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Christchurch Swiss Club

The 1st of August celebration this year will be held on Saturday, 31st July, 1965, in the Hard of Hearing League Building, 98 Victoria Street, Christchurch. There will be competitions for the children and singing and fun for all! Keep this date in mind.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

PRIZE-WINNING SWISS INVENTION

A Swiss inventor has just been awarded a gold medal with the congratulations of the jury at the last International Salon of Inventors, in Brussels. He is a qualified engineer and a member of the executive staff of a Swiss watch factory.

During the course of his work, the prize-winner noticed that certain metals produced energy when in contact with the skin, which gave him the idea of creating electrodes capable of producing an electric current in contact with the human skin.

Although naturally quite weak, this energy is nevertheless sufficient to work, either continuously or intermittently, various control devices such as servo-mechanisms, programmers, micro-motors, and appliances for automation and remote control.

This invention, which has many uses in electronics and medicine in particular, is in the form of a very simple, very small and inexpensive bio-electric cell, requiring no maintenance.

LEADS FREE WORLD IN CONSTRUCTION OF DIESEL MARINE ENGINES

According to British statistics for the year 1963, the Swiss firm of Sulzer Bros. in Winterthur, together with its foreign licensees, supplied the most Diesel marine engine outside the Communist countries. In fact Sulzer Bros and its foreign licensees supplied a total of 1 million HP of motive power, i.e. over 28 per cent of the total power of all Diesel marine engines produced in 1963 throughout the free world, for ships with capacities of over 2000 metric tons.

SWISS MACHINERY INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENT

The Electricity Company of France has commissioned Sulzer Bros. Co. Ltd. at Winterthur, as well as the Sulzer Process Engineering Company, Paris, to supply and instal a collector for the Mont Cenis Power Station in Savoy. This distribution system consists of 14 by-passes and breeches-pipes supplying 2 Pelton turbines, each developing 272,000 H.P.

The collector, made of specially treated steel, will have an inlet diameter of about 9' 10" and will work under a service pressure of 102 kg/sq. cm.

THE TRAVEL-LOVING SWISS

Tourist traffic has in recent years taken on dimensions which even the greatest optimists would scarcely have dared to predict two decades ago. Whereas before the last war only a relatively small, 'privileged' section of the population had the chance to spend its holidays abroad, today the broad mass of our people can afford to explore beyond the frontier, and schoolchildren are already beginning to regard it as a deprivation if they have never yet been able to spend their holidays by the sea. Journeys are of course no longer made on foot or by horse-post as in the 'good old days' when—as grandfather is so fond of telling his grandchildren proudly—the craftsman's apprentice set out to finish his training by travelling abroad. By plane, train, motorcoach or private car (often with a tent or the more comfortable caravan trailer) large numbers make for foreign lands. Apart from improvements in travel arrangements and the extension of the road system, it is mainly the prosperity which has now continued for more than 15 years which, together with its accompanying high wages and regular long holidays, has made contemporary mass tourism possible. For many of those who like to go abroad a special incentive lies in the fact that they can spend their holidays considerably cheaper in foreign countries than at home, even though some comfort may have to be sacrificed. It is true that they will soon realise that large price differentials do not last very long. For price 'oases' quickly attract other holiday-makers, and the romantic, unspoilt and inexpensive fishing village of yesteryear is the average 'international' resort of tomorrow. Those who seek particularly cheap holiday areas which have not yet been seized upon by the tourist industry will therefore have to keep looking further afield.

How, then, have the frequency figures for Swiss visitors developed over the past ten years in certain important countries?

Swiss visitors in	1952	1956	1963
France	450,000	374,000	460,000
Greece	1,500	5,000	17,700
Great Britain	20,000	29,000	48,000
Italy*	1,651,000	1,953,000	4,248,000
Yugoslavia	—	13,000	48,000
Netherlands	25,500	41,000	56,000
Austria	102,000	121,000	168,000
Spain	26,500	46,000	170,000
USA and Canada	2,500	7,000	14,600

Although it must be borne in mind that the figures shown above are not in all cases obtained by the same means, the comparison speaks for itself. It not only demonstrates that modern means of transport and communications are bringing far-off lands

ever nearer (considerable increase of Swiss tourists in Spain, Greece, overseas), but also underlines with the utmost emphasis the enormous attractive power of southern countries with 'eternal sunshine,' the preference for bathing holidays. At the same time the overwhelmingly important role played by Italy—just as much a tourist-oriented country as Switzerland—as a tourist and holiday target for us is again brought out. In view of the little-exploited areas which are still available it is probable that our neighbour will be able to improve its leading position even further. The 'Autostrada del Sole'—which is open for traffic from Milan via Florence and Rome right down to beyond Naples—opened up for us too the possibility of discovering the charming southern part of the 'boot.'

The significance of inexpensive travel destinations is reflected not only in the expansion of traffic with Italy but also, and more especially, in the rapidly increasing pulling power of Spain and Yugoslavia. In contrast to this, interest in holidays in France has not increased noticeably. Apart from the disappointing trend in prices and the hospitality which often bears no relation to the charge, this is probably also due to the fact that people going on holiday are reluctant to go to countries where conditions are from time to time unstable. In contradistinction to this the number of visits to Great Britain and the Netherlands developed satisfactorily.

