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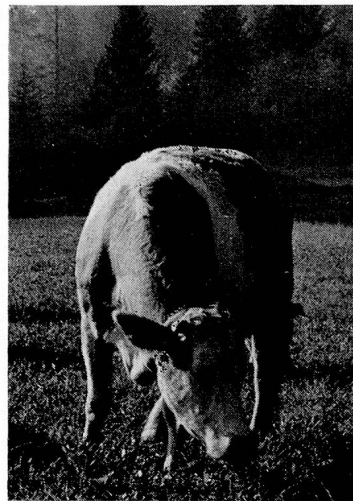
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It seemed to me that it was being kept and fattened for breeding veal livestock and later for home consumption. By being fairly small this Angus presented a great advantage. A heifer fertilised by it would be able to carry a calf, whereas the experiment would be impossible with a larger breed. This meant that the owner's cattle would be able to calve meety "half-Angus" calves at an early date, and thus calve more in their lifetime and produce more meat. A subtle calculation.

Spending a night at Bussy gave me a small taste of some of a Swiss farmer's problems. The owner of the Angus had lost a cow the previous week through "inflation". When it rains the rich fodder can ferment during the



*The Simmenthal Cow,  
backbone of Swiss livestock*

cow's digestion and an expansion of gases make the unfortunate victim burst. The symptoms are immediately recognisable: the cow lies on its side, panting with a huge belly. The cure is to puncture it with a *trocad*, a kind of bradde, which will allow the gases out. If the cow is too sick to be saved, it is essential to kill it and retrieve its meat quickly because the meat of a cow that has died thus is invariably foul.

A villager explained to me two standard possibilities of breaking the law in farming, stressing that neither of them paid well. One was to water milk. He related the case of a farmer in a neighbouring village whose cows produced exceptionally fatty milk and who for a very long time managed to mix 5 per cent of water. He was eventually caught because the doses of the non-fatty contents of his milk was not right. His wife held a bistrot in Moudon but had eventually to abandon it owing to local reprobation and the continual teasing of customers. The man could not serve a drink without the villagers taunting him with remarks like "make sure there's no water in my wine!" He emigrated to a village at the other end of the canton.

Another temptation for farmers was to falsify their breeding record, in particular, to state that a calf was born of a prize cow in order to increase its price. The cattle contest is still an important institution. Farmers will lovingly nurture their livestock to win a prize at one of these numerous regional events. They no longer ornate the walls of their farmsteads with prize certificates as they used to. The system has changed. But the judges are still as punctilious as ever. A beautifully proportioned Simmenthal cow with a tremendous milk-yield record may forfeit a prize for a small white patch under the eyes or a muzzle that is not quite of the right colour.

Thus, the official judgment is intent on keeping the Simmenthal cow at a high standard. This may conflict with economic expediency, yet it does not appear to arouse the ill-feelings of most farmers.

(PMB)

## COMMENT

### CONFERENCES. CONFERENCES . . .

Delegates from 70 countries sat in the *Palais Wilson* in Geneva for the 33rd session of the International Conference on Education. They were briefed in the comparative world expenditure on defence, education and health. UNESCO statistics compiled since 1960 demonstrated that, in 1967, the world (excluding China) had spent 173 million dollars in defence, 120 million dollars on education and 53 million dollars on health.

Total defence spending has increased by 150 per cent in the eight years to 1968, soaring from 54 billion dollars to 132 billion (in 1960 prices) in that time. 120 billion of the increase was attributable to the military budgets of developed countries.

While these 200 educationists and eight ministers were being told such staggering figures, the 4,000 delegates to the 4th Conference for the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy were closing their session at the *Palais des Nations*. As far as the layman can understand, these vast international confrontations are there to establish common guidelines which the technical and scientific delegations will put into practice when back in their laboratories and offices. The environment and the problems of security were expectedly those on which the most emphasis was laid. Many papers were presented on an international system of control for fissile materials.

Two speakers, one Canadian and the other Polish, spoke in plenary sitting to remind their audience on their particular responsibility and of their special position in influencing their governments in making wise use of the

for breeding any more. The reasons are obvious. A prize bull sure to maintain the breed at its high level costs a fortune and can at best cover two to three hundred cows in a year. Add to this that it must be fed and transported to each "meeting". Things are done more scientifically today. In Pierre-à-Bot (Neuchâtel) there is a sperm bank where the vital stuff is preserved indefinitely in refrigerated and chemical conditions. This means that a bull long since dead can continue to procreate.

