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NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

FIGHT AGAINST ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION: WORLD FIRST IN SWITZERLAND

A plant unique of its kind in the world has just started up in the canton of Aargau. Converting an area of some 25 sq. miles, nine sulphur dioxide (SO₂) detectors, a mobile station and two meteorological stations are permanently connected to an electronic calculating centre. Two million francs have been invested by three chemical firms in this new plant, which is designed to keep a permanent check on the sulphur dioxide content of the air (the combustion gas produced by fuels containing sulphur) and to allow industrial firms to take the necessary technical steps in good time whenever local meteorological conditions might lead to pollution of the air.

PARADISE FOR STEAM LOCOMOTIVE FANS

As steam trains become scarcer, fans are having to search further afield and Switzerland figures among their favourite destinations. The Brienz-Rothorn railway is the only one running daily to a fixed timetable during the summer months. The museum steam locomotive running between Blonay and Chamby above Lake Geneva is equally a big tourist attraction. A favourite with both young and old is the "Schnaagi-Schaagi" train running from Zurich Selnau to Sihlwald every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon in summer. The small red Vitznau-Rigi train, Europe's first rack railway also puffs away on certain summer days. When good weather prevails, the Sensetal train operates from Flamatt to Gümmenen in the Canton of Berne. The Waldenburger train runs from Liestal every third Sunday from May to October.

The following steam trains only run for group travel: that of the Rhaetian railway leaving from Landquart, the Bernese Oberland train from Wilderswil to Schynige Platte and the Brig-Visp-Zermatt train. On their wedding day, newly-weds enjoy a ride on the "Amor Express" of the Bodensee-Toggenburg railway.

FARM HOLIDAYS NOW AVAILABLE IN SWITZERLAND

If you want to discover what it's like living in the country for a while, you can now spend your holidays on a Swiss farm known as "Rüti". The farm in question is 300 years old and located at Abtwil in the countryside of Appenzell. The town of St. Gall is only three miles away and Lake Constance is quite nearby too. One week's full board and lodging costs Fr. 167.— for an adult and Fr. 104.— for a child.

A FILM INSTEAD OF A VIEW

When it's bad weather on the Titlis mountain (9060 ft), Central Switzerland's highest excursion spot, a surprise awaits its visitors. When dense clouds and fog ruin the panoramic view, the observatory is transformed into a cinema and for eleven minutes tourists can watch a film on the panorama and on summer skiing.

DIVING CHRONOMETER

A watch factory in Geneva last year developed and placed on the market a new diving watch which proved perfectly waterproof down to a depth of 2000 ft. during recent trials. This new chronometer, the "Sea Dweller", is equipped with a special valve which, while preventing water from getting into the waterproof case, allows any helium present to escape. In fact, this gas, without actually affecting the working of the movement, can get into diving watches during prolonged stays under water and cause them to explode when surfacing.

This watch is standard equipment at present for some 250 professional divers working for Comex, with which the Geneva firm has just signed a contract of mutually exclusive rights. Comex, a Marseilles firm, is one of the two biggest in the world in the fields of underwater research and projects. In June 1972, it carried out a simulated diving operation to a depth of 2000 feet, in which two "Sea Dwellers" were successfully put to the test.

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