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Official Communications

The Swiss Postbus Service

The Postbus service has a proud tradition to look back on. When the Federal State was established in 1848, passenger conveyance was the foremost duty of the Post. The receipts from this branch of the postal service accounted for almost half of the Post Office's total revenue. Although after the advent of the railways the diligence was able to hold its own only in remote, thinly populated areas of Switzerland, it stimulated new needs and enabled journeys over large distances to be made at lower cost. Travel was no longer available only to the privileged few. The diligence was at its height in 1913, with 2,500 horses, over 2,200 carriages and half as many sleighs travelling 9,7 million kilometres and carrying 1,8 million passengers.

The history of the Postbus service goes back to 1906, when motorized mail transport had already been in operation in Zurich for two years. After a rather slow start, the service gathered momentum at the end of World War I, benefiting from the experience of other carriers. In 1919 the Postbus made its appearance on Alpine roads, and

by 1927 the major routes had been turned over to motorized operation. Progress was somewhat slower in the mountains, where diligences and sleighs continued to be a familiar sight during the winter.

The length of today's Postbus network is 7,500 km, which compares favourably with that of the Railways (5,000 km). Some 600 Postbus routes are available to about 1,600 places. The average route length is only 15 km.

A staff of 1,280 carefully selected and trained drivers and about the same number of vehicles have an important task to fulfil: they supply essential public transport to areas not served by the railways.

While the diligences had been run exclusively by private contractors, the first motorized services were operated by the Post Office on its own account. In numerous cases, however, Postbus operation was later entrusted to local private contractors using their own personnel and vehicles against payment of a fixed sum (based on the number of kilometres travelled). The users hardly notice any difference between Post Office-operated and contractor-run services, as uniform timetables and rates apply to both and drivers wear identical uniforms.

In some areas, more particularly in the larger towns, private companies operate regular transport services under licence, on their own account, mostly with the financial backing of cantons and municipalities.

The PTT-owned vehicles are serviced and repaired in 60 workshops all over the country. These

(continuation on page 18)

Notice

German Democratic Republic

May we remind you of the public notice which appeared in the December 1975 issue asking all interested parties to notify the Swiss diplomatic or consular representation competent for their place of residence, by 31st March 1976 at the latest (date of postmark), of their property, interests and claims relating to the GDR.

Federal Political Department

Notice

concerning compensation agreement of 26th March 1973 with Hungary

The Commission for Compensation arising from Nationalization has been charged with the distribution of the total sum of 1,4 million francs paid by Hungary.

In a notice in the Federal Bulletin of 29th September 1975 and in other publications Swiss nationals who have suffered as a result of expropriation measures in Hungary between 19th July 1950 and 26th March 1973 were asked to lodge their claims for compensation.

Persons who have not so far responded to the notice of 29th September 1975 giving them an opportunity to send in their claims are hereby granted a final time-limit to 30th June 1976, within which they can still notify the

Kommission für
Nationalisierungsentschädigungen
c/o Eidgenössisches
Politisches Departement
Eigerstrasse 80
CH-3003 Bern.

That is the final date for the lodging of claims. The Commission will not be able to consider any claims not sent in by then.

Commission for Compensation arising from
Nationalization

Via Mala



(Swiss Postbus Service, continuation)
garages also maintain the 9,000-odd motor vehicles used by the postal and telecommunications services.

The structure of the Postbus service shows a rather unfavourable picture, with the network including a great many short routes and commuters marking up half the users but accounting for only 20 per cent of total earnings. Party travel is far more remunerative (5 per cent of the passengers provide 20 per cent of the revenue). The remaining 60 per cent of the operating income is from individual travel. Except on routes warranting the use of special mail vans, the Postbus normally carries mail as well as passengers, luggage and goods.

While the Postbus route length has remained practically the same for the last ten years, the improvement of timetables has received particular attention. Between 1964 and 1974 the number of kilometres travelled rose by 48 per cent to 38,4 million, and the number of passengers even increased by 57 per cent to 52,9 million.

Foreign visitors tend to be impressed by the smooth interconnections between rail and road in the Swiss public transport system. Cooperation among the different carriers is indeed excellent, with regard to both timetables and ticket issue.

Unfortunately, the financial results of Postbus operation are far from satisfactory. The years 1974 and 1975 each saw deficits of nearly

50 million francs. The figures shown in the Postbus accounts are not directly comparable with those of other transport organizations, as they are not based on the same principles of calculation. The Postbus service relies on absorption costing, taking into account, among other factors, depreciation and interest on the capital invested (in line with real market conditions). Unlike other carriers, the Postbus does not include in its accounts any credit entries for services rendered in the public interest, work performed for Gov-

ernment departments, or losses arising from fare reductions allowed for policy reasons.

Thanks to constant improvements over a number of years the Postbus service has attained in the areas covered – more particularly in tourist regions – an economic importance comparable to that of the railways. It has stimulated tourism, and the services rendered by the PTT through its Postbus operations may well be said to offset the deficit arrived at by cost accounting.

Summer Camp 1976

«Valais». This word which in the first place denotes a Swiss Canton, is at the same time a synonym for sun, mountains and holidays. That is where our next summer camp will take place. At first, we shall ramble through a part of the Valais along its slopes, and then in the second half we shall relax in a holiday home and alternate visits with excursions.

Provisional dates of the camp:
20.7.–6.8.1976

If you are interested in taking part and would like to have more details, please write to the following address: Secretariat of the Swiss abroad, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16.

Books

«Zirkus Knie»

This book, published by Marguerat SA, was compiled in cooperation with the Knie Family, a writer, a journalist, a professor, as well as the Circus Knie Press Service. It begins with a short story by C.-F. Ramuz «The Circus», followed by the family history of the Knies, various interviews and an essay on animal training.

Language: French-German. Format 28x28 cm, linen cover with coloured jacket, 160 pages richly illustrated with coloured and black and white photos. Price: Fr.48.—

«Merveilleuse Notre Dame de Lausanne»

Burgundian Cathedral

A new publication on the 700th anniversary of the Cathedral in Lausanne. The volume is comprised of text and more than 150 engravings and drawings, of which 60 are in colour and 25 in black and white, drawn by Henri Stierli and Michèle Duperrex.

Published by Payot SA.

Price: Fr.96.—

Luxury edition with gilt edges
Fr.112.— (In French only)



Yes and no

Courier of the Solidarity Fund

The no to mishap and to risk
Means yes to Soli-savings brisk