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News from Switzerland

THE AUTOMOBILE IN THE SERVICE OF THE SWISS POST OFFICE

In 1966, Switzerland's postal bus service carried over 35 million passengers, i.e. about 1.6 million or 5 per cent more than the previous year, on a network totalling some 4700 miles. The motorization of the postal services has continued apace. At the end of 1966, 2740 motor vehicles were operating from 650 post offices, whereas ten years earlier there were only 1000 vehicles for 140 offices. With a total of 7337 vehicles, 4118 of which are reserved for strictly postal purposes, the Swiss Post Office is by far the biggest road transport concern in Switzerland. (OSEC)

BEER CONSUMPTION IN SWITZERLAND

During the annual period which ended in September 1966, Swiss breweries recorded a total output of 4.54 million hl. of beer (1 hl. = 26.4 US gallons), i.e. 4.17 per cent higher than in the previous period. If this figure is compared with that of the population, one obtains a theoretical average consumption of 74.8 l. of beer per head of the population. By way of comparison, let us mention that the corresponding figures are 122 l. for West Germany, 120 l. for Belgium, 92 l. for Great Britain and 115 l. for New Zealand. Imports of foreign beers into Switzerland have again increased and in 1966 amounted to 71,700 hl., while home breweries exported 7000 hl. During the last period, the special tax on beer in Switzerland brought the Confederation S.Fr. 54.8 million, i.e. 1.8 million more than the previous year. (OSEC)

AN INTERESTING SPORTS AND SCIENTIFIC PROJECT AT NEUCHÂTEL

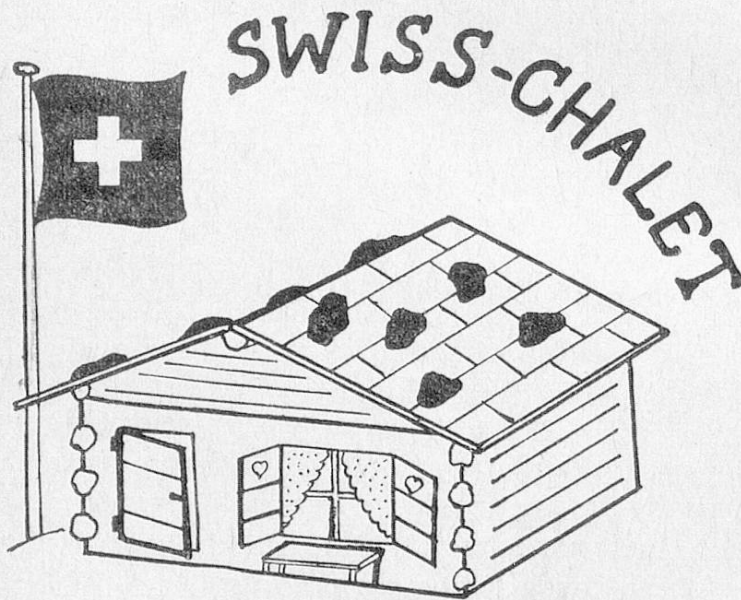
For the last ten years at Neuchâtel, on the lake of the same name, there has been a Centre of Aquatic Studies and Sports (CASS), where frogmen are trained for all sports of underwater work and exploration, as well as amateur divers. Devoted not only to diving but also to instruction, CASS is the home of the National Diving Centre, which three times a year organizes special courses and examinations at the higher levels for the whole of Switzerland. This organization is at present the only one in Europe to hold special courses for instructors in fresh water. Today, owing to its work being threatened by the future demolition of the baths in which it has operated until now, CASS has drawn up an important alternative scheme providing for the construction and development of a "Divers' House", of modern design, which will be the first of its kind in Europe. (OSEC)

A FLOATING CULTURAL CENTRE ON THE LAKE OF ZURICH?

In Zurich, serious attention is being given to the scheme of Mr Georges Muller, theatrical producer at Herrliberg (Zurich), for creating a floating cultural centre which would cast anchor once or twice a month in the vicinity of a dozen towns round the Lake of Zurich in order to bring them concerts, plays, readings and other cultural entertainment. As there are some 600,000 inhabitants living on the shores of the lake of Zurich, the promoter of the idea considers that there would be a sufficiently large public for his "Floating Cultural Centre" seating 500. Young student architects at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich have already formed a team and started drawing up plans. (OSEC)

MOTOR VEHICLES IN SWITZERLAND

According to estimates of the Federal Bureau of Statistics, at the end of September 1966 there were over 1.28 million motor vehicles licensed in Switzerland, not counting army vehicles, agricultural tractors and motor-bicycles. Within the last 5 years, the figure has increased by almost 400,000 or 43 per cent. Compared with the figures for the previous year, motorcycles, motorscooters and light motorcycles decreased by 6 per cent, while the number of motorcars increased by 7.5 per cent to reach the figure of 1.1 million. Included in this figure are 990,000 private cars, i.e. 70,000 or 8 per cent more than the previous year. (OSEC)



