

News from Switzerland

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **34 (1971)**

Heft [1]

PDF erstellt am: **21.09.2024**

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GROUP TRAVEL 1971

Depart: Wednesday, 26th May, Wellington.

Route: Wellington - Sydney - Hong Kong - Zurich

Arrive in Zurich: Saturday, 29th May

Depart Zurich: Tuesday, 3rd August

Route: Zurich - New York - Los Angeles - Nandi - Auckland

Arrive Auckland: Sunday, 8th August, 1971

Cost: \$886.00 per adult; deposit \$100.00

Due to cancellations we still need some more firm bookings to enable the Group to leave New Zealand. So book in **NOW**, do not **DELAY** and send in **YOUR DEPOSIT** so that the final arrangements can be made.

News from Switzerland

GENEVA HONOURS FRANK MARTIN

One of the most eminent Swiss composers, Frank Martin, has recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. Born in Geneva, he is now, however, living in Holland. To honour its illustrious citizen, the city of Geneva organised a special symphony concert, inviting Frank Martin to conduct some of his most famous works. Critics and audience alike were unanimous in their admiration of the vitality of the octogenarian conductor.

WAKING TO ORDER

In Switzerland, the land of punctuality, some 30,000 to 35,000 people are woken by telephone every day. In order to reduce the work of telecommunications staff, use has been made since 1953 of a waking system automatically executing orders, after recording by an operator. The automatic reception of orders marked a further step forward in the rationalisation of the making system; the instructions recorded on a perforated tape are transferred by an operator to an automatic transmitter. Recently, the Swiss town of Solothurn put into service the first fully automatic waking service in the world, which receives and executes orders without any human intervention. The telephone subscriber can use this service occasionally whenever required or for a specific period of time; a user who has asked to be awakened at a precise time each day can very easily cancel this order if exceptionally he wishes not to be called on a particular morning.

The Solothurn installation, made by a specialised Swiss firm, handles 350 orders daily; it has had such success that it is planned to extend it to other towns throughout the country.

SWISS BOOK BUSINESS DOING WELL

Owing to the smallness of her territory, Switzerland is not conspicuous for the exceptional size of her editions but, proportionally to the number of her inhabitants she nevertheless comes second in the world with regard to the number of titles published every year (6028 in 1969). It is quite remarkable to realise that while Switzerland imports a great many books, she exports almost as many: in 1969 imports of books amounted to 145 million francs' worth, while for the same period exports totalled a value of 130 million francs' worth.

These exports cannot help but grow, owing first of all to the excellent quality of certain Swiss specialities, especially in the field of art publishing and, secondly, to the regular strong participation of Swiss publishers in the most important international book fairs (Brussels, Frankfurt, Leipzig, etc.). In this connection it should be remembered that four Swiss books recently received awards at the Leipzig Fair in the "Schönste Bücher aus aller Welt" section and that the finest achievements of book publishers in the country will be on show at the 2nd International Exhibition of Art Books and Bibliophilism, to be held in Lausanne from 30th January to 7th February. (osec)

THE ORIGIN OF STREET SIGNS IN VARIOUS COLOURS IN BERNE'S OLD STREETS

If anyone keeps one's eyes open while strolling through Switzerland's federal capital he may have noticed that the street signs — unlike those in other cities — change their colours from street to street and from section to section. We have looked into this matter and found out that after the city's occupation by French troops (1798) the French General Schauenburg had issued an order that all houses were to be numbered and this was to be done separately within each section.

These sections had already existed before the French occupation. However, under General Schauenburg they were marked by special colours. Matte and Badgasse were assigned black; Nydeggestalden and Kreuzgasse were designated as the white section; the section of Kreuzgasse-Clock Tower was given green while the yellow section was from the Clock Tower to the Waisenhausplatz (Orphanage Square) and red was chosen for the section Waisenhausplatz - Bollwerk - Bubenberplatz (region of the trenches).

The names of the streets had also been in use already prior to the occupation (partly they date back to the 13th century!); however, during the occupation a French version of these names was devised. Only the numbers of the houses were missing. Schauenburg needed these in order to have lists made of the houses where his troops were billeted, for his officers and men were assigned quarters with individual families. This was, therefore, the reason why the general ordered that each house be given a number.

SIMPLON PASS — NOW OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND

Recently festivities took place in the Upper Valais to inaugurate the Simplon Pass road's availability for motorists throughout the entire year. About twenty years ago work was started to improve this road linking Switzerland with Italy which had been built according to Napoleon's orders. The road was widened to seven meters (about 23 feet) and many of its numerous curves were given new lines. Thus in 1960 the Simplon Pass road could be incorporated into the Swiss federal highway network whereby this north-south connection has been gaining more and more importance for the automobile traffic. In wintertime, however, the pass road has had to be closed for several months due to the danger of avalanches. To avoid this, one has tried to keep the road free of snow by building protective walls, tunnels and galleries. This proved to be a good solution. Soon even the last small bits of construction work will be finished so that road traffic across the Simplon Pass will be ensured also throughout the winter.

THE EXPANSION OF KLOTEN AIRPORT TO BE CARRIED OUT

The people of Canton Zurich gave the go-ahead to a vast programme of expansion of Kloten Airport with a considerable majority on Sunday, 27th September. The airport, which received 4.4 million passengers last year and which is expected to have a traffic of 13 million passengers by 1980, must be equipped with a new runway and elaborate new installations if it is not to reach saturation point within a few years. The cost of the works is estimated at 800 million francs. This will be shared by the Canton of Zurich, the Confederation, Swissair and the Airport Estate Company.

