

Swiss events

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REPORT SAYS SWITZERLAND MAY BE *UNDERPOPULATED*

The Consultative Commission on the problem created by foreigners in Switzerland has published a report concluding that Switzerland is far from being overpopulated and forecasts that its population will be stabilised at around 6.5 million by the end of the century.

This federal group considers that a high level of population is required so that the economy can operate at its best. Some members of the Commission even consider that Switzerland could function economically at its best with 8 million people. It notes that the concept of overpopulation is relative, since Switzerland was considered as hopelessly overpopulated a hundred years ago with 2.7 million inhabitants.

But in those days, the lack of agricultural efficiency and employment prospects was such that the country could not offer a place to less than half its present population. In view of the slow demographic growth, the Commission predicts that the proportion of space taken up by built-in areas will rise very slowly and thus preserve a vital "breathing space".

Built-up areas take 3.5 per cent of total land surface. The break-down is as follows: built-up areas 1,460 square kilometres, arable land 11,600, pastures 8,500, forests 10,500 and non-exploitable land 7,200. The Commission adds that Swiss agriculture can at present feed up to 3.8 million people but could if

necessary be adapted to feed up to 6.3 million people.

SWITZERLAND TO ATTEND NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

Switzerland has accepted an invitation to attend the forthcoming summit conference of non-aligned nations in Colombo with the status of "invited nation". Other neutral countries such as Austria will also be attending in the same capacity. Switzerland will be represented by her ambassador in Sri Lanka.

Some observers wondered whether the decision to attend a meeting of a kind that has shown increasing radicalism in the past meant that Switzerland was moving away from its staunch policy of neutrality. Three years ago, she had declined an invitation to join the previous summit by stating that neutralism and neutrality were two different concepts.

But times have changed. Although there is to be no compromise on neutrality, Berne feels that, with the Third World's growing importance, it was useful to make her presence felt at such a platform. Switzerland had greatly increased its connections with the developing years during the past few years. It sits at the Conference for International Economic Co-operation in Paris and also sits at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

SWISS EVENTS

As an "invited" nation, Switzerland will only be allowed to attend plenary sessions at the Colombo gathering. She will not be entitled to speak. This is therefore a less important status than that of "observer nation" which allows for occasional speeches and for taking part in some closed sessions.

HELICOPTERS SEEK OUT PIRATE RADIO STATION

All the technological resources of the Swiss GPO were mustered to locate a pirate radio station that had been transmitting illegal programmes in the Geneva area for some time. After a month's silence, the "pirates" announced they would resume their broadcast at the end of July. The postal authorities were ready for them with special helicopters equipped with goniometric equipment capable of locating sources of radio transmissions.

Within minutes, they had located the spot from where the programme was being beamed towards Geneva: a point on the foothills of the Jura. The helicopters quickly approached the point and hovered above the pirates for several minutes.

Lack of official co-ordination gave the illegal broadcasters time to get away with their equipment, which was said to be compact enough to fit in a shoe box.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR SUCHARD...

It was in the early 1930s that the Suchard Chocolate Factory (Neuchâtel — Switzerland), which this year celebrates the 150th anniversary of its foundation, launched the fruit-flavoured caramel known as Sugus, whose success has steadily grown ever since, both in Switzerland and abroad. Today, Suguses are made all over the world and sold in a multitude of countries.

The growing success of Sugus has obliged the Neuchâtel firm to increase its production capacity once again. For this purpose, a whole new technique has been perfected, making it possible to cut the space required by half and at the same time improving still further the regularity of the quality. In its new production centre at Neuchâtel, which represents an investment of over 6 million francs, Suchard produces about 12 tons of Sugus every day, some 40 per cent of which is exported.

Thus, each day, 3,000,000 caramels are turned out by the ultramodern plant developed by Suchard and inaugurated on the occasion of its 150th anniversary. Under optimum conditions of work and hygiene, the paste, composed of sugar, glucose, vegetable fats, concentrated fruit juices and other natural substances, is cooked, cooled, then poured into moulds and packed in a single continuous operation. The folding machines which, forty years ago, produced barely 90 items a minute, now achieve speeds of nearly 1,200 Suguses a minute.

TAXING OF CORPORATIONS AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS IN SWITZERLAND

According to official Swiss figures, the ratio between the tax yield of private individuals and corporations has undergone a slight modification in the course of the last ten years. While, on the whole, in 1965 76.8 per cent of the proceeds from direct taxation was accounted for by individuals, the figure rose to 77.7 per cent in 1974. At the same time the proportion of the tax yield from corporations dropped from 23.2 per cent to 22.3 per cent.

