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PROGRESS WITH THE RAT EXTERMINATOR

In the 25th September, 1970, issue of *The Swiss Observer* we splashed across the Colony Page the heading *The extraordinary work of a Swiss inventor in London*. You may remember that I was referring to Mr. Charles Naegli and his discovery of a peculiar form of radio wave which could kill mammals at distance by affecting their pituitary gland.

Needless to say, the comments that this story received were two-sided. Some persons thought this was a wonderful invention, asked for voucher copies and showed them later to doctors and experts. Other people thought that I had been gullibly taken in and that my story was a lot of codswallop.

Well, these people should now ask two members of the Swiss Rifle Association, Mr. Armin Lötscher, owner of the "St. Moritz" in Wardour Street, and Mr. Werner Troffer, owner of the "White Horse" country club at Chorleywood, what they think of Mr. Naegli's rat exterminator. Both of them owned premises pestered by rats and mice. Within three days of installing the rat exterminator there was not a rat to be seen in the house, if not dead ones.

A temporary set-back for Mr. Naegli has been a fire in the factory at Blandford, Dorset, which was about to open a production line for the rat exterminator, but he has fortunately won recognition in many quarters. In particular, the University of Southampton have awarded him an M.D. and the Ministry of Environment has appointed him as consultant for rodent control.

He is at last publishing some of the results (but naturally not all the secrets!) of his solitary research in the *International Medical Journal* and *Acta endocrinologica*. So much for the unbelievers. . .

Mr. Naegli is presently working on a device for the deaf. The system that transforms the sound captured by the tympanic membrane into an impulse which the brain can receive in order to give the perception of sound is, in engineering terms, a highly com-

plicated "transducer". Mr. Naegli has managed to simulate this transducer approximately with an electronic device transforming sound into messages acceptable to the brain. He has replaced nerve bundles, neurones, the cochlea and other components of the hearing system with a complicated electronic circuit and integrated circuits.

In order to reproduce the behaviour of the various stages of the hearing systems he has had to make hundreds of measurements on a human brain. His prototype works, although it only conveys the sensation and not the *feeling* of sound to the brain.

Mr. Naegli could do with a few guinea pigs, although they have strictly nothing to fear! If any genuinely deaf person reads this and is willing to help Mr. Naegli, please contact me at *The Swiss Observer*.

Talking about rats, we read in a feature in *La Suisse* that there were as many rats as there were inhabitants in Geneva, or 300,000 rats, each consuming 400 grams of food a day. And Geneva is a modern and clean city! These statistics were however outdated the day they were published because two rat mates are capable of spawning nine hundred descendants in one year, gestation lasting only 20 days with this uncommon beast. If they were left to proliferate there wouldn't be a crumb of bread left for the people of the town.

Moreover, they are well-known carriers of the germs of typhus, plague, rabies, tuberculosis and still cause epidemics in less comfortably off parts of the world. But provided their numbers are kept under control, they *can* be useful in eliminating refuse and thus helping mankind in eliminating pollution.

On the other hand, if people want to fight off rats, they must carefully avoid spreading nature with the remains of their picnics. Aware of the danger, the health authority of Geneva has launched a vast rat extermination drive by making use of an anti-coagulating chemical. It will make a rat bleed to death at the least wound. As his comrades have a vampire nature

they will lick up the blood and catch the disease as well. Furthermore, when a beast dies it will have dried up and not pollute the environment by its rotting.

The poison is to be mixed with maize in carefully placed "candle-sticks" which the rats will be enticed to chew. Death takes about four days to come about and this is expected to outwit the rats, who are too smart to eat food that kills or sickens instantly.

The campaign is to be launched on two fronts, the areas shared by the public including the waterfronts and individual homes. The latter will require the co-operation of the public. It is certainly a domain where the rat exterminator could come in useful. It's time Mr. Naegli's machines were advertised in Geneva!

(PMB)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOUVELLE SOCIÉTÉ HELVÉTIQUE, no meeting until October.

SECOURS MUTUELS, no meetings until October.

CITY SWISS CLUB, no meeting until 21st September.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY, no meeting until 8th September.

SWISS RIFLE ASSOCIATION, no meeting until 5th September.

Wednesday, 25th August. Freemason's Hall, Edinburgh, 11 a.m. The pianist Claude Frank plays *Frank Martin's Eight Preludes*.

ASSEMBLY OF THE SWISS ABROAD. 27th-29th August at Brunnen.

Monday, 30th August. Usher Hall, Edinburgh, 8 p.m. *Ernest Bloch's Schelomo* presented by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

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