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RECENT SWISSAIR DEVELOPMENTS

It is not unduly chauvinistic to say that our national flag carrier treats its clientele as generously, or more, than any other airline. As an example, we can mention the two highly attractive schemes introduced by Swissair for the last off-season period, which lasted from November 1st to April 1st, and which will doubtless be repeated again.

The treat is offered to non-Swiss residents who travel into Switzerland from outside Europe. One possibility is to enjoy a "Helvetian Hideaway". This prospect, ideal for the businessman who, travelling with his wife, can include some relaxation with work, offers him a dinner, overnight accommodation and breakfast at a country inn, a self-drive car for two days with 300 km free of charge or a first class return (rail) ticket which he can use on one of 11 itineraries to the country inn of his choice. These country inns are situated in eight Swiss regions, from all of which he can choose, and seven regions bordering Switzerland. These are Savoy, Burgundy, the Black Forest, the Vorarlberg, the Austrian Tyrol, South Tyrol and the Italian lakes. This wonderful scheme only costs a basic £6.12.0 and must certainly be a strong incentive for a businessman from outside Europe to fly to Switzerland by means of Swissair.

The second treat is equally attractive and entirely free. It consists in receiving a voucher at the travel agency (outside Europe) where the air ticket is bought and exchanging it at Geneva airport for a cheque book offering 20 gorgeous attractions. The scheme is called "Geneva and Lausanne in the bag" and was rightly considered by Swissair to be the hit of the 1969-70 off-season. Among the free pleasures offered are an unlimited trip on Geneva Transport, a typical Swiss fondue meal, free admission to a fashionable nightclub, and a "free AVIS self-drive car to your good luck coupon for a high-prize lottery". Swissair certainly understands the Americans.

The company has announced favourable financial results for 1969. Net profit for the year amounted to £3.1 million compared with £2.6 million in 1968. Total revenue advanced by £18 million to £103.6 million. Operating costs went up by £12.5 million to £84.9 million, leaving an operating surplus of £18.7 million. Of this surplus, £15.6 million are to be appropriated to depreciation, compared with £107.7 million in 1968.

Including the profit balance brought forward from 1968, £3.24 million was at the disposal of the Annual General Meeting held in Zurich on April 24th. After appropriating a little less than a million to statutory reserves and staff welfare institutions, the

Directors have recommended the distribution of a dividend of 30 Sw. Fr. per share, compared with 28 fr. per share for 1968.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank and the manufacturers have granted Swissair a £33 million credit, repayable ten years after deliveries, for the six DC-10-30 high capacity and extended range jets which Swissair has placed firmly on order. These planes will be put in service in 1972. Swissair has also placed two Boeing 747Bs on order.

Owing to its continuously increasing traffic of passengers and freight, Swissair has both extended and intensified its network. Starting on April 1st, there have been three more destinations in the Swissair network, namely Kinshasa and Douala in Africa, and Oslo in Europe. Switzerland's air links with Great Britain had been intensified this winter and the new flights which had then been introduced are there to stay. The airline's management considers that the lifting of the £50 allowance will boost Swiss-bound traffic. At present there are daily morning, afternoon and evening flights from London to Geneva and Zurich and the Coronado airliners now used on these routes have been converted to accommodate more passengers. There are daily flights from London to Basle and from Manchester to Zurich (via Rotterdam). There are moreover three weekly night flights to Basle, up to ten to Zurich and five to Geneva from London. To this must be added a 7-day a week air-cargo service towards London and a 4-day a week service to Manchester which is run in conjunction with BEA. Basle Airport is rapidly emerging as an important cargo-handling centre.

Switzerland is linked to Tokyo four times a week. DC-8 airliners are commonly used for this route. An important innovation of last winter was the use of mixed passenger/cargo DC-8-62F "Jet Traders" on the Tokyo and New York routes. According to the way the cabin is adjusted, these aircraft can carry 80 to 111 economy class passengers and five to seven cargo pallets. A sixth flight daily is being added between Geneva and Paris, the airline's highest frequency international route.

With the introduction of the 1970 summer timetable Swissair now serve 75 cities in 56 countries on all continents except Australia.

For a number of years, Swissair has been co-operating with two other airlines, the Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) and Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) in the repair and overhaul of aircraft. The three airlines have many types of aircraft in common, particularly DC-8s, DC-9s and Coronados, a fact which has had a bearing on the way this agreement (or KSS agreement) has been implemented. The KSS airlines decide in common which types of aircraft they will operate. They have recently decided to buy the DC-10 trijet (Extended Range version) and not the Lockheed L1011, its only competitor, which is powered by Rolls-

Royce engines. Each airline has a share in the maintenance of the KSS machines. For example, Swissair has the responsibility of overhauling all the DC-9 engines of the group. KLM takes care of the DC-8 engines and SAS is in charge of air-frames.

The French airline UTA will join the group at the advent of the DC-10s and Swissair will be responsible for the air-frames of these new airliners within the "KSSU" group of airlines.

Swissair's official policy has always been extremely guarded towards the Concorde supersonic airliner, on which it has not placed any options. The Concorde doesn't appear to be at present a sound economic proposition. Its range and capacity are too small for Swissair's requirements and the company is not prepared to make any costly experiments. Considering that Swissair is a relatively small airline and a private company not enjoying the backing of the State, this position appears to be a very sensible one.

(P.M.B.)

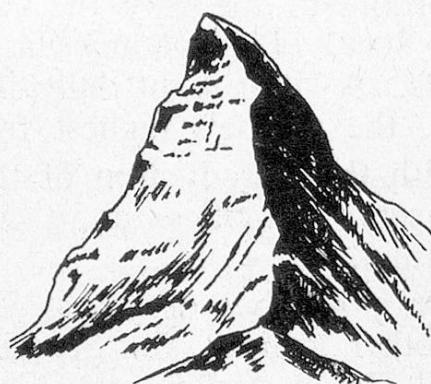
★ **GROUP TRAVEL.** Members are reminded that the Society has decided at its Annual General Meeting to organise a Group Travel for the year 1971. This flight is expected to leave in May 1971 and further news will follow.

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