BERNE — SWISS TOY FAIR

The 24th Swiss Trade Fair for Toys, Souvenirs, Boutique, Christmas and Winter Gifts — SPISO — will be held in Berne from 5th to 8th September. SPISO is intended only for those in the trade; more than 100 Swiss and foreign exhibitors are expected and some 8,000 retailers have been invited. SPISO takes a long look ahead to the festive season, with major interest again being focused on what's new in the toy trade.

PROCEEDINGS ARE SUSPENDED 'PRO TEM'

Legal proceedings have been suspended against the former head of Triemli Hospital in Zürich, Professor Haemmerli, who had been suspected of causing death to his terminal patients by depriving them of proper food.

The judicial enquiry that had been opened at the behest of a woman municipal councillor, Mrs. Regula Pestalozzi, concluded that it was not possible to consider the Professor directly responsible for the deaths of the patients under his care.

The doctor who carried out the enquiry investigated five hundred patients and thirty-two deaths at Triemli Hospital. He found that many of the terminal patients had been administered "zero calory" nourishment. But in all cases, this had been seriously considered between Dr. Haemmerli and the nursing staff. The patients were too sick to be fed otherwise than intravenously. Nine of them could be considered to have lost their personality, since their brain functions had been irrevocably impaired.

In its conclusion, the report considers that zero-calory feeding can't be considered as a case of euthanasia when dying patients have lost all their personality and retain only a vegetative existence.

Despite the conclusions of the experts being in his favour, Dr. Haemmerli was made to pay a quarter of the costs of

these legal proceedings. It was claimed that his remarks regarding zero-calory feeding to Mrs. Pestalozzi were ill-considered. It was these remarks which moved the controversial woman councillor, then in charge of public health, to act against the Professor.

SWISS CHRONOGRAPH IN THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNOLOGY

After years of research, a Zürich watch firm has succeeded in making an electronic watch that is in the forefront of world technology. The Digi-Stop chronograph presented at the European Watch and Jewellery Fair recently held in Basle, is a "solid state" quartz watch (without any moving parts) with liquid crystal display; it indicates the time from a leap year to a hundredth of a second and at the same time acts as a high-precision chronometer.

The Digi-Stop wrist watch indicates the hours, minutes and seconds, as well as the date with the month and the day of the week in figures and letters, the whole being programmed for a period of four years. While continuing to indicate the time of day it also displays the measurement of lap times and split times to the nearest hundredth of a second.

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'PRISON CONDITIONS' PROVOKE HUNGER STRIKE

Petra Krause, a German-Italian woman anarchist, arrested in March last year in connection with bomb blasts in Switzerland, has been on hunger strike since 19th June.

Mrs. Krause, who has dual Italian and German nationality, was among the 53 political detainees whose freedom had been demanded by the hijackers of the Air France Airbus jet at Entebbe airport.

She is in a Zürich jail on charges of having taken part in a bomb assault against the Hanover Trust Bank in Zürich, and against the West German Embassy in Berne. She is also charged with having supplied stolen arms to the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany and with having taken part in a plan to abduct the West German Ambassador in Switzerland.

The Italian authorities also want her in connection with a bomb blast against the ITT offices in Milan.

Petra Krause is hunger-striking to protest against her conditions of detention. A committee against solitary confinement, chaired by the writer Walter Diggelmann, called for an end to the harsh conditions to which prisoners awaiting trial were subjected. According to this committee, they are shut up in individual cells; they can't talk to one another during break; and they are refused daily exercise. The committee also claimed that panels were blocking the windows of prison cells.

Preventive detention in Switzerland is a Cantonal issue which has raised considerable controversy over the years.

GEZA ANDA DIES

Geza Anda, a Swiss pianist of Hungarian descent, died last month at the age of 55. Born in 1921, he had acquired Swiss nationality in 1955 and in 1964 married Hortense Buehrle, of the great Zürich industrial family. Geza Anda had often performed with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. He was noted for his interpretation of Bartok and his recordings of his compatriot's first two piano concertos, under Ferenc Fricsay, are among the best-known recordings of these works.

He was also a remarkable teacher and succeeded the great Edwin Fischer in directing the "Meisterkurse" in Zürich.

TRANSATLANTIC RACE

The only Swiss to take part in the Observer single-handed transatlantic race, Peter Fehlmann, sank in the north Atlantic in a storm which caused a great deal of trouble to many of the competitors. He was rescued by a Swedish freighter who heard his SOS message.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIRRORS

A firm at Feuerthalen (Zürich), specialising in the manufacture of cameras and accessories, has developed a system which enables the camera fan to get special effects which are both highly original and technically flawless.

