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## Taranaki Swiss Social Club

The Annual Picnic will be held on the second Sunday in February, the 13th, at Te Ngutu Park.

## Wellington Swiss Club

The Annual Picnic is to be held at Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki, on Sunday, January 30th. We meet at the Cenotaph at 9.30 a.m.

## SWISS SOCIETY SHOOTING COMPETITION

The Swiss Society Shooting Competition will be held on the 12th and 13th of March, 1965. Further particulars will follow in the February issue. —Hans Oettli.

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## News from Switzerland

### VERDUESTERTE FEIERTAGE AUF UNSERN BAUERNHÖEFEN

Zuerich, 26. Dezember.

Auf Hunderten von Bauernhöfen in weiten Teilen der Schweiz war Weihnachten dieses Jahr ein trauriges Fest. Die Maul- und Klauenseuche hatte die Ställe geleert und riesige Schäden verursacht. Auf andern Gehöften verbrachte man die Zeit in banger Furcht, der Stallfeind könnte ebenfalls Einzug halten. Noch am Vorweihnachtstage hatte die Seuche auf den 13. Kanton uebergreifen: In Herisau mussten 25 Stueck Rindvieh abgefuehrt werden. In den 13 Kantonen waren es bis Weihnachten rund 500 Ställe, die von der Seuche betroffen wurden. Ueber 18 000 Tiere mussten abgetan werden.

Am schlimmsten hatte die Seuche, die in der dritten Oktoberwoche im Waadtland ihren Anfang nahm, im Kanton Bern gewuetet. Hier sind 169 Fælle mit 6366 Tieren gezæhlt worden. Den zweiten Platz in der traurigen Statistik nimmt der Kanton Luzern ein, wo bisher 4662 Tiere aus 74 Stællen der Seuche zum Opfer fielen. Im Kanton Waadt wurden 86 Fælle mit 2633 Tieren gezæhlt, im Kanton Freiburg 30 Fælle mit 1081 Tieren. Es folgten die Kantone Basel-Land mit 33 Fællen, Aargau mit 32, Tessin mit 20, Zuerich mit 18, St. Gallen mit 10, Solothurn und Thurgau mit je 5 und das Wallis und der Kanton Appenzell Ausserrhoden mit je einem Fall.

### Isolierung der betroffenen Høefe

Die betroffenen Gehøefte sind alle abgesperrt worden. Der Zutritt ist unter Androhung von Busse in der Høefe von mehreren tausend Franken oder von einigen Monaten Gefængnis verboten. Seuchenteppiche aus natron-getrænkttem Sægemehl sollen weiteren Schutz bieten. Sie sind nicht nur bei den betroffenen Gehøefen, sondern bei vielen andern auch zu einer gewissen Absicherung an-

gebracht worden. In zahlreichen Kantonen — mehrere noch nicht von der Seuche befallene haben ebenfalls scharfe Massnahmen zum Schutze angeordnet — befinden sich auch Seuchenteppiche auf Haupt- und wichtigen Nebenstrassen.

Die betroffenen Bauern sind weitgehend isoliert. Spezielle Seuchenboten besorgen ihnen den Verkehr mit der Umwelt und bringen ihnen Lebensmittel und anderes. Der Postbote konnte die Weihnachtspakete und -karten nur auf Distanz bringen. Er musste sie an den Abschränkungen aus Milchtansen und landwirtschaftlichen Gefährten deponieren, wo sie dann von den Bewohnern der Seuchenhöfe abgeholt wurden. Kein Handschlag mit persönlichem Weihnachtswunsch war möglich.

Vielfach mussten die Bauern noch andere ihrer Haustiere opfern. Verbotenerweise frei herumlaufende Hunde und Katzen musste die Polizei abschiessen — eine traurige Arbeit!

### **Kein Kirchenbesuch und leere Gaststuben**

Aus Sicherheitsgründen kam an den von der Seuche besonders betroffenen Orten auch kein Kirchenbesuch in Frage. Viele Bauerfamilien mussten auf den Besuch der feierlichen Mitternachtsmesse zu Weihnachten verzichten.

Auch das Weihnachtsgeschäft in den dörflichen Läden und Geschäften stockte. Die verseuchten Höfe durften nicht verlassen werden. Die Wirtschaften der Döfer waren in den letzten Wochen ebenfalls fast leer. Dutzende von Veranstaltungen mussten abgesagt werden. Tiergärten sahen sich zur Schliessung oder teilweisen Sperrungen veranlasst.

In vollem Gange ist die Impfung der noch nicht verseuchten Tierbestände. Aber bis sie wirksam wird, vergehen rund 14 bange Tage, und auf verschiedenen Gehöften ist der Stallfeind in dieser Zeit schon eingezogen.

### **Grosse Schäden, grosse Hilfsbereitschaft**

Gross sind die Schäden des gegenwärtigen Seuchenzuges, der in den vierzehn Tagen vor Weihnachten die grösste Zahl von Tieropfern gefordert hatte. Allein die direkten Schäden werden auf rund 20 Millionen Franken geschätzt. Viele Bauern müssen vollständig neu anfangen. Bittere Schäden erliden aber auch viele, die mit den Bauern in irgend einer Weise im Geschäft stehen.