An initiative committee was formed around Professor Marcel Beck to combat the proposed enlargement. The Professor put forward a design of the airport that went against official plans. His proposals were that, if a new runway had to be built, it should be built parallel to the present one. All the plans under consideration for Kloten foresee a second runway making a large V with the present one. The only communes to support the initiative were those situated under the approach or take-off path of Kloten's air traffic — communes such as Regensdorf, Ruemlang, Niederhasli, Oberglatt, Wallisellen, Bassersdorf and Bulach. Swissair has received this popular verdict with relief, as the enlargement of Kloten was vital for its expansion.

The people of Canton Zurich voted on the same day in favour of noiseless-zone planning by the Canton. Cantonal decisions in this field will supersede individual communal will. Voters also approved the prohibition of night flights to Kloten. Their vote therefore stressed their opposition to noise and their readiness to take measures against it. They were not prepared, however, to sacrifice prestige of their canton as an inter-continental airline centre for the sake of a minority of noise-plagued communes.

SWISS WATER PROCESSING APPLIANCE

A Swiss firm specialising in the manufacture of water processing plant makes an ion exchanger used in many European research laboratories and firms. As everyone knows, ion exchangers supply a chemically pure water. The appliance in question, which is available in different sizes, supplies large quantities of completely demineralised water, whose purity is comparable to that of twice distilled water. Connected to a tap the device performs the purifying operations under the permanent supervision of a precision resistivity-meter worked by a 2.5-volt battery with a life of one to two years and without having to be connected up to the mains. The periodic replacement of the resins is carried out quickly and very easily.

The cost of running this ion exchanger is practically negligible, varying between S.Fr. 1 and 4 per 1000 litres. Apart from its economical running, the instrument has the advantage of operating completely reliably over a period of many years. (osec)

SCHWARZENBACH HAS ANOTHER TRY

James Schwarzenbach, the herald of a pedigree Switzerland pure of an invading foreign element, has launched a new initiative whose proposals are somewhat softer than those which were rejected by the Swiss people in a nation-wide referendum last June. Instead of chasing foreign nationals outright from Switzerland, he wants to make the capitalist establishment which uses them pay for their stay. Every firm not employed in agriculture or forestry, employing more than three foreign workers will have to pay a tax proportionate to both its foreign payroll and to the percentage of aliens in Switzerland. The money thus levied will serve to improve the environment. Schwarzenbach thus remains faithful to his anti-capitalistic and anti-materialistic bent.

"The growth of the national product is not everything", he says, and is ready to go a long way to prove it. Jack Rolan, a humorist writing in "La Suisse", suggested that "someone ought to start an initiative to prevent Schwarzenbach from launching initiatives".

GIANT-SIZE ROOF IN BERNE

The World Ice Hockey Championships are to be held in Switzerland, during the month of March 1971. In order to be able to hold these matches under all possible conditions, the Allmend skating rink in Berne, where some of the games will be held, had to be provided with a roof of a completely new kind: 13 arched beams of laminated wood, with a span of 85 metres each and weighing 30 tons will support a roof made of translucent plastic. After the championships, skaters in Berne will thus be able to practise their favourite sport sheltered from inclement weather under the largest wooden roof in Europe. (osec)

TECHNOLOGICAL SUCCESS OF A VAUDOIS FIRM

Paillard Co. Ltd., Yverdon (Switzerland), and Siemens Co. Ltd., Berlin and Munich, have just signed an agreement concerning the Hermes Writing Process (H.W.P.). This contract authorises the German firm to manufacture under licence the H.W.P. system invented by the big Swiss firm and to use it to equip some of its products. The new H.W.P. writing process using the electrostatic emission and deflection of a jet of ink proves particularly useful in cases where the multicopying devices known at present seem to have reached the limits of their possibilities. The H.W.P. uses the action of electric fields on the particles of a dyed liquid, for the purpose of tracing signs, letters or figures. It consists of a liquid discharge device comprising a cylindrical metal container, a nozzle supplied with ink and four deflector plates arranged symmetrically around the axis. The difference in potential between the ink and the container creates an axial electrical field which forcibly attracts out of the nozzles particles of ink carrying electrical charges, while the transversal electrical field, resulting from the difference in potential between the deflector plates, deviates the trajectory of the particles and makes it possible to trace any sign or line desired, through variations in the tensions.

The main advantages of the H.W.P. are its speed of writing (up to 70 signs a second), its absolutely silent running and the absence of mechanical movements. Its technical originality and its advantageous cost price make it ideal for many practical applications; it can be used with any machine for printing data on paper: typewriter or calculating machine, computer outputs, etc. A licensing contract has already been signed with Casio, the well-known Japanese producers of electronic calculating machines. Let us also mention that the H.W.P. was one of the industrial products on display in the Swiss pavilion at the Universal Exhibition in Osaka. (osec)

PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR YOUNG BRAZILIANS

Some sixty Brazilian agriculturists have just arrived in Switzerland where they are to undergo periods of practical agricultural training. This is the second stage of the training programme set on foot by the Swiss Farmers Union. In 1967, this organisation had already invited a first group of 60 students who, for the most part, returned to their own country at the beginning of 1969; some of them stayed in Switzerland for another year in order to learn all about the art of cheese-making. The new arrivals will work on Swiss farms for a year; this practical training, which will continue during the summer of 1972, will be completed, during the winter months, by a period of theoretical training in various agricultural schools throughout the country. (osec)