They are obtained with optical mirrors designed for total or semi-transparent reflection. By breaking up the ray of light impinging on the lens, by means of a plane optical mirror with a reflecting power of about 90 per cent (at a distance short of the focal distance), it is possible to combine or superimpose different objects. The merging of one object into another can be attenuated or intensified by choosing the right diaphragm aperture.

By mounting a semi-transparent mirror with a reflecting power of about 60 per cent instead of a plane mirror, so that the ray of light in its entirety impinges on the mirror, different objects can be reproduced either superimposed outright or placed beside each other. By regulating the position of the mirror, one can choose freely and creatively the position of the objects in relation to each other.

6 FATALITIES AS TRAIN CRASHES IN BRIG

Six people were killed and some thirty were wounded when the Riviera Express, heading from the Italian Mediterranean coast to northern Germany, was derailed as it emerged from the Simplon Tunnel.

Six of the seven coaches of the express, which was full of tourists, overturned. The Swiss driver of the train and a Danish woman and her two children were among the victims. It has already been established that the train was driving far too fast as it left the tunnel to approach Brig. An autopsy has been ordered and an examination of the wreckage was expected to determine whether the brakes of the train were functioning correctly.

The accident caused a closure for a whole day of the 20 km long tunnel. Damage could be as much as 20 million francs.



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LIFE SAVING DRIVER IS HONoured IN BERNE

A Romanian lorry driver who had avoided a major road disaster through his courage and presence of mind in Lausanne last February was recently made "Knight of the Road" at a ceremony held at the Federal Palace in the presence of the Romanian Ambassador and several officials from Berne, Lausanne and Zürich. He received two Vreneli gold coins from the hands of the Head of the Police Division of the Department of Justice and Police.

Mr. Ioan Duma was driving a heavy refrigerated lorry with eight tons of eggs when the hydraulic system of his brakes failed on a steep incline in Lausanne. He applied the hand-brake, but that wasn't enough to prevent the heavy vehicle from gaining speed. It burst into a busy square which was, miraculously, without traffic at that precise moment. It crossed through a pedestrian crossing as the lights were turning green. The driver then saw an exit in a steep flight of steps at the end of an alley.

The convoy hurtled down the steps and caught fire at the bottom. Mr. Duma was seriously wounded. His assistant had panicked during the lorry's mad flight and had jumped out of the cabin but had been caught under the truck's wheels and killed instantly.

He was the only victim of what could have been a major accident. It was established that Mr. Duma had deliber-

ately avoided throwing his vehicle on to the walls of a hospital on his path so as not to injure any pedestrians and not to cause damage to parked cars.

He was offered a free journey from Bucharest to Berne to receive his medal. He was then treated to a visit to Switzerland, organised for him by the Swiss National Tourist Office.

SWISS WATCH EXPORTS: NEW STRUCTURE

The breakdown of exports of watches and watch movements by continents shows clearly that the difficulties at present being experienced by the Swiss watch industry are mainly due to the big drop in sales of watches to America in 1975. In fact, 60 per cent of the total drop in Swiss watch exports, which amounted to 18.7 million items, can be attributed to the falling off of sales to America, whose purchases decreased by 11.3 million items compared with the previous year. The American continent's share in the volume of total Swiss watch exports has consequently fallen, dropping from a third in 1974 to only a quarter in 1975. Europe's share on the other hand has increased, rising from a quarter to a little over a third. Europe therefore accounted for the major part of Switzerland's watch exports with 22.4 million items, followed by Asia (21.5 million), America (16.5 million),

Africa (4.4 million) and Australasia (0.9 million). In 1974, the order of magnitude was different: Asia 29.5 million items. America 27.8 million, Europe 22.4 million, Africa 3.3 million and Australasia 1.4 million.

A GOLD AT LAST

Switzerland is the proud possessor of an Olympic Gold Medal.

Christine Stüchelberger, riding her horse Granat, won the individual dressage competition in Montreal with 1,486 points.

Miss Stüchelberger acquired her magnificent Bavarian horse purely by chance. He was due to be sold by auction in Italy last June but, just before he should have left Germany, he developed a cough and had to stay behind.

Miss Stüchelberger and her trainer, George Wahl, heard about him and bought him at a bargain price.

Obviously a good investment. We extend our congratulations to Christine.

MOORE EXHIBITION IN ZÜRICH

An exhibition comprising a hundred works by the British sculptor Henry Moore was held during the whole summer in Zürich in a park situated on the right bank of the lake. This exhibition, which was organised by the "Kunstforum", was very well attended. It gave rise to very favourable comments from Swiss critics, some of whom wrote that Moore was the greatest sculptor of the century.

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	<i>Depart Zürich</i>	<i>14.05</i>	<i>Arrive Gatwick</i>	<i>15.35</i>

Durations: 1/2/3/4 weeks (small supplements for 3 or 4 weeks)

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