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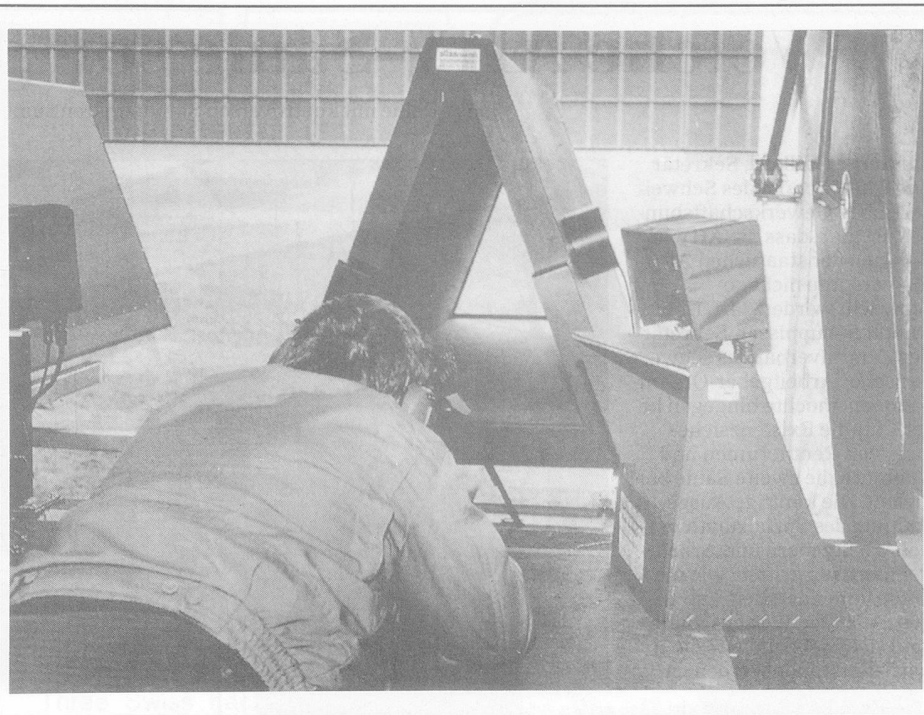
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FROM UNEMPLOYED TO SELF-EMPLOYED

Now and again, the Swiss hit the nail on the head (which of course means that more often than not they miss!). But in this particular case, they have really come up with a terrific idea. Instead of keeping paying people unemployment benefits, why not pay them and help them to become self-employed. This fantastic scheme is based on the following considerations: 1) An unemployed needs some capital to start a new enterprise. 2) It takes a while before the new venture provides him or her with a livable income. Accordingly, the Dept. of Social Welfare invites unemployed people to submit their proposals. If accepted, the Dept. will then assist the unemployed to obtain the necessary loan from a bank and it will keep paying the unemployed's benefit until the new enterprise is capable of providing a steady income to the (ex)-unemployed. At long last the unemployed who really wants to get off the dole can see a sporting chance to get back into a working situation. Up to now, unemployed persons were facing an impossible situation because: a) as an unemployed, no bank would lend them any money whatsoever. b) as soon as they registered a company, they were cut off from their benefits although they knew it could take months before they could hope of drawing any salary from their new venture. So many people had no other option than to stay on the dole. This new scheme is absolutely brilliant. It gives the unemployed who genuinely wants to get off the dole the chance to get back into an active and productive life. It would be high time for the New Zealand government to look more closely at such a scheme. But it needs someone first to point the government into the right direction.

CIBA AND SANDOZ PLAN SUPERMERGER

In what will be one of Europe's biggest ever corporate mergers, the Basle chemical companies Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz are to join forces. Probably between June and August, the two groups, whose joint turnover last year amounted to some SFR 35,900 million, will amalgamate to form the new Swiss corporation NOVARTIS. Subsequently, speciality-chemical activities will be spun off as a separate company, while operations in the field of construction chemicals will also be divested. Plans had already been announced for the divestment of the scales manufacturer Mettler-Toledo. In the sectors to be retained, Novartis will become the world's second largest pharmaceutical concern and Number One in the field of agrochemicals, as well as playing a leading role in the field of health food.



SHOOTING THROUGH A "TUNNEL"

The picture shows a new invention which drastically reduces the bang of a rifle shot. The triangular "tunnel" is made out of a special material which absorbs most of the noise. The "tunnel" also produces better scoring results mainly because the shooter can better concentrate on the target but also because, in sunny weather, the sight of the gun is always in the shade and the shooter is therefore no longer bothered by the glare. By the year 2002, all shooting ranges in Switzerland must abide by the new noise control regulations and this new "tunnel" will go a long way towards achieving this result.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

The new craze amongst the young Swiss is to go to "message parties" where you make contact with other participants by scribbling some notes addressed to the person of your choice. The process is simple. On entering the dance hall, you are given a number which you display prominently upon your person. Then you have a good look around for the "hunk" or the "vamp" you wish to get in touch with. You rake your brains to find something original to jot down on a piece of paper and once completed, you put it into a huge panel with some eight hundred numbered pigeon-holes acting as letter boxes. As messages are deposited, the relevant numbers start flashing on the panel and you can go and collect any messages addressed to your given number. Once the contact or contacts are established, the rest is up to you. This new craze is just a new version of what was called in the old days the "Postillon d'amour" where employees of the establishment picked up your messages from your table and delivered them to the persons you indicated at some neighbouring tables. So what is new? Not much except that the new version is simply a bit more impersonal than the old "Postillon d'amour" which had a nicer ring to it than the blunt "message party". Another twist to the "message party" is that anyone can use your number to

write a note to someone else (usually a rude or suggestive note) and stand back and see what happens. So if you see someone you hate at the venue, you can play this dirty trick on that person who will never find out who did it. That's the risk you take when you go to one of these "message parties".

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