Our convenient geographical situation and our compulsive need to get outside our rather narrow frontiers make us a nation of travel-lovers who spend a great deal of money abroad. In spite of this our invisible balance of payments shows a satisfactory surplus of fr. 1290 million under 'Foreign Tourism' (1963: income from tourist traffic fr. 2210 million, expenditure fr. 920 million). If the economic climate continues favourable mass tourism will go on developing and will embrace even more sections of the population. At the same time increasingly difficult problems will arise by reason of the extraordinary pressure placed on the rail and road networks and on the hotel industry during the high season. It is true that the periods before and after the main season offer some opportunity to avoid the rush, and the holiday-maker of means will be making increasing journeys to new and more distant destinations in Africa and the near, middle and far East (Japan) and so on.

For many who would like to get away from the noisy mass installations of overcrowded resorts however, considerations of fixed holiday periods or of the purse preclude such solutions. Here is the opportunity for the quiet places away from the noise and the main roads; in our hectic days they may be able to recover some of their attractive power.

LITTLE KNOWN SWISS INVENTOR

According to Canon Michelet's recent biography of him, the Valaisan Isaac de Rivaz, who was born in 1752 and died in 1828, is to be included among the early inventors of the automobile, having invented, patented and experimented with the first vehicle to be provided with an internal combustion engine.

His invention should have worked but faults in manufacture prevented it from moving more than 20 feet. Nevertheless his patent was registered and Isaac de Rivaz is entitled to be ranked with various better known inventors among the forerunners in the field of automobile production.

CENSUS OF SWISS CONCERNS

In accordance with a federal decree, as from 1955 a census must be taken of all Swiss firms once every 10 years. The Federal Bureau of Statistics has therefore been asked by the Swiss Government to take a census this year of all firms in Switzerland according to their type of activity, their legal form, the number and nature of their personnel, the number of working hours a week, staff holidays and insurance, as well as their possession of certain equipment goods.

This year's census will also cover doctors and veterinary surgeons as well as museums and libraries. It also takes in agriculture and horticulture, fishing and forestry. Details will also be taken on the consumption of power, the capacity of fuel depots as well as the volume of cold-storage chambers and deep-freeze premises.

BIGGEST HARD WHEAT MILL IN EUROPE FITTED OUT BY SWITZERLAND

The biggest hard wheat mill in Europe, recently built by an Italian flour-mill, has been fitted out with machines of Swiss make. For several decades now, Buhler Bros. at Uzwil (Switzerland) have occupied a leading position in the construction of hard wheat mills. During the last ten years this firm has equipped hard wheat semolina factories all over the world with mills totalling an output of over 4400 tons per 24 hours.

The new Italian hard wheat mill consists of two sections with a capacity of 150 tons each, i.e. a total milling capacity of 300 tons a day. The machines ordered from this Uzwil firm, after thorough comparative trials, comprised mainly the whole processing plant, i.e. the 4-cylinder mills, bolting machines and semolina sifters, the plant for the pneumatic transport of the products, the mechanical transport devices, the suction apparatus, the depot transport equipment, various additional machines for the silo, the cleaning machines and laboratory appliances, as well as the equipment required for the animal feeding stuffs depot.

ADVERTISING OF INTERNATIONAL STANDING

On the occasion of its annual congress in Paris, the International Advertising Association organised a world advertising competition. Out of 1000 entries from advertising agencies of over 30 countries, it was an advertisement created by a Zurich advertising agency for a Swiss glue, which won first prize in the consumer goods category.

BAKERY AND CONFECTIONERY EXHIBITION

The Swiss Association of Master Bakers and Confectioners has decided to hold the 3rd International Bakery and Confectionery Exhibition in Basle from May 13th to 22nd, 1966. The first exhibition of this kind was held in Lugano in 1951, and the second in Zurich in 1962.

The organisation of this year's event has been entrusted to the Swiss Industries Fair which will make its halls available for the occasion. The International Bakery and Confectionery Exhibition will once again be accompanied by special demonstrations and displays.

AN EXCEPTIONAL CONSIGNMENT

The 130-ton stator for the first of the two turbo-alternators in the first big Swiss thermal power station being built at Chavalon, above Vouvry, in the Rhone valley, upstream from the Lake of Geneva, was recently installed. The two hydrogen-cooled turbo-alternators, each developing 175,000 kVA, will be the most powerful of their kind in Switzerland.

The transport of this huge consignment from Oerlikon (Zurich) to Vouvry raised a number of tricky problems, especially during the last 3½ miles, which had to be covered by road. After being transported by special train on a Federal Railway wagon with 18 axles, the stator was loaded on to a special road vehicle with 16 articulated axles, each with four wheels, drawn and pushed by tractors and weighing in all some 300 tons.

The alternator in question has been built by the Oerlikon Engineering Company (Zurich), while Escher Wyss (Zurich) was responsible for the construction of the steam turbine.

Laugh a little . . .

"Yesterday I was at my friend's, the veterinarian's place, for dinner."

"What did you get to eat?"

"Most probably one of his patients."

"Funny, every morning after I get up I have a tummy ache, and half an hour afterwards it is gone. What could I do about it?"

"Well, simply get up half an hour later."

—Nebelspalter