A shot by a bull is rich enough to fertilise 500 cows and this explains why bovine procreators are in smaller demand today than they ever were. The travelling inseminator is a specialist from the Federation of Cattle Breeders. He has the record of the ancestry of the heifer he is dealing with and will inject a special matching semen. The calf that is born will also be registered if it is intended for milk production. In this way it is possible to optimise the selection process and learn more about its laws.

### Peasant problems

The Pierre-à-Bot sperm bank depends on the Federation of Cattle Breeders, a semi-official intercantonal organisation created for the purpose of protecting the interests of farmers. Its computerised "genealogy" of classified semen will help to offer its innumerable customers the best service that agricultural technology can procure. The centre does not as yet handle semen from foreign breeds.

The only bull in the village of Bussy was a Scottish Angus. I failed to understand with assurance the object of the exercise. It must have been the only Angus bull in a hundred miles.

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potentialities of the atom.

What is surprising is the apparently ineffectual results of these vast conferences on the progress towards peace. Four thousand eminent technicians and scientists from all over the world came to discuss the peaceful uses of the atom—that should have some sort of perceptible impact. Yet, less than a mile away another conference was being told that defence spending had almost trebled in eight years. These education-

ists, incidentally, were assembled to speak on "The social surroundings of schoolchildren and their chances of success".

The distance between the *Palais Wilson* and a Ghetto school is so infinite that one almost senses an element of luxury in these international congresses. They are necessary, but an awful lot of talking seems to be required to get the world moving for the better. (PMB)

## SWISS EVENTS

### FEDERAL

#### Recognition of North Vietnam

The Federal Council has granted recognition to the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam. As though this gesture required "excuses", the Federal Council explained its decision with a series of humanitarian reasons. In 1966 the Swiss Ambassador in Peking had first approached the North Vietnamese government. His efforts were continued by his successor. The present recognition is therefore the result of four years of diplomacy behind the scenes. Switzerland has also been involved in North Vietnam from a humanitarian point of view and Swiss Red Cross teams have operated there.

Many circles are asking why it was necessary to wait for so long to recognise North Vietnam. The recognition of partitioned states has always been a horny political problem. Strict neutrality would have required a recognition of both East and West Germany, North and South Korea and North and South Vietnam. So far, only the pro-West halves of these divided countries have obtained Swiss recognition.

#### Troops to leave Zurich and Geneva airports

The attempts on an El Al airliner two years ago, followed by the explosion of a Swissair "Coronado", climaxing in the hijacking and destruction of two airliners in the Jordanian desert led to the occupation by the troops of the international airports of Geneva and Zurich. They were first posted on 28th September, 1970. Each airport received a battalion. Since then over 18,000 men have performed their annual military service at one of the two airports.

Considerable equipment has been engaged in protecting them. At Geneva airport, ten watch towers were erected (three of which burnt down accidentally), 50 km of barbed wire protected its approaches, and machine-gun nests guarded its boundary.

All this arsenal is now to be moved away and both airports freed from militiamen. This follows the opening of a Palestinian office in Geneva and assurances given by the Palestinians. It would therefore seem that they have given up hijacking as a means to an end. The Military Department believed that the troops were no longer necessary under those circumstances. The visitors platform at Cointrin will once again be open, as it has been for some time at Kloten. The shopkeepers at these airports are relieved by the troop departure and allege that their presence has caused a substantial loss of business.

Some airlines, such as El Al, are concerned by this relaxation of security and have complained to the military authorities concerned.

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### A second TV channel for 1974?

In the course of a recent reunion of the Central Committee of the Swiss Broadcasting Society, a body covering the activities of the three linguistic networks, it has been decided that broadcasting staff should take part in the management of their services. Two commissions with equal representations from management and staff are planned to lay down the guidelines of this future participation.

The Central Committee has also established the principles which will govern programmes during the forthcoming federal elections. Every party will be given the opportunity to put its views on the air and programmes will be planned to inform the public on the scope of these elections.

A previous decision to install a second TV channel has been reaffirmed. The starting date has been fixed for 1st January, 1974, a delay which will give the Swiss Broadcasting Society the time to make the necessary arrangements. French-speaking Switzerland will also enjoy a third channel through which the Swiss Italian programmes will be relayed.