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===== Forthcoming Events =====

SWISS SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

in the Swiss Chalet, Hamilton

on Saturday, June 4th, 1966

at 8.30 p.m.

Auckland Swiss Club

SOCIAL EVENING

A social evening will be held in the Edendale School Hall, Sandringham on June 18th, 1966. Further information will be available in the programmes when posted.

Hamilton Swiss Club

Card evening: June 25th in the Swiss Chalet at 8.30 p.m.

1st August Celebration: Saturday, July 30th, in Pine Lodge.

Christchurch Swiss Club

On Wednesday, June 1st, at 8 p.m., Mr O. Kennel will give us a slide evening about his recent trip to Switzerland, at 48 Arawa Street, Shirley.

On Sunday, June 26th, at 2 p.m., Mr Kalin will give us another stamp afternoon, this time about newer stamps, in the Hard of Hearing Hall. Bring the children and a plate.

Preliminary notice: Keep the evening of Saturday, July 30th, free for the first of August Celebration. Think up some items of entertainment and give notice to the secretary of your good intentions.

—H.M.



===== News from Switzerland =====

A SECOND GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE 37th SWISS COMPTOIR

The Lausanne National Fair (September 10th to 25th, 1966), which has just announced that Finland will be its next guest of honour at its 47th event, will be welcoming a second official foreign exhibit—that of Pakistan. This participation, ratified by the Swiss government, is placed under the auspices of H.E. Mr S. K. Delhavi, Pakistan Ambassador in Berne, the organization of the pavilion being the responsibility of the Export Promotion Bureau, forming part of the Pakistan Ministry of Trade and Industry.

8.6 MILLION LETTERS AND NEWSPAPERS PER DAY

In 1965, the Swiss letter post delivered or forwarded 1.34 billion unregistered letters, 26.3 million registered letters and 439.7 million unaddressed circulars plus 875.3 million newspapers, to Swiss and foreign destinations. The total for the past year therefore amounts to 2 billion 681 million letters and printed packets (3 per cent higher than in 1964).

Per working day, the Swiss post office received, sorted, transported and delivered over 8.6 million letters and printed packets. With regard to parcels, over 119.3 million were delivered to destinations at home and 5.5 million forwarded abroad (plus 2.7 per cent). This makes an average of 22 parcels per inhabitant per year, a figure which places Switzerland at the head of world statistics (German Federal Republic 6, Austria 4, France and Italy 1).

FIRST STAGE OF "GRAND PRIX DE LA VILLE DE GENEVE"

The jury of the town of Geneva "Grand Prix" for watchmaking, goldsmith's work, jewellery and enamel work has just finished examining the 980 projects submitted to it by 88 competitors in 13 different countries. Of these 980 entries, 57 were selected for actual execution. The distribution of prizes awarded on the basis of the finished works executed from the designs selected will take place at the end of September this year. Once again the standard and quality of the designs submitted to the jury were remarkable. Since 1963, the number of entries has more than doubled, bearing witness to the fame enjoyed by the town of Geneva Prize in international trade and artistic circles.

AUTOMATION AND THE SWISS POST OFFICE

Continuing its work of rationalization, the Swiss Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Service in 1960 introduced a system of payment cards for the whole of Switzerland. This modern invoicing system, in which the traditional payment forms are replaced by punched cards (payment cards), greatly simplifies bookkeeping operations and the checking of payments.

The Swiss Post Office's electronic centre, the biggest installation of its kind in Switzerland, can easily handle 300,000 to 400,000 payment cards a day at peak periods and, the same day, transfer the corresponding amounts to the subscriber's account. All Swiss businessmen, industrialists and administrative departments can adhere to this rational payment system based on punched payment cards.

Nearly 20 per cent of all cash payments made in the postal cheque department at present use the payment card system. The annual rate of increase of about 15 per cent shows the growing interest taken in this rational system. One big Swiss factory in the engineering industry has just joined this system, for the purpose of handling an estimated 20,000 bills a year.

GROWTH OF TELEVISION IN SWITZERLAND

Having increased by 17,500 in the course of February, the number of Swiss Tv. subscribers has now risen to 652,243. Of this number, there are 466,014 in German-speaking Switzerland, 155,173 in French-speaking Switzerland, and 31,056 in Italian-speaking Switzerland, including 457,652 telediffusion subscribers.

NEARLY ONE MILLION AND A HALF PASSENGERS

In 1965, traffic through Geneva Cointrin airport, like that at Zurich-Kloten and Basle, increased considerably. There were 79,326 arrivals and departures of planes, i.e. an increase of 5.1 per cent compared with the previous year, whereas the number of passengers increased by 11.5 per cent to reach 1,488,907.

Local freight totalled 16,727 tons, i.e. an increase of 15.2 per cent. The transport of postal packets on the other hand fell off 2.5 per cent but nevertheless amounted to 2,266 tons. The daily record of passengers was made on August 1st with 6,727; while the monthly record, in September, was 157,836 passengers and 1,661 tons of freight.

NAPOLEON STARTED IT

The Simplon is one of the most beautiful Alpine passes. It was here that, "pour faire les canons," Napoleon ordered "the Queen of Alpine Highways" built between 1800 and 1805. Originally a roadway used by the ancient Romans, it became an international military and trade route during the Middle Ages. After stage coaches had used the Napoleonic highway for a century, the first motorised post coach went into service in 1919 between Brig and Iselle.

