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News from Switzerland

MATTERHORN VILLAGE TO REMAIN FREE OF MOTOR CARS

"Zermatt, the Matterhorn village, will always remain free of motor cars". This comforting sentence is taken from a letter of Zermatt's tourist director, Constant Cachin, to a worried friend of the Swiss Alps and their fortunately still numerous "pedestrians and hikers reserves". The writer of the letter, who hails from North Carolina, U.S.A., had lodged a protest with the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C. against press reports which had mentioned that a highway was to be built to the very foothills of the Matterhorn.

Tourist Director Cachin says: "It is true that a road is approaching Zermatt. By 1971 it will reach Täsch, four kilometers (less than three miles) below Zermatt. However, the community of Zermatt — which means the entire population — has decided in a public referendum not to admit motor cars. A further referendum would have to be held to clear up the question of a possible participation in the considerable cost of building this highway which is now estimated at about 33 million Swiss francs. It may be assumed that Täsch will remain the terminal of the highway. Incidentally, the Brig-Visp-Zermatt Railroad is already planning to put into service shuttle trains which would run between Täsch and Zermatt every thirty minutes".

A MINOR "REVOLUTION" IN THE WATERING OF PLANTS

Is the tiresome chore of the traditional watering of lawns, trees, shrubs and flower-beds doomed to disappear at last? This would seem to be the opinion at any rate of a Montreux inventor, who has designed and perfected a new system for the underground irrigation of roots. It requires no special installations, consisting as it does of a hollow metal rod with a large number of holes in the bottom through which the water soaks into the surrounding earth. A system of valves makes it possible to regulate the flow and the pressure.

This new method of watering has the advantage of avoiding any chalky deposit on the leaves. In addition, it makes for a considerable saving of water, evaporation being greatly reduced, even practically nil. After having successfully passed the experimental stage, this new system of underground watering has been patented in Switzerland and abroad and will shortly go into mass production.

(osec)

BEER CONSUMPTION IN SWITZERLAND

On an average, 74.9 litres (15 gallons) of beer were consumed per head of the population in Switzerland in 1969, that is to say 1.2 litres more than the previous year. Generally speaking, beer consumption in Switzerland is lower than that in other European countries.

For the period 1968-69, which came to an end in September, the breweries broached 4607 million hectolitres of beer, i.e. 2.95% more than during the period 1967-68. This slight increase is insufficient to make up for the falling off noted at the end of the previous period. Imports amounted to 99,270 hl., exports to 20,233 hl. In 1968 the tax on beer produced for the Swiss Confederation the sum of 62.5 million francs, the increase compared with 1967 being 2.4 million francs. (osec)

A UNIQUE STORAGE TOWER IN EUROPE

A storage tower unique of its kind is at present being built near Fribourg for the foodstuffs industry. The new building, which is the work of a large wholesale foodstuffs dealer, consists of four very narrow corridors some 190 feet deep and about 65 feet high, with fork-lift trucks for moving the merchandise. Operated by a single man, they can stack and take out whole pallets, thus making possible a rational preparation of orders.

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