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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



ZURZACH—NEWEST SWISS SPA

An elegant tower, which houses a hotel and a restaurant with a splendid view, is a new landmark in the spa of Zurzach, in north-western Switzerland. For the second time in a decade, deep drilling has had successful results there: A thermal spring, located at a depth of 1500 feet, is now providing some 525 gallons of curative waters per minute at a temperature of 102 deg. F. More than a thousand people per day visit this youngest spa on the Swiss Rhine. Specialists have declared Zurzach's thermal springs to be excellent, with powerful effects on the circulatory system. Located about 36 miles east of Basel and 21 miles north-west of Zurich, the historic town is currently being expanded to provide all necessary facilities for a first-class resort.

NUMBER OF BOOKS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Fifty years ago, there were some 9 million books in 5798 public libraries in Switzerland. In 1959, there were over 28 million in 5820 libraries. This increase corresponds to the general trend in the world publication of books. In 1963, out of 350,000 titles published in all parts of the world, 8000, i.e. a 43rd, were published in Switzerland. (OSEC).

DEATH OF SWISS AUTOMOBILE PIONEER

At the beginning of the year, the death was announced at the age of 93, of Paul Vorbrot, who started to manufacture motor cars in 1904 and, in 1907, founded in Zurich the Turicum automobile factory which continued its activity until the beginning of the first world war. Paul Vorbrot is chiefly remembered for having introduced the system of ignition by magneto into the construction of the internal combustion motor, the idea for which had been suggested to him by an electromagnetic timekeeping device designed by one of his friends. It is to a Swiss pioneer therefore that we owe this important early step forward in the design of motor-car engines. (OSEC).

WATER PURIFICATION IN SWITZERLAND

On January 1st, 1965, there were 158 water purification plants in Switzerland operating in the service of 227 communes, totalling a population of 1,176,355. These plants had cost 116 million Swiss francs, not including the cost of constructing collectors and drainage channels. On the same date, there were 51 purification plants under construction for 151 communes with 2,153,715 inhabitants and 52 projects ready for construction, for 123 communes with 858,240 inhabitants. The cost of the plants under construction and planned is estimated to be in the neighbourhood of 523 million Swiss francs. (OSEC)

CONTRIBUTION TO INTENSIVE CULTIVATION

Water vapour is known to be an excellent disinfectant for the soil, with a view to the intensive cultivation of flowers and vegetables in comparatively small areas from which a very high output is expected. In fact, superheated steam can destroy not only animal parasites and pathogenic germs in soil, down to a certain depth, but also the roots and seeds of weeds, without however harming the soil for future cultivation.

Twenty years of experience and research in this field have led a Swiss engineer to build a new, very efficient type of apparatus for disinfecting the soil, which is not only easy, simple and reliable to operate but also comparatively low in cost and economical to run; consequently, with the excellent results achieved, this plant quickly pays for itself.

The vertical steam generator, mounted on wheels, is heated by a forced draught oil burner and works with a heat recuperator, a pre-heater and a steam superheater at service pressures of 0.4 to 1.5 kg/sq. cm. The steam passes through four separate pipes to four rectangular cloches, which are placed by hand in position on the soil, which is submitted to the action of the steam for five to six minutes, so that the effects are felt to a depth of 3½-5in. The capacity of the apparatus is approximately 730 sq. ft. an hour at a minimum. Consequently market gardeners and horticulturists now have at their disposal a worthwhile, inexpensive and reliable apparatus which removes all weeds from the soil and disinfects it, at the same time ensuring a speeding up of germination and growth, two factors of considerable importance in intensive cultivation. (OSEC)

SWITZERLAND AND EUROPEAN SPACE RESEARCH

One of the biggest European Associations, the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT), invited Contraves Co. Ltd. in Zurich to take part, together with foreign firms affiliated to ITT, in the competition organised by the European Space Research Organisation (ESRO) for the creation of the satellite Esro I. Meanwhile, in cooperation with other firms belonging to ITT, Contraves has drafted plans for the development and construction of this satellite intended for the study of the polar ionosphere.

The Swiss firm of Contraves Co. Ltd., which has not only acquired a great reputation for itself in the field of electronic calculation but has 20 years' experience in the field of rocket construction behind it, today possesses the necessary knowhow and equipment to make a valuable contribution in the field of space technique. Cooperation between ITT and Contraves, in the execution of the Esro I project, opens up interesting possibilities to Swiss industry for its future activity in the sphere of European space research. (OSEC)

SWISS PROPAGANDA STAMPS IN 1965

This year's series of propaganda stamps placed on sale at post offices from March 8th until supplies run out consists as usual of four values, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents. The 5-cent stamp, in light blue, red, grey and light red, has been designed with a view to promoting the recruiting of hospital staff; the 10-cent, in green, brown and blue, reproduces a revenue stamp of 1854, in view of the National Exhibition of Philately, which is to be held in Berne from August 27th to September 5th; the 20-cent stamp, in red, blue, yellow and dark grey, is dedicated to the Women's Auxiliary Services of the Swiss Army, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of this institution, and finally the 50-cent stamp in blue-grey, red and dark brown, is designed to commemorate the centenary of the International Telecommunications Union. (OSEC)

BUILDING AND COMFORT OF APARTMENTS IN SWITZERLAND

According to a report by EEC, in 1963, in Switzerland, Sweden and the German Federal Republic from nine to ten apartments were built for every 1,000 inhabitants; the proportion was eight per thousand in Italy and Norway, about seven per thousand in France, Denmark and the Netherlands, six per thousand in Great Britain and Austria, and less than five per thousand in Belgium.

According to the figures given by EEC, the average facilities provided in apartments in Switzerland are better than the European average; in this country, 69 per cent of the apartments have baths, as opposed to 62 per cent in Great Britain, 61 per cent in Sweden, 52 per cent in Federal Germany, 39 per cent in Denmark, 28 per cent in France, 24 per cent in Belgium and less than 15 per cent in Italy. Furthermore, in Switzerland all apartments have running water, while 10 per cent of those in the Netherlands, Sweden, Great Britain and Denmark do not, this figure being as high as 20 per cent in France and Belgium.

SWITZERLAND SHOWS THE WAY

The British Government plans to introduce a postal cheque service. In January this year, two representatives of the British General Post Office Headquarters came to Switzerland to study the organisation of the Swiss postal cheque department, in particular the payments service. (OSEC)

★ RECIPE

FRIED FISH, A LA LAKE OF CONSTANCE

Sprinkle fish (or fillets) with salt, then turn them in flour. Fry a few at a time in hot oil to a light colour. Drain well. Just before serving heat oil again and fry the fish in small lots until golden brown and crisp.

—L.O.