

# The Neuchâtel observatory prepares a scheme for a european timekeeping service

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## VILLARS — 100 YEARS OLD

In the heart of the Vaudois Alps, at an altitude of 4,265 feet, lies the famous summer and winter resort of Villars. The resort's area extends up to the forest slopes of the Chamoissaire (6,785 feet) and offers a fine panoramic view of the Valais and Savoyan Alps, including Mont Blanc. From 28th to 31st July, 1966, Villars celebrated its centenary as a tourist resort. On Sunday, 31st July, a grand procession comprising 740 participants, twenty-five floats, five bands and three orchestras was organised.

It was in summer 1866 when the first tourists came to this expanding place — then accommodated in alpine huts, which were soon turned into small comfortable guest-houses and pensions. In 1907, after the Bex-Gryon-Villars mountain railway was constructed, Villars also became a winter sports resort. It gained international recognition through the opening of the Villars Palace Hotel in 1914, just before the outbreak of the First World War. The year 1908 saw the extension of the railway line to Bretaye, where in 1936 the first skilift was inaugurated. In the last ten years, a rapid expansion has taken place: construction of the aerial cableways Barboisaz-Les Chaux and to Roc d'Orsay and an artificial ice rink open all the year round. A new aerial cableway to the Paneyrossaz Glacier (8,415) is planned.

[S.N.T.O.]

## SWISS LAKES RESPLENDENT WITH LIGHT

On the evening of 6th August, the green bay of Kreuzlingen on Lake Constance, right on the German-Swiss frontier, reflected bright, colourful fireworks. Thun celebrated a similar occasion on 6th and 7th August. Neuchâtel knows a very pretty tradition of the so-called "Summer Evenings" which once a week fill the gardens along the lake with music, dancing and laughter. There are also open-air theatre performances. The Bienne Fair (25th August to 4th September) always brings a lot of life to this region, and the lake front in Bienne plays a major part. Geneva looks forward to the yearly "Fêtes de Genève" (12th/14th August) and to splendid evenings for the fireworks. After a pause of four years, Zurich, too, will again have its fireworks. The date has been set for Saturday, 27th August with possibility of postponement to 3rd or 4th September should the maker of good weather not have returned from vacation by then! The extensive parks and promenades along the lake offer sufficient room for large crowds who will surely be able to watch the fireworks from any chosen spot.

[S.N.T.O.]

## SWISS CHOCOLATE IN PROMINENCE

In order to meet the growing shortage of space and manpower by increased rationalization, the Tobler Co. Ltd. Chocolate Factory in Berne has built an imposing six-storey depot, three of whose floors are below ground level, with a 120 foot high silo at its side, possessing a storage capacity of 240 waggon loads. The silo was built in 142 hours which means that within the space of barely a week this building soared from its foundations to a height equivalent to that of a ten-storey building, at the top of which one of the biggest luminous advertisements in the country will flash its message for all to see.

[O.S.E.C.]

## THE NEUCHÂTEL OBSERVATORY PREPARES A SCHEME FOR A EUROPEAN TIMEKEEPING SERVICE

The Neuchâtel Observatory has decided to create a European timekeeping service. In fact, although all European countries possess a timekeeping service and although most of these services today are equipped with very high precision atomic clocks, it turns out in practice that the scientist who needs the right time and makes use of the frequency standard is not always satisfactorily served, that is to say that the precision attained by the timekeeping services is not available to laboratories and even less out on the job. In other words, it is the transmission that is not perfect. An examination of the situation shows that only one transmitter, which would serve the whole European continent, can offer a solution that is both technically acceptable and financially feasible. Thanks to an agreement with the Swiss Broadcasting Company, the Neuchâtel Observatory has been able to reserve the use of the HBG long-wave radio transmitter at Prangins (near Geneva), while the Swiss Horological Research Laboratory in Neuchâtel has perfected a small transistorized receiver which work in the field has shown to be capable of receiving completely satisfactory timekeeping signals up to distances of over 1,500 miles. It is to be hoped that this purely scientific scheme of the Neuchâtel Observatory will not meet with any obstacles and that very shortly the HBG transmitter, the technical installations of which are already working, will be able to transmit timekeeping signals and the frequency standard satisfactorily to institutions in the most varied fields: geophysics, astronomy, space research, electronics, etc. in all European Countries.

[O.S.E.C.]

## A "SPACE-WALKER" EQUIPPED WITH A SWISS CHRONOGRAPH

A big Swiss watch factory recently displayed at the Swiss Industries Fair in Basle a replica of the chronograph worn by the first American spaceman to walk in space in June 1965, during the Gemini IV exploit. This model, which is widely used in scientific circles and industry, is nevertheless a mass-produced Swiss chronograph available on the market.

[O.S.E.C.]

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