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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

FIRST WATER-SKI-TOW IN THE WORLD

A new tourist and sports attraction, which was already announced last year but was not able to be completed satisfactorily in time, has just been inaugurated at Geneva Beach. It consists of a closed circuit traction cable sunk 10 feet below the level of the lake; as it turns in a regular movement the cable pulls three small boats to which water skiers may hook up.

The water-ski-tow satisfies all safety requirements, the cable and the pulleys being sunk sufficiently deeply to exclude any risk of accident should a skier fall. Even if it does not reach maximum speeds, it nevertheless allows everyone to enjoy the pleasures of water-skiing and to train in this sport which has become very popular.

The demonstrations which were given at the official inauguration augur well for the future of this new sports equipment, invented and built in Switzerland. (OSEC).

SWITZERLAND'S FIRST "EUROTEL"

Now you can own your own modern compact apartment in the Engadine. The first "Eurotel" in Switzerland will open in Autumn at St Moritz. An international operation, "Eurotel" sells completely equipped apartments, the owners of which automatically become profit-sharing members of the organisation.

If the owner so desires, his apartment in the "hotel" can be rented to other guests during the periods in which he himself is not in occupancy.

A second Swiss "Eurotel" is being planned for Montreux.

RECREATION CENTRE IN LAUSANNE

The world's first tourist submarine, the Mesoscaph, which made its debut at last year's Swiss National Exposition ("Expo"), has resumed its diving beneath the waters of Lake Geneva to the delight of visitors from all parts of the world.

At the same time, the liquidation of the remnants of the "Expo" continues. And the city fathers have been trying to decide what is to be done with the 550,000 square meters of ground at Vidy, where the Exposition was held. At first it was intended to continue operating only the concrete "Ideal Hotel" which had been erected by the Swiss Hotel Association.

But recently the City of Lausanne also acquired the deep-red Expo Theatre, the structures which housed the Transportation exhibitions, and an underground beer bar.

In the centre of the area, grouped around the Vidy manor house which will in future house a University Institute for Mass Media, there are playgrounds for gymnastics, football, hockey and tennis.

JUBILEE OF THE UPPER RHINE FLEET

The first steamship to sail down the Rhine and anchor at Schaffhausen was called the "Max Joseph" after a contemporary prince; it came from Bavaria and made the journey in 1825. To-day Schaffhausen is headquarters of the "Schweizerische Schifffahrtsgesellschaft Untersee und Rhein" (Swiss Navigation Company for Untersee and the Rhine). The company boasts a fleet of six ships which cruise through the still pastoral countryside between Schaffhausen and Kreuzlingen. Its newest flagship, the "Thurgau," has room for 600 passengers and is equipped with the most modern refinements; it was commissioned only a few weeks ago.

Between 1825 and the present, navigation on the Upper Rhine has seen its ups and downs: Thanks to the monopoly on Upper Rhine navigation which it enjoyed until well into the last century, the city of Schaffhausen developed into an important inland port. But the development of the steamboat brought radical changes. To keep pace with the times, a "Swiss Steamship Company for the Rhine and Untersee" was formed in 1850. But it could not match the competition of a firm in Kreuzlingen and went out of business in 1863.

Aware of the necessity of maintaining constant connections between the many communities along the banks of the Upper Rhine and the Untersee (Lower Lake Constance), the cantons of Thurgau and Schaffhausen formed a joint company in October 1863. And two years later, exactly a century ago, the "Swiss Navigation Company for Untersee and the Rhine" began operations.

NEWS FROM HERE AND THERE

At Easter there were anti-atom-bomb marches and demonstrations in several Swiss towns. On 1st May there were traditional processions and demonstrations by Socialists, Trade Unions and workers' organisations.

A working party was organised at the Philipp-Albert Stapfer House at Lenzburg Castle to discuss the question of whether Switzerland should have an international centre on the pattern of Wilton Park. It was decided to make a start with courses intended to further international relations.

At a meeting in St Gall, the experts on the Swiss language expressed concern that the mother tongue of part of Switzerland, German, which acts as an umbrella to all the different varieties of "Schwyzerdutsch," was in danger of becoming shallow, and that there should not only be organisations for the protection of monuments and countryside, but also of the language.

The "Jerusalem Prize" was awarded to the Swiss author and playwright Max Frisch. The literary competition of the "Schweizer Spiegel" was won by Ursula Isler-Hungerbuehler for her novel "Am Ufer."