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THE SWISS APPARATUS EIDOPHORE IN SOVIET RUSSIA

At the invitation of the President of the Academy of Medical Sciences in the USSR, the big Swiss chemical firm of Ciba in Basle recently presented in Moscow its Eidophore system of colour television on a big screen. Using this process, several demonstrations on the latest knowledge and discoveries of Soviet research in the field of cancer, carried out in the laboratories and operating theatres of the Cancer Scientific Research Centre in the Soviet Union were recently transmitted for projection in a large auditorium. As everyone knows, the Eidophore system invented and perfected in Switzerland, and manufactured in this country by a company consisting of the Basle chemical factory Ciba, which has worked to improve this invention over a period of years, and the Dutch firm of Philips, is used to project colour television images from a great distance on to a big screen; thus a large audience can follow the direct transmission of sports events or scientific demonstrations and surgical operations. At present, nearly 200 Eidophore projectors have been installed in different countries all over the world for use partly in situ and partly as mobile units. This summer, Swiss football fans were able to follow the matches of the World Football Cup projected on to a big screen by means of Eidophore in three cinemas in Switzerland.

(OSEC)

BIENNE, A CITY WITH A FUTURE

The bi-lingual city of Bienne (or Biel), situated at the foot of the Bernese Jura chain, has a population of more than 66,000. As testimony to its future-oriented outlook, the city has just completed construction of a new convention hall, a building complex which includes a high-rise office building and an indoor swimming pool. Construction of the complex cost a total of some 25 million Swiss francs—an incredible sum for such a relatively small community—and was executed in three stages: the office building was finished in the spring of 1961, the indoor pool in April 1966 and the convention hall in the fall of the same year.

The convention center includes a spacious foyer, with gallery and casual seating arrangements, all optically connected to the swimming pool; a restaurant on the ground floor; a lecture room; a meeting hall with a simple stage and facilities for simultaneous translation, and a large hall which can accommodate 1300 people for concerts or more than 700 for banquets, also equipped for simultaneous translation as well as radio and Tv hookups. Attached to the swimming pool are a sauna section with special baths and massage rooms, and a ladies' and men's hairdresser. The 17-storey high-rise building, in addition to the Centre's management and technical equipment, houses a School of Home Economics and various industrial offices occupying a total of nine storeys.

NUCLEAR POWER: FOREIGN ORDERS FOR SWISS FIRM

The French electricity company, Electricite de France (EDF), has ordered from Sulzer Bros Co. Ltd at Winterthur, eight CO₂ circulation blowers for the nuclear power stations St. Laurent-des-Eaux I and II, both rated at 500 MW. The Swiss firm has already supplied EDF with a blower of the same type for its first 70 MW nuclear power station at Chinon. An inspection carried out after more than 10,000 hours of duty showed this first plant to be in perfect condition and helped to secure the new orders for the two St. Laurent-des-Eaux power stations.

The blowers already delivered and the new ones ordered are the first in France to be installed directly inside the reactor containment shielding. They are driven by condensing steam turbines at 2,700 r.p.m. These blowers are built mainly by the Sulzer affiliated company in France—Compagnie de Construction Mecanique (CCM), Paris—in co-operation with Sulzer Bros., Winterthur.

(OSEC)

THE SWISS WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY'S GIFT TO THE COUNTRY

In order to replace the carpets covering the stairs and corridors of the Federal Palace in Berne (the Swiss Government and Parliament buildings), the Swiss Association of the Wool Textile Industry offered the Confederation about 5500 square feet of carpeting, i.e. sufficient to cover the stairs and corridors as well as to unroll on the pavement outside for the official visits of foreign sovereigns or heads of State. This generous gift could not pass unnoticed.

(OSEC)

A SMALL INVENTION OF GREAT IMPORTANCE

Modern man, always busy telephoning, dictating, jotting down a message or an instruction, glancing through a report and checking an account, sometimes has to put and take off his glasses nearly every other minute, all of which only increases his irritability. With this in mind, a Swiss specialist has created a new frame "Permatic", protected by eight patents, whose branches fitted with springs can be opened at a touch and automatically close again when taken off ready for putting back into one's pocket. This is sufficient to ensure the success of this item of everyday use.

(OSEC)

AN AMERICAN PRIZE FOR A SWISS RESTAURANT

The "Moewenpick" restaurant, recently opened in Lausanne (Switzerland), has been awarded a prize by the Chicago "Institutions Magazine" for the architecture, interior decoration, furnishing and organization of its dining rooms, bars, catering establishment and cellar. This is the first time that this prize has been awarded to a non-American achievement.

(OSEC)