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RECENT EVENTS IN SWITZERLAND

At the week-end of 11th March, the "5th Winter-Gebirgs-Skilauf" took place in the Obersimmental. In spite of difficult snow conditions 123 patrols participated with 640 members.

Prof. Jacques Piccard was present when the first piece of the cylindrical hull of the new Mesoscaphe "PX-15" was cast at the firm of Giovanola Frères at Monthey on 17th March. Representatives of the American company Grumman Aircraft and numerous journalists also attended.

The following week-end, Federal Councillor von Moos addressed the delegates' meeting of the Swiss Federation for Civil Defence at Lenzburg. He stressed the importance of organised protection and referred to the Confederation's subsidies which had risen from 14.5m. francs in 1963 to 80.7m. francs in 1966. Estimates for 1970 are 164.8m. and for 1974 208m. francs.

The competition "Swiss Youth on Research" was a great success, and the prizes were distributed in Basle, after forty-five University Professors and *Gymnasiallehrer* had judged over eighty entries. The four first prize-winners will be able to represent Switzerland at the International Science Fair in San Francisco. Their entries ranged from botany, satellite observation and chemistry to an ideal town centre. At the same time, the prizes for the best history compositions in the national contest for Swiss History were awarded at Engelberg.

The Swiss "Bauern, Gewerbe-und Bürgerpartei" celebrated its 30th and the Zurich organisation its Golden Anniversary at the Zuespa Hall in Zurich on 18th March. The former Federal Councillor Prof. Dr. F. T. Wahlen was amongst the speakers who addressed the gathering of over 1,000.

At the end of February, there was a First Federal Congress for Conductors at Herisau. The federation was founded in 1945 and counts over 700 members. The new President is Fridolin Buenter, Zurich, in succession to Hans Ritzmann, Lucerne.

500 delegates attended the Annual Congress of the International Interpreters' Federation in Geneva.

At the same time, Rigi-Kulm was the venue for this year's *Alpfahrtskonferenz*, attended by various cantonal *Landwirtschaftsdirektoren* and veterinaries.

At the first week-end in March, the Fourth Ecumenical Meeting for Protestant and R.C. graduates and undergraduates took place at Zurich University. The 400 participants discussed in particular the thorny problem of mixed marriages.

The Fifteenth German Medical Congress took place at Davos from 6th to 18th March and was attended by about 2,000 doctors.

At the 85th Federation Meeting of VOLG ("Verband Ostschweizerischer Landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften") took place in Zurich. Prof. Dr. W. Minder of the Federal Office for Health addressed the 800 delegates and guests on the protection against atomic dangers to agricultural production and food management.

The 37th International Motor Show, the *Salon* in Geneva, was opened by Federal Councillor Bonvin who not only referred to the problematic financing of the national road network, but also announced that the petrol duty would have to be increased by another 2 or 3 cts. in the near future. Well over half a million visitors

attended the show, 273,000 more than last year. There were 1,155 exhibitors from over twenty countries, and there was a special racing car display.

The two National Councillors Peter Duerrenmatt and Max Weber took part in a discussion at the Swiss Youth Academy on the Herzberg on 19th March. The main topics were total revision of the Federal Constitution, relation between state and economy and international relationship.

Switzerland has convened a European Conference on Molecular Biology in Geneva, at which statesmen and scientists from fifteen countries are taking part. For the second time, a hundred American newspaper boys visited Switzerland, the most efficient and friendly ones were chosen and given the trip by way of a reward. The Swiss National Tourist Office arranged the stay in Switzerland, and the hundred American papers concerned represent a total circulation of 12 million copies.

LA CHAUX-DE-FONDS AND LE LOCLE

La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle, two key centres of the Swiss watchmaking industry, will be the scene of the "Polish Weeks" scheduled to run from 6th May to 4th June. The programme includes exhibitions in the museums of both cities and the Fine Arts Museum of La Chaux-de-Fonds, chamber music concerts by the Warsaw Chamber Orchestra, a Chopin recital by Askenaze, performances by the Polish National Folk Dance Group, a festival of Polish films, as well as lectures and displays on Polish architecture.

[S.N.T.O.]

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