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NEWS AT RANDOM

According to the latest statistics just published in Bern, there are now 21 telephones per hundred people in the whole of Switzerland. The canton of Basle comes first with the highest number of people having a telephone.

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Schiers, in the canton of Graubünden, benefits by 100,000 francs from the death of a former president of the local council. Christian Wilhelm, who died there in June, at the age of 82, made the bequest to the local hospital. He also bequeathed a further 25,000 to nearby Grüschen, where he was born, to cover the township's share in a new hospital building.

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The beach of Vevey-Corseaux, on the sunshine coast of Lake Geneva, is now being remodelled. An olympic swimming pool, a paddling pool for children, and a new landscaped and enlarged lakeside park will add to the increasing appeal of this Swiss Eden-Roc.

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Thieves stole 9,000 francs in cash from the Stadt Casino, in Basle. In the early morning hours they broke open a steel desk to get the keys to a wall-safe.

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A Swiss organist, Hans Vollenweider, has just completed giving a most popular course for organ at the University of Michigan.

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Zurich City Council has been asked to prepare a project for a pedestrian subway beneath the busy Bahnhofplatz. A motion submitted to the Council asks for the subway to be designed to allow "quick and safe passage" of 6,000 pedestrians an hour by modern methods such as moving stairways, and for it to be constructed as soon as possible.

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The police of Prilly, near Lausanne, have arrested a strange man of 30, whose behaviour was similar to that of an animal. Walking on all fours and eating tree leaves, the man had been haunting the forest of Jouxtens for the last three years. He has now been transferred to a mental hospital.

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A Winterthur housewife, Mrs. Lotti Egger, the mother of four children, has signed a contract with Decca — who will bring on the market the song she composed in honour of General Guisan.

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The State Council of Schwyz have forbidden the selling of flowers and souvenirs on their roads. Several people have complained that such a sale was harmful to cars and pedestrians alike by distracting the attention of drivers.

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A parachutist was killed at Montreux airport when he jumped from an altitude of 3,000 feet — and his parachute failed to open. He was Jacques Doyen, noted sportsman and parachutist, who was instructing new recruits to the Vaud Parachute Club.

Four sisters, who have been shoplifting by habit rather than by necessity since 1957, have been sent to prison by a tribunal in Basle.

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Dr. Rudolf Speich, chairman of the Swiss Bank Corporation and president of the huge Nestlé food combine, died recently in Basle, aged 70.

He was born in the Lebanon, where his father was a senior partner in the important house of Speich and Yared. He studied political science at Munich and Zurich, and came to London in 1914 for a firm of brokers.

Four years later he joined the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and in 1920 entered the Swiss Bank Corporation. He became chairman in 1944.

Dr. Speich was also chairman of the Basle Rhine Navigation Company, of chemical and leather concerns, and a director of the Swiss Federal Railways.

During the war he was a colonel in the Swiss Territorial Army.

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On 3rd September the citizens of Cartigny, in the canton of Geneva, will vote on whether a go-kart track may be built in their village. An official declaration by the municipal council of Cartigny gave approval to the plans for the karting track last 31st May. However, objections have been raised over the track by people who feel it would detract from the beauty of this village, one of the oldest in the canton.

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A speed limit of 20 k.p.h. has been imposed over part of the Lake of Sempach (Lucerne). The go-slow area — where water skiing will be banned — is along the lake-edge.

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Already this year one hundred thousand tourists have visited the famous Château de Chillon, on the Geneva Lake, where Lord Byron wrote his "Prisoner".

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Although the final financial result has not yet been announced, it is known that HYSPA — the Health, Gymnastics and Sport Exhibition — which closed recently in Bern, ran at a loss. Guarantees undertaken by the city and cantonal authorities of Bern and the Swiss Federal Government will be called on to make good the deficit. The exhibition authorities expected a total of at least 1,144,000 visitors. But the actual number was only 770,000.

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Fernand-Louis Blanc, journalist, radio-reporter, and specialist of the Vaudois dialect, died recently in Lausanne.

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Pratteln, in the canton of rural Basle, is now a town officially, as it now has a four-figure population. The local bells rang out as a signal for the local holiday declared by the municipal council.