers, Airmails, Pre-Stamp Covers, Varieties and Errors, Pro Juventute Issues, Commemorative Covers, Postage Dues, Telegraph Stamps, and, of course IMPERF. ISSUES, SITTING AND STANDING HELVETIA, mint and used, FEDERAL CROSS ISSUES 1882-1905, U.F.U. 1900, and all postage issues 1914-1948.