

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 61 (1995)
Heft: [1]

Artikel: Negative voters
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-944981>

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AIRCRAFT ARE HIS LIFE

"Because of all this aircraft business, I have no time for a girl friend" says Kurt Glauser, 31, a builder from Utzenstorf (BE). Over a period of 10 years, it took every minute of his free time to build this replica of a B-29 bomber with a wing-span of 7 meters and weighing some 250 kg. He even gave up his holidays in order to save the 25,000 SFR it cost him to build this model. His next project: a B-38 Lightning with a wing-span of 15 meters.

BREAKDOWN DESPITE MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Recently the SBB-CFF suffered the biggest breakdown in its history when a failure occurred in its electric power distribution. For over 3 hours, the entire railway network of the Western part of Switzerland came to a total standstill, creating havoc with train schedules. This goes to show that modern technology is still no protection against massive break-

downs. Fortunately for the SBB, the incident occurred between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning, but early morning commuters were still affected by the breakdown until the trains could gradually be brought back to schedule.

Talking about the SBB, expansion has become very expensive. How costly new railway lines have become is being illustrated by the fact that the doubling up of the tracks between Onnens (VD) and St. Aubin (NE), a long-standing bottleneck in the SBB-CFF network, will cost half a billion SFR for a distance of only 10 km. This is 50 million SFR per km. On the positive side, the new tracks will allow speeds of up to 180 km per hour.

HOSPITALS, DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH

In Switzerland, according to a survey, one in-house patient in ten picks up an infection during his or her stay in a hospital. In many cases these infections result in the death of the patient or at least force the patient to a longer stay in hospital than originally planned. The extra costs involved amount to several hundred millions SFR per year.

The most affected patients are those in the intensive care units where the infection rate is up to 30%.

It is a bit upsetting to think that you go to hospital to get cured of one illness simply to pick up another one which, in some cases, is even more serious than the one you went to hospital for in the first place.

The famous Lucerne fountain called "Wagenbachbrunnen" which has stood near the central railway station for the past 60 years had to be shifted to make room for the new "Kultur und Kongresszentrum" which will be built there instead. This new centre will open in the year 2001 and in the meantime, the "Wagenbachbrunnen" will be relocated nearer the lake shore.



NEGATIVE VOTERS

The canton of Schwyz holds by a long shot the record of negative voting. Practically every referendum submitted to the citizens of Schwyz, whether it be a federal or a local one, meets with a rejection. So the local authorities of Schwyz have decided to launch an enquiry into why the majority of the people of Schwyz always seem to be voting in the negative.

Note from your Editor: A somewhat simple explanation might be that the citizens of Schwyz are such contented people and so happy with the way things are in their canton, that they simply do not want any changes. If there should be any other explanation, your Editor would be most surprised.

PTT NO MORE

As from 1997, the old established Swiss PTT (Post, Telegraph und Telephon) will be no more. Like in New Zealand, the Swiss PTT will be split into two different entities. The money making Telecom will become a limited company in which individuals can take up shares to a maximum total of 49%. This will also allow Swiss Telecom to enter into commercial alliances with Telecom companies of other countries. The money losing Post Office will remain in the hands of the Federal Government but with more commercial freedom. Transfers of profits from Telecom to the Post Office to cover the latter's losses will no longer be possible under the new arrangement.

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