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SWISS ECONOMIC NEWS REPORT

A Commendable Effort: Industrial Development in the Mountains

The inhabitants of the mountain regions are in urgent need of new means of livelihood. In certain parts of Switzerland, especially the Valais, in villages and hamlets clinging to the slopes of the Alps, the problem of providing a livelihood on the spot for the population is becoming more and more acute owing to the low wages to be earned in agriculture as compared with the earnings to be made in the towns and industrial regions. In addition, the Swiss canton of the Valais is short of industries suitable for women; it is necessary therefore to introduce some to balance the situation.

This twofold aim can be achieved by setting up light industry workshops in the mountains. Continuing its work towards this goal, the Valais Association for Economic and Social Research has just arranged the creation in the mountains of two watchmaking workshops each employing some forty men and women and due to be completed by the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965.

No Shortage of Beds in Switzerland

According to the calculations made by OECD, Austria boasts 46 hotel beds per thousand inhabitants, thus setting a new record for Europe. The tourist country of Switzerland comes second with 41 beds, followed by the United States with 28, France with 23, Great Britain with 20, Italy with 18, Canada with 14, Eire with 13, West Germany and Belgium 12, Spain 11 and Denmark 10. As these figures show, visitors to Switzerland need have no fear of having to sleep out in the open. Swiss hotels are quite capable of coping with the invasion of summer vacationers and winter sports enthusiasts without any difficulty at all.

Stockings Keep Abreast of the Times

Among other fashionable shades selected for the spring season just commencing, manufacturers of Swiss stockings have chosen the shade "Leman," a dark beige given this name in honour of the Swiss National Exhibition 1964, which will be taking place this summer in Lausanne on the shores of Lake Lemman or the Lake of Geneva as it is better known to Anglo-Saxon visitors.

Swiss Watches on Tour

A Swiss international transport company with its offices at Bienne has organised an airborne exhibition of Swiss watches due to tour the East for a period of 38 days. The tour, which began on January 7th, will be calling for one, two, three or more days at Beirut, Baghdad, Teheran, Karachi, Colombo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Bangkok, Calcutta, Bombay, Kuwait, Aleppo and Damascus.

The organising company has freighted a specially equipped plane divided into 20 cabins each reserved for a display by a different watch or spare parts manufacturer.

A Very Original Swiss Creation: The Ski-Boat

Winter sports enthusiasts, who are now disporting on the ski slopes, have been surprised to see a new sport in Switzerland this year practised by means of a device shaped like a scallop-shell and fitted with a shock-absorbent seat and a pair of handles.

This novelty, the Ski-Boat, has been produced by a Swiss inventor and patented in Switzerland and many other countries. It is a sort of a compromise between a ski and a toboggan, and is easy to manoeuvre, brake and stop by a simple movement of the body without the feet ever coming in contact with the snow. Thanks to its streamlined shape and efficient stabilisers, both children and adults find it easy to control on any kind of track whether the snow is powdery, beaten hard or even icy.

The Ski-Boat is remarkably light and uncumbersome. Made of layered polyester, it weighs just under 9 lb. and can be carried in the boot of any car, even the smallest, as well as in cabin-lifts and aerial cableways. The seat is protected against shocks by means of rubber shock-absorbers. The stabilisers and handlers are in aluminium.

Ski-Boat enthusiasts are already quite numerous. This new sport is well within the reach of the general public for it requires no special equipment and is popular with those slightly afraid of the accidents or dangers involved in skiing. But like skiing it requires a certain skill and training. Consequently one never grows tired of it. Certain skilled amateurs can even manage to negotiate a slalom course very well with it. Finally, a last advantage—and one to which nobody will object — the Ski-Boat can be purchased for a very modest price. (OSEC).

NEWS OF THE COLONY ★ ★ ★ ★

Auckland Swiss Club

SCHUETZENFEST 1964 IN HENDERSON

Busy volunteers turned up almost every weekend to have the "Schuetzenstand" ready for any weather conditions, and what a blessing it was on both days! Saturday, a hot but brilliant summer day, and Sunday with a few short but heavy showers, the roof on the building and on the target site gave welcome sheltering. Although a lot of work is still to be done, it is a credit to all who participated of what they have achieved in such a short time.

On both days the organisers were very busy on their assigned posts and if sometimes a bit of a rush was on, it was well handled, everybody taking turns to indicate the results which were anxiously watched by the competitors—every point adding up to the much-desired and coveted medals. For quite a few it was not such an