

Transport through the ages

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paign against the French. The pony ride through the Alps was under the patronage of the Swiss National Tourist Office, which sent messages of greeting via the riders to the various local authorities and tourist offices along their route. In its message, it underscored the necessity of "becoming aware again of the wonders, values and beauties of nature in this age of machines and automation".

[S.N.T.O.]

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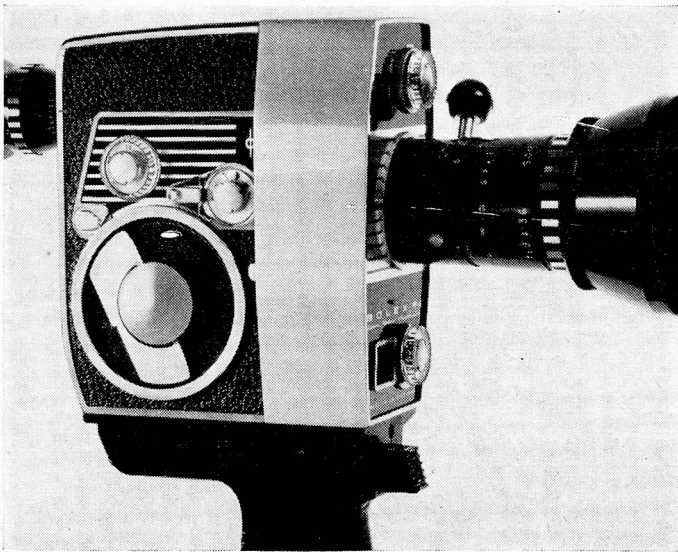
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TRANSPORT THROUGH THE AGES SWISS MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT IN LUCERNE

Safe tracks for 140 km/speed

All over the country, cities and communities are connected by railways. Maps and charts on this rail network and traffic service can be studied by the visitors coming to the Swiss Institute of Transport in Lucerne. An interesting demonstration piece is a section of a standard rail with gauge, connections, welding and contact spots, on steel ties, creosoted wood or concrete ties, as the location of the rail tracks may require. Also on exhibit are numerous sample pieces of heat-treated rails, some of it corroded and deformed, broken or bent, as the result of heavy use and traffic.

Swiss navigation in old times

"Four streams rush down from the mountains", from a poem by F. Schiller significantly greet the visitor as he enters the section of Navigation at the Swiss Institute of Transport in Lucerne, where this form of traffic on Swiss rivers and lakes is on display.

One of these major Swiss rivers is the river Rhone, entering the Lake of Geneva and leaving again at the City of Geneva. The once turbulent river was only usable in its lower part for floating beams of lumber. Discoveries of an ancient tree-trunk canoe from lake-dwellers and Latin inscriptions found on the shores of Lake Geneva denote that this lake was a traffic route already in Roman times and before. Military necessities also helped develop navigation on the big lake. But commercial lake traffic really took its start with the launching of the first Swiss steamship, the "Guillaume Tell" in the year 1823. Of this historic steamship which was in service till 1838, an exact model is in the Swiss Institute of Transport in Lucerne. "A pleasant mixture of mountains, rocks and lakes . . ."

With these words, the Swiss writer, Albrecht von Haller, in his famous lyric "The Alps" described for the first time the majestic beauty of the mountains, and thereby set aside the age-long fear from alpine glaciers and high icy peaks. Up to that time, scientists and explorers had occasionally climbed some high mountains, but avoided glaciers and ice-covered peaks. The inspiring poem of A. von Haller published in 1729 brought about a change, and later the ascent to the top of the Mont Blanc (highest mountain in Europe) in 1786/7 was the start of Swiss alpinism. It may be noted that the English in particular, conducted by experienced Swiss alpine guides did pioneer work in alpine climbing. In the Swiss Institute of Transport in Lucerne one may see pictures of these prominent alpinists, together with their ice-picks and other equipment often used in the first conquests of Swiss alpine peaks.

[O.S.E.C.]

SWISS TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN 1964

In 1964, Swiss telecommunications continued to develop in all sectors. 762,527,000 local calls were recorded (increase over 1963 = 2.3%), 790,792,000 trunk calls (+8.6%) and 49,328,000 three-minute periods for foreign calls. At the end of 1964, the Swiss telephone network numbered 1,388,680 connections and 2,131,521 phones (increase of over 6%). The telegraph service handled 1,055,572 inland telegrams (+2.2%) and 4,683,048 international cables (+1%). The telex too continued to develop at a rapid pace and the increase in traffic approached or exceeded 20% on all points. There were 4,246,711 inland communications and 9,806,150 international messages. At the end of 1964, the Swiss telex network was the densest in the world with approximately one link-up per 1,000 inhabitants (5,754 subscribers).

[O.S.E.C.]