Gerade vor Weihnachten indessen sind auch zahlreiche Hilfsmassnahmen getroffen und spontane Aktionen ins Leben gerufen worden. Bäuerliche Selbsthilfemassnahmen wurden angeordnet, landwirtschaftliche Vereinigungen trafen Unterstützungsanordnungen, im Kanton Bern bildete sich ein Komitee (Die Stadt hilft dem Land), und verschiedene andere Stellen riefen zu Sammlungen auf. Weihnachten 1965 wird der schweizerischen Bauernsame dennoch bedrückend in Erinnerung stehen.

Montag, 27. Dezember 1965

## BEER PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN SWITZERLAND

Swiss breweries produced 95 million gallons of beer during the annual period ending on September 30th, 1965, which corresponds to a theoretical average consumption of 130 pints per inhabitant. This result is lower than the corresponding figures for Belgium (220 pt.), Western Germany (210 pt.) and Great Britain (157 pt.). At the same time, imports of foreign beer into Switzerland increased by 37.5 per cent, amounting to 987,000 gallons, while exports of Swiss beer fell 3 per cent, viz. 360,000 gallons during the same period. During the last period, the tax on beer yielded the Confederation S. Fr. 53 million as during the period 1963/64. (OSEC).

## SKIER AS SWISS ARMY TRAINING CHIEF

It is certain to be a good thing for the promotion of skiing in Switzerland, that the man who on January 1, 1966, became the Swiss Army's Chief of Training is Colonel Pierre William Herschi, of La Chaux-de-Fonds. He is a licensed ski instructor. His father was for some years President of the Swiss Ski Association and also President of the Swiss Olympics Committee which supervised the 2nd Winter Olympics in St Mortiz in 1928.

The wife of the new Chief of Training is Rosmarie Bleuer from Grindelwald. Twenty years ago she was one of the most successful of Swiss racing skiers and slalom champions. Little daughter May-Christiane is already following in the ski-tracks of her famous parents.

## MELCHSEE-FRUTT'S 30th SEASON AS A WINTER RESORT

Until well into the spring, Melchsee-Frutt offers almost unlimited opportunities to the skier, as one of Switzerland's most snow-sure winter sports resorts. Experienced skiers take ski-lift up to the Balmeregghorn, while beginners and intermediates find their pleasure on the broad, open slopes of the Erzegg, which is also served by a lift. Experienced climber-skiers may go on their own up the Boni or, under the direction of the Swiss Ski School, up any of the many other untouched mountains, while less adventuresome walkers can make the pilgrimage to the Tannalp where they can enjoy some rural refreshment.

This winter paradise, avalanche-free and blessed by the intense, high-altitude sun, lies at about 6600 ft above sea level. This season marks its 30th anniversary as a winter resort. The valley station from which the 33-passenger cabins of the cablecar rise to Melchsee-Frutt is called Stockalp; it is just about 22 miles south of Lucerne, may be reached by auto via good roads, or by post bus from Sarnen, a stop on the Lucerne-Brunig-Interlaken Railway.

## PROMISING START FOR THE WINTER SEASON

The skiing season began unusually early in Switzerland this year. November snowfalls provided the winter resorts with between 50 and 80 centimeters of snow by early December. Work on the ski runs was begun exceptionally early. The following snow levels were registered on December 10th: Davos — 70 cm (in the village), 120 cm (ski areas); St Moritz — 50 cm, 50-100 cm; Melchsee-Frutt — 80 cm, 120 cm; Engelberg 20 cm, 50-100 cm; Zermatt — 60 cm, 100 cm; Grindelwald-Kleine Schaidegg — 40 cm, 120 cm. More recent snowfalls have raised the snow-cover in places to more than 2 meters.

Since December 13, the Swiss Federal Railways in co-operation with local tourist offices have been issuing daily snow reports, giving snow level, type, air temperature and conditions on the pistes. Ski lifts and other facilities have been in daily operation since early December. All indications point to a promising winter season ahead.

Many hotels are already fully booked for some periods, particularly the Christmas-New Year week and mid-February; they expect 5-10 per cent higher overall bookings than last year. Meteorologists are predicating a long, hard winter. The 1965/66 winter season offers much to the walker and hiker as well as the skier. Winter resorts are extending their walking paths. Adelboden, for example, now has 24 miles of walking paths available in winter.

## SWISS TECHNICS ABROAD

A firm of consultant engineers, Krebs & Co. Ltd., in Zurich, was recently commissioned to build a new chlorine factory for the big Norwegian industrial concern, Norsk Hydro, which goes in mainly for the manufacture of nitrate fertilizers, plastics and magnesium. The new plant will have an annual output of some 50,000 tons of chlorine. In 1961 the engineering office in question constructed a plant for the manufacture of polyvinyl chloride for the same company. (OSEC).