Max Daetwyler is known as "Apostle of Peace" in many parts of the world. He has been joined by a second Swiss, an "Apostle for Education" in the person of Jacques Muehlethaler, from Geneva, who is touring Europe with his "Charter for Men."

The Swiss Federal Railways have prohibited the sale of a German illustrated magazine at their book stalls on account of a series of articles on nudist culture.

His Holiness Pope Paul received a book "Pour l'Europe" by Robert Schuman and the three volumes "Histoire Illustrée du Catholicisme" on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The presentation was made by the Geneva publisher Louis Nagel.

The Swiss Pharmacopoeia, the official drug list, has been compiled for one hundred years.

Julius Mueller, a well-known Swiss-American business man, now retired at Zollikon, has given one million Swiss francs to Swiss Cancer Relief.

An American, John Jeffries, who died in 1964, has left his fortune of several hundred thousand dollars to the Swiss Evangelical Church.

The 1964 contest "Come and paint the Ticino," sponsored by the Ticino Tourist Association, has met with an excellent response. Mr Charles W. Cadley, of Manchester won third prize.

PURCHASES OF THE SWISS FEDERAL RAILWAYS

The Swiss Federal Railways, which constitutes the biggest concern in Switzerland, is a big client of the nation's industry for all types of articles ranging from office supplies to rails, waggons and locomotives. In 1964 the purchasing office of the Federal Railways in Basle placed orders amounting to S. Fr. 152 million (\$35.25 million). Taking into consideration the orders placed directly by a number of departments, in particular for the purchase of locomotives and waggons, as well as the orders given to the building trade, the expenditure of the Swiss Federal Railways on orders totalled over S.Fr. 500 million (\$116 million). This sum is shared among some 13,000 firms including not only the big firms but a very high proportion of medium size and small industrial, commercial and craft concerns.

NEW TUNNEL OPENED

The village of Brunnen is on the north shore of the Lake of Lucerne, at a point where the highways from Lucerne and the Zurich region converge. Thanks to the newly opened, 1265-yard long Mosi-Tunnel, motorists can now gain access to the picturesque Axen Road and the Reuss Valley without going through Brunnen itself. The tunnel, which cost 20 million francs to construct, has two lanes (each 30 feet wide) and is mechanically ventilated.

SWITZERLAND AND THE AMERICAN BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

H. E. True Davis, United States Ambassador to Switzerland, recently gave a lecture in Chicago on the part Switzerland plays in America's balance of payments. The speaker was addressing a meeting of American businessmen and bankers, whom he reminded of Switzerland's importance on the international capital market.

Swiss investors are among the most important foreign holders of American shares, their holdings totalling nearly 4 billion dollars. Swiss direct investments in the United States are moreover considerably higher than those of American capitalists in Switzerland.

Furthermore trade between the United States and Switzerland constitutes a contribution to America's balance of payments, since Switzerland has always bought more from the Americans than she sold to them. (In 1964 the United States imported 242 million dollars' worth of Swiss products while Switzerland bought 315 million dollars' worth of products from the United States). (OSEC).

FURTHER SWISS AID TO EASTERN PAKISTAN

After a first contribution of S. Fr. 50,000 (\$11,600) from Switzerland and a further gift of S. Fr. 10,000 (\$2320) from the Swiss Red Cross in aid of the victims of the cyclone which recently devastated several parts of eastern Pakistan, the Swiss government recently granted a new subsidy of S. Fr. 50,000 in favour of the victims of the cyclone in eastern Pakistan. This sum, which will be devoted to the purchase of food and clothing, was handed over to the Swiss Red Cross for transmission to the Red Cross in Pakistan.

COMPLETION OF A BIG SWISS CARTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

The last sheet of the Swiss National Map to a scale of 1:100,000 appeared this spring. This new map was intended not only to equal but even to surpass the famous Dufour map, which won first prize at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1889 and which was considered a masterpiece of its kind. The new national map to a scale of 1:1000,000 comprises 22 whole sheets and one half-sheet; it covers the whole of Switzerland and the frontier regions of the neighbouring countries. Modern surveying methods make it possible to achieve far greater precision than before and the new copying techniques have also made considerable progress so that the new map now available to civilians and the Swiss army is a perfectly produced work of a high artistic standard. (OSEC).