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SWISSMETRO

"Every Swiss could be in physical contact with any other Swiss in less than 90 minutes". This is the claim in a report about Swissmetro, this ultra fast train invented by the Lausanne engineer Rodolphe Nieth.

Swissmetro would be an underground railway network connecting all major Swiss cities by trains travelling at over 500 Km per hour. Trains would move on magnetic fields without wheels and the tunnels would be airless to eliminate air resistance.

Construction could start in 1996 and the first train between Geneva and St. Gallen could operate by the year 2004.

The great advantage of Swissmetro is that it could be built without any expensive and lengthy land expropriation, the whole construction being underground.

Travelling from one end of Switzerland to the other would take less time than it takes today to cross London on the Underground. Whether the idea of living only minutes away from any person in Switzerland you happen to hate, may well be a mute point for many.

HELICOPTER BATTLE

Competition between two helicopter companies has turned to tragedy in Wallis. Air Zermatt and Air Glaciers have been locked into a struggle for commercial supremacy for quite some time.

During a recent local forest fire between Turtmann and Gampel, the police called Air Zermatt for assistance whilst the fire brigade asked Air Glaciers for help. Sensing extra business, both companies responded to the calls and within minutes 5 helicopters were operating in a very restricted area of only 500 x 400 meters around the seat of the fire.

Unbelievably, the two companies did not use the same radio frequency, nor did all pilots understand one another as they spoke different languages. Therefore, coordination from the ground of the helicopters' movements was almost impossible. Visibility in the smoke around the

forest fire was very restricted and finally the accident happened. Water from a monsoon bucket released by one helicopter hit another helicopter operating nearby. The pilot of the second helicopter lost his control under the deluge that hit him, which also cut off his engine, and he crashed to the ground. He died a few days later in hospital. Indeed a very high price to pay just to get some extra business.

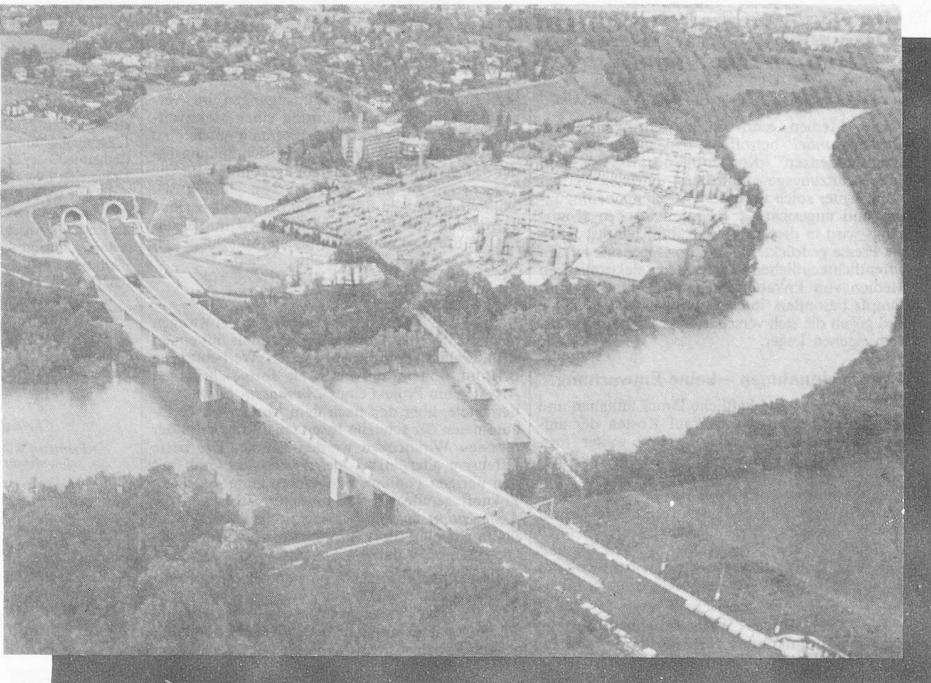
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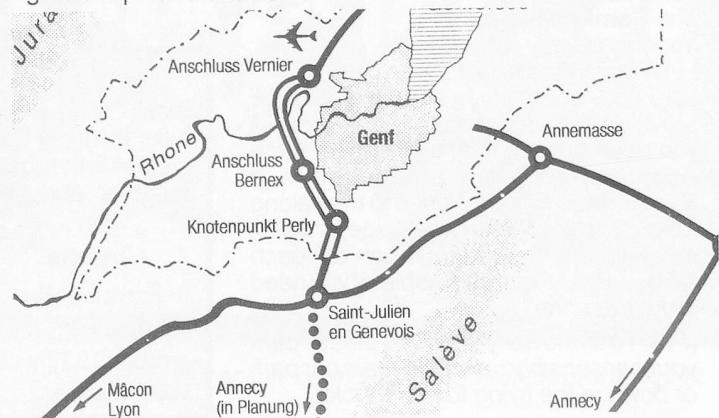
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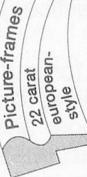
GENEVA BREAKS ITS STRANGLEHOLD

Very soon, transit traffic will no longer have to squeeze itself through the narrow streets of Geneva. A new motorway will at long last by-pass the city by linking the Lausanne-Geneva motorway with the French Lyon-Annemasse motorway as shown on the map. Construction of the by-pass involved the building of bridges and tunnels, a very costly undertaking as the picture shows.



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