## NEW PASS HIGHWAY IN THE VAUD

A new highway over the Col de la Croix (5725 ft altitude) bids fair to be an important new traffic artery, connecting Gstaad with Les Diablerets and Villars, bringing the three important Alpine resorts closer together.

The new road will make it possible to go from Villars to the Diablerets Glacier and the Scex Rouge (9900 ft.) in just 40 minutes all year round, at the same time making the ice rink at Villars accessible by the shortest possible route from Gstaad and Les Diablerets. The highway will open up fascinating new possibilities in the winter-and-summer resort area.

## ZOO DIRECTOR BECOMES "ELEPHANT DENTIST"

"Elephant dentist" was the unusual role which Basle's Zoo Director, Dr E. Lang, assumed recently at the request of the Sarani Circus in Germany. He travelled to Oggersheim, near Ludwigshafen, to extract a molar from 36-year-old "Sahib," an elephant bull who put in an appearance with the Swiss Knie Circus in 1963. Five miligrams were enough to send the pachyderm into dreamland, so that the well-known elephant expert could remove the throbbing tooth with hammer and chisel. Awakened from his slumbers by a stimulant, "Sahib" appeared to bear his dentist no ill-will and headed immediately for his fodder.

## TENTS IN THE SNOW

Each year about 300 earnest nature lovers from Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Switzerland traditionally get together for "New Year's Camping in the Snow," organised by the Swiss Camping Association.

This year the participants, who prefer a warm sleeping bag under a more or less snow-proof tent to the most comfortable hotel room, gathered from December 31 to January 2 at the trailer and camping park of Savognin, in the Grisons. This up-and-coming winter sports resort is located on the historic Julier Highway, about half-way between Coire (Chur) and St Moritz.

Declares one dedicated nature-lover who has taken part in this annual event for years: "Camping in the snow offers all the advantages of winter sports plus the adventure of the best summer sport of all — tenting." A piece of essential equipment is a snow-shovel, used to prepare the tent floor, which is then insulated with sacks of straw in the sleeping areas. And then, let the cold come!

## SWISS MOTOR COACH FOR THE DISABLED

In Switzerland there are over 25,000 cripples and several thousand people of all ages either bed-ridden or restricted to their invalid chairs by sickness or disease, and often for years.

In order to offer these unfortunates an opportunity to travel and see their country a little, some 5000 classes of schoolchildren in Switzerland banded together on the occasion of the centenary of the Red Cross in 1963 to organise a special collection which brought in over S.Fr. 600,000. This sum was used to build a special motor coach equipped with 20 invalid chairs and a lifting device. In this way the coach can easily take 20 cripples at a time on a tour of the country. Planned to run 5 days a week for 9 months of the year, it will offer outings to 4000 cripples or bed-ridden patients a year.

Put into service last June, this vehicle has already provided welcome entertainment for 3000 patients. (OSEC).

## AN "ALMOST-SUBWAY" IN BERNE

A young boy from Berlin who won an essay contest recently came to Zurich. Upon visiting Mayor Emil Landolt in City Hall, he asked, "Mr Mayor, why wasn't a subway built in Zurich years ago?" Mayor Landolt explained to the sharp young Berliner that a subway project was placed before the city's voters quite some time ago, and rejected.

Now Berne, the nation's capital (and allegedly a slower-moving city than Zurich), has completed a double-track railroad tunnel nearly 4000 feet long — "almost a subway" — through which the trains of the Solothurn-Zollikofen-Berne Railway will enter the city's main terminal.

Although municipal approval of the project was given back in 1954, construction was only begun in 1960. The "subway" station lies beneath the tracks of the Swiss Federal Railways and consists of four platforms. The Solothurn-Zollikofen-Berne line is one of Switzerland's busiest private rails. In 1964 alone it transported more than six million passengers.

## SARGANS 1200 YEARS OLD

The first historical mention of the town of Sargans, in Canton St. Gallen, with its castle which looks over a steep outcropping of rock down to the broad Rhine Valley below, took place on December 15, 765 — 1200 years ago. Archeological finds, however, have indicated the presence of prehistoric settlements there.

During the 13th century Sargans became the property of the family of the Counts of Werdenberg-Sargans. During subsequent centuries, the village and the castle constituted a single fortified location which was twice besieged: in 1405 by the Appenzellers and in 1445 by the early Swiss Confederates. The village was conquered and plundered, but the proud castle remained standing.

The older part of the town within the ancient walls was destroyed by fire in 1811, but a proposal by the Cantonal Government of St Gallen to rebuild it was rejected by the local inhabitants. In 1906-7 the main highway was relocated on the plain below, where new residential districts have since developed.

## AUTO RENTAL SERVICE

Europe's most modern auto rental service recently opened its doors on Zurich's Stampfenbachstrasse, just a few hundred yards from the main railway station and air terminal. 150 rental cars of the latest model are at the disposal of customers of Avis-Swissways AG. A two-level underground garage also has parking facilities for an additional 75 vehicles.