Simplon-Village, located on the southern side of the pass, has repeatedly made world history, serving as a way station for emperors, popes, princes, artists and pilgrims. It is a place that has hardly altered in the last 800 years. The Hotel de la Poste, built as an officers' club in 1805 by order of Napoleon, has been serving transient traffic for the last 160 years. The outside of the building still retains its original form. But the guest rooms, restaurants and capacious dining hall were recently renovated to suit modern needs. Here is a place with a 160-year tradition of hospitality, to serve today's tourists and vacationers seeking pleasure and recreation in the area's many walking paths.

SWISS TECHNICAL SUCCESS OVERSEAS

An agreement has been signed between the Industrial Development Corporation of Zambia and a Geneva company for the construction in Zambia of a textile factory which will produce an estimated 14 million yards of fabric a year. The factory will absorb the whole cotton production of Zambia, which at present totals 3175 tons per year but is expected to double in the next two years. It will provide employment for a thousand local workers.

NEW VACATION CENTRE ON WORLD'S BUSIEST MOUNTAIN

The 6000ft Rigi, located in Central Switzerland about 25 miles south of Zurich and less than 18 miles east of Lucerne, is the world's most visited mountain, receiving about one million tourists and vacationers annually.

An new kind of vacation centre, unique not only in Switzerland but in all Europe, is currently under construction at Rigi-Kaltbad, on the southern slope of the mountain at an altitude of 4750ft. Called "Hostellerie Rigi," it will be dedicated in October 1966. When completed, this "well-balanced combination of a sport hotel, vacation apartment house, restaurants, and later a convention hotel"—as the future Director of the complex described it—will be able to accommodate 500 guests. The Director added, in the course of a recent interview, that the convention hotel will be particularly well-suited for corporate training courses of several days' duration and similar industrial functions. To insure maximum utilisation, however, it will be used as a normal holiday hotel on weekends and during the summer and winter vacation seasons.

The sport hotel, to which will be annexed an apartment house with 68 vacation apartments (owner units), will feature a fascinating choice of restaurants: There will be the luxury restaurant "Zur Trotte," with exclusively a la carte service and an extensive wine cellar from which gourmets may personally select their own bottles. In the self-service restaurant, meals will be served much as they are prepared on international airlines. The Tarascon Alpine Club will be for those who prefer fine food in a casual atmosphere (it is named for Tartarin de Tarascon, the delightful Rigi mountaineer created by Alphonse Daudet). Memories of still another literary hero who "climbed" the Rigi will be awakened by Mark Twain's Bar, where regular patrons will each be assigned a storage compartment in which to keep their unfinished bottles.

A sensational feature of the new vacation centre will be its indoor swimming pool. By pressing a button, it will be possible to lower the ceiling so that it completely covers the pool and becomes the floor of a large meeting hall.

Said the Director of the new "Hostellerie": "The Rigi, accessible from Zurich, Switzerland's metropolis, in barely one hour, is the classical walker's mountain. It has more than 60 miles of walking paths—and not a single motorised vehicle. A place of absolute peace, a private preserve for pedestrians and children at play. Provision has been made for ample parking in Vitznau, the starting point of the Vitznau-Rigi cog railway, and in Weggis, from which a cablecar will run directly to Rigi-Kaltbad—all of which will give our guests at least temporary freedom from the bondage of the motorised age."

SWISS PRODUCTS IN ORBIT

Through the press we have learnt that NASA has made use, in the Gemini VI and Gemini VII space cabins, of "Velcro" textile fasteners, which adhere strongly together when placed in contact but can be separated at will. This invention of the Swiss engineer, Georges de Mastral, was put on the market in 1962 after many years of practical trials in Switzerland; it is at present manufactured in a number of countries and has been used very widely in the textile, furnishing and automobile bodywork industries.

"VACATIONS FOR TWO" LOTTERY PRIZES

For the first time in the history of the major Swiss lotteries, a dozen prizes of Swissair vacations for two to America and Canada are being offered, in addition to the usual cash awards.

This unusual incentive is being offered by the Bernese SEVA Lottery, proceeds from which are used for charitable purposes, the protection of Swiss lakes, and tourist publicity. The drawing of the lottery has been so arranged that the lucky winners can make their plans for a visit to the USA and Canada before the onset of the summer season.

10,000 SKIERS PER HOUR

Thanks to two new ski lifts which went into operation at the end of 1965, St-Cergue in the Jura of Canton Vaud now boasts eleven transportation facilities for winter sportsters.

In close co-operation with a resort area in neighbouring France, which also has more than ten ski lifts, an hourly total of more than 10,000 skiers can be brought up to the heights around St-Cergue. All subscription tickets are valid on both sides of the border—a fine example of international co-operation in the field of tourism!

NIGERIA PLACES BIG ORDER WITH SWISS FIRM

The Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN), a state concern, is undertaking a big development programme. The discovery of petrol in Nigeria has had the effect of attaching new industries to the country, resulting in a rapid increase in the demand for energy.

In order to solve the many problems arising out of this need, the ECN requires a supply station and at the same time the possibility of speeding up the training of its own personnel. For this purpose, it intends to build a laboratory; Motor Columbus Co., Ltd., of Baden (Switzerland) has been selected, from a number of competitors, to draw up the plans for the laboratory, which is to be incorporated in the premises of the supply station. A team of engineers has been sent out to work out the preliminary plans on the spot. (OSEC)