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Swiss Television Networks

Although Swiss Television has just celebrated its 20th anniversary, it is still in a period of full development with regard to both programmes and the expansion of its technical installations. While the responsibility for the programmes falls to the Swiss Radio Broadcasting and Television Company (in accordance with the licence issued by the Confederation), the construction, running and maintenance of the networks of transmitters, programme distribution networks and the electronic equipment of the studios are the responsibility of the Swiss Post Office. At the end of 1973, the Swiss television network had nearly 520 transmitters and relay transmitters at 303 different sites. They are divided among the three linguistic regions of the country, forming in each of them three distinct transmitting chains. The large number of transmitters is dictated not only by the number of national languages; they are needed to ensure the TV coverage of the country, which is complicated by the tormented topographical conditions. The Netherlands, whose area is comparable to that of Switzerland, needs only six transmitters to cover the whole of its territory. The high number of transmitters required and the problems involved in their construction and electricity supply are the reasons why, in spite of 20 years of intensive expansion work, the stations are not all in operation yet. The 19 main and regional transmitters in operation in 1959 made it possible to reach 80% of the Swiss population. To raise Switzerland's TV coverage to 96.5%, as was the case in 1968, 120 extra transmitters and relay transmitters had to be put into operation. The building of 160 other relay transmitters made it possible to achieve a TV coverage of 99%, i.e. an improvement of only 3.5%. To obtain—by 1975 probably—complete TV coverage of the country, planned at 99.2%, another 50 transmitters and relay transmitters will have to be built. While at present all built-up areas of more than 500 inhabitants are reached, tests are being carried out to bring television to areas inhabited by 200-300 inhabitants. Such undertakings involve considerable expenditure. By the end of 1972, the Swiss General Post Office had invested 212.3 million francs in television installations, to which should be added large sums for buildings.—(SODT).

Swiss Boats for Soviet Rowers

For the 1974 World Championships, the oarsmen of the Russian National Team will be using Swiss racing boats. The Soviets have just bought 17 boats (skiffs, coxed and coxless pairs and fours, double sculls, etc.) from a naval shipyard at Wollishofen (Zurich, Switzerland). The latter, which has 30 employees, has specialised for some 30 or 40 years now in the construction of racing boats known all over the world. In fact, apart from the Soviet Union, several other countries have already bought boats from the Zurich ship-builder; in particular Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, France, West Germany, Italy, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and, naturally, Switzerland. Quite frequently at world championships or Olympic Games, half the medals are won by teams racing in boats built by the Wollishofen shipyards.—(SODT).

The world chemical industry has a total of 3.8 million employees; 2 million are employed in western Europe, 1 million in the United States and 500,000 in Japan. With its 68,000 workers, the Swiss chemical industry thus employs 1.8% of the world total of employees in this industry.—(SODT).