

Topics

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hundred firemen from Goldau, Arth, Oberarth, Küssnacht, Einsiedlen, Schwytz, Walchwil and Lucerne fought the fire for 6 hours before it gradually abated. The tank miraculously didn't explode. It had the neighbouring buildings would have suffered serious damage. But the precaution was taken to evacuate the people.

The "Sonne" hotel in Wildhaus in the Toggenburg was completely destroyed by a fire which broke out at midnight, trapping the guests and forcing them to jump for their lives from the windows. As there was a shortage of water firemen could do no more than to prevent the surrounding buildings from catching fire by spraying them with water.

TRAGEDY ON THE "WALKER POINT"

The first direct winter ascent of the 3,800-ft. wall of the "Walker Point" in the Grandes Jorasses ended as one of the most nightmarish tragedies of alpine history.

There were two men, René Demaison, 41, one of France's most experienced mountaineers, and Serge Gousseault, 24, a skilled enthusiast. The two men set out to attempt this awesome and perpendicular climb on 10th February, starting at 7 o'clock on a brisk morning. The weather was splendid and the two mountaineers expected to reach the summit within eight days. Foreseeing any unexpected delays, they had supplies of food for 10 days. They each carried 30 kilograms of supplies and equipment. Pitons, buckles, two ropes and a small gas stove to melt the ice into drinking water. Drinking was a most important discipline during such a prolonged effort. One litre in the morning and one litre at night. They had Vitamin C tablets and salt tablets, malted biscuits, dried meat, butter and mint sweets. René Demaison carried a small walkie-talkie set with which he called his wife, waiting down below at the end station of the aerial ropeway to be reassured every day.

The ascent started smoothly and the two climbers made swift progress under good conditions. When they pitched camp for their third night they had already covered half the distance. The next day the difficulties of the climb increased, but the two men covered 85 metres. That night the weather suddenly deteriorated. The temperature fell to -20°C and it began to snow. The thought came to René Demaison whether they should not turn back. The decision had to be taken now or never, as they were approaching the point of no return. Turning back would have presented some complications as the rock wall was now covered by a slippery layer of snow, but the difficulties that lay ahead were far greater. Gousseault scoffed at the suggestion and cheerfully invited Demaison to lead the way onto the 5th lap. The weather remained bad. The wind was

howling against the mountain and it was bitter cold. Demaison saw that Gousseault was not wearing his gloves and was hammering pitons with his bare hands. He told him to put them on. Gousseault complied grudgingly. It was easier to climb without gloves—besides, he had trained his hands to resist against the cold in long bare-handed ski excursions for months.

The next night they found a tiny slanting ledge in the ice on which they could hardly sit side by side. They spent the freezing night there, strapped against the rock and with their feet hanging in the void. Demaison was beginning to see white patches and feel pains in his fingertips. But for Gousseault the situation was becoming far more dramatic. His hands were swelling visibly and he was having great difficulty in pulling back pitons from the rock. Demaison chided him for leaving too many pitons behind, especially the flat pitons of which they were getting short. On the night of the 16th, after a week's climb and three days after the bad weather had settled in, Gousseault's hands had become completely unusable. They were swollen to three times their size and frozen. His right hand was entirely stripped of skin and harder than a piece of dead wood. If ever he should come out of this adventure alive, thought Demaison, then those hands would have to go!

They soldiered on for an agonising eight laps. Gousseault was desperately trying to loosen the rope from the pitons by pulling at the buckles with his teeth. Finally, on the evening of the 17th, they realised they could go no further. Demaison no longer had the strength to hoist his companion and Gousseault could just not climb any more. They pitched camp on a ridiculously small ledge and waited miserably for sunrise, huddled in their sleeping bags, while a biting wind was whipping at them.

Demaison decided to stay with Gousseault. He had given up sending regular messages to his wife a day earlier because the situation had become too serious for him to spend time trying to reach her with his walkie-talkie. His watch had furthermore broken down and he could not call his wife at the prescribed hours. The weather was worsening and the people at Chamonix were beginning to get worried. A first helicopter hovered around the two men as they lay helplessly anchored to the rock wall. Demaison made broad signs indicating that they were not climbing any higher. The helicopter flew away. Whether its pilot had understood Demaison's signs mattered little in the circumstances, as the 70 m.p.h. gusts lashing the summit of the Walker Point prevented the air-lift of a team of rescuers.

Demaison survived eight days on this ledge. It was less than a day's climb from the summit. The tempera-

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TOPICS

THE PROBLEM OF CRIME PREVENTION

While the problem of crime is not as acute in Switzerland as it is in this country, it is nonetheless, like in every "civilised" country, growing in amplitude and stretching the capability of the forces of law and order. The British Sunday papers recently estimated that British shops lost a million pounds a day through shop-lifting (most of which was committed by shop employees), the Swiss review of criminal statistics estimated the value of stolen goods in Switzerland to have risen to 30 million francs last year. One insurance company, the "Schweizer Mobiliar", which handles about 40 per cent of anti-burglar policies, had to answer claims of 13 million francs last year. Other statistics showed that the number of house-breaking incidents had risen in Zurich from 1,936 to 2,875 in ten years. Over 51,000 persons were charged in court last year, which meant that about one Swiss in a hundred was a proven "law-breaker". For forty per cent it was not the first conviction. Half the total figure pertained to driving crimes, but 19,374 people were convicted for crimes relating in the first place to theft and immorality.

St. Thomas of Aquinas believed that thievery was a product of poverty. However, twenty years of uninterrupted economic boom during which the rate of crime has steadily increased would seem to disprove this. The most general motivation for pilfering and theft is not poverty, but a general phenomenon of "covetousness". In an acquisitive society, one is "somebody" when one "possesses something". Everywhere one looks, there are incitements to consume new goods, durable or not. A study into 1,481 supermarket pilfering incidents in Switzerland showed that two-thirds of them had been committed by persons earning less than 10,000 francs a year. However, few of the persons convicted had been motivated by actual need. The same enquiry revealed that 70 per cent of them were women, but (to do them justice) they stole altogether 20 per cent less in value than the minority of male supermarket pilferers. Sociologists have long been bent on the causes of the present surge in crime. One Zurich specialist finds that driving and the possession of cars is an important component. Driving can exacerbate the lower tendencies of man and facilitate crimes through negligence.

The police of Zurich is one organisation overburdened by this rising trend. For every day that passes, the city police receives a list of 30 "wanted" persons. Half of them can quickly be discounted and only about half of the remainder found. A police official interviewed by the "Weltwoche" considered that, optimistically, 8 wanted

persons escaped the dragnet of the police each day. This meant that the files of "wanted" persons grew by 3,000 entries every year. In fact, every second crime only was cleared. This was not counting the multitude of petty thieves and misdemeanors, with which the police just haven't got the time to deal.

There is indeed little use, apart from the purposes of statistics, to declare a stolen coat to an overtaxed police office. The criminal police is increasingly diverted from the detection of serious crimes by a glut of driving offences, and cases belonging to civil law. Furthermore the CID spends more time at its desk than on the field, drafting exhaustive reports for impending trials. There is effectively too little time left for the job of hunting out criminals.

Swiss police are severely understaffed. In the town of Berne alone there is a shortage of 50 policemen. Salaries ranging from 1,200 to 1,400 francs a month and the absence of a five-day week are not of a nature to attract a flow of recruits. This could lead to a lowering of the requirements and a loss of standards at a time when criminals are becoming increasingly astute and sophisticated. The image of the criminal as an unshaven and square-jawed thug is not true anymore. Most of the crimes committed in modern society are clever and well calculated crimes by persons wearing honest faces. They are crimes which require a high standard of knowledge to deal with—crimes like share forgeries, balance sheet retouches, pay-offs, legal and managerial frauds, and so on. The inquest into such crimes can be so technical and time-consuming as to overtax a local police outfit completely. A typical economic crime might require a dossier of 20,000 pages needing two to three years to compile.

It is ironical that under these circumstances Switzerland should be without a special school for detectives. All Swiss detectives are recruited from the regular uniformed force. They follow a three-month introductory course in criminology and undergo a trial period of 15 months before being promoted detective. As criminals are becoming smarter, it is necessary that their pursuers should not remain behind.

One setback in the operations of the police in Switzerland is its federalistic structure. Every canton and some large towns have their independent police authority. A chief inspector at the Zurich Police willingly admitted that, from a professional point of view, he would like to see the whole police system federalised. As a citizen, however, he would be loathe to see such a thing come about. When a crime is committed somewhere in Switzerland, the culprit usually has the time to cross the boundaries of three police districts in half an hour. Another shortcoming of the federal system is the existence of 25 different arrest procedures. Owing

to the fragmentation of the forces struggling against crime, only the larger police units can afford the scientific equipment upon which crime detection increasingly depends. The main developments in this domain lie in chemical analysis, in powerful microscopic tools and in a systematisation of the science of fingerprints. Computers are now being used to compare and classify fingerprints and the Zurich Police is one of the only Swiss police organisations to have one. Psychology also comes into its own and helps crime detection through its discoveries of criminal motivation. A CID chemist is now able to determine with certainty whether a person found drowned or burnt has received previous bodily blows. He can also determine, for example, who has stuck a stamp on an envelope produced in evidence. Half the answers are in the laboratory.

(Weltwoche)

BALLY'S PROBLEMS

Swiss shoes are as intimately associated with "Swiss Quality" as Swiss cheese and Swiss chocolate. And by Swiss shoes one usually understands Bally shoes. This household name was representative of long-lasting, rugged and yet finely finished shoes. The firm has met with some financial difficulties. An article in the "Weltwoche" revealed that it had current cash problems and was finding it difficult, by the very labour-intensive nature of its quality production, to struggle against the onslaught of foreign competition. Although the Bally Holding doesn't publish consolidated profits, it is known these profits have remained marginal and that last year's turnover of 494 million francs was only 1.7 million francs better than the year before. This situation is partly due to a saturation of the quality shoe market. The public is showing a growing tendency to buy cheap shoes. The shoe market was estimated at 21.6 million pairs in Switzerland in 1966. It had risen to 26 million by 1969. However the imports of foreign-made shoes have made inroads into the market by increasing their share from 40 to 50 per cent during the same period. This has resulted in a diminution of 300,000 pairs a year in Bally's production. Swiss shoes are expensive quality products and this conflicts with the taste of the Swiss market. The average value of each exported pair of shoes was 39.60 francs, compared to an average value of each imported pair of 13.90 francs. Quality shoes are not only increasingly difficult to sell, they are increasingly difficult to produce cheaply. They require intensive labour and cannot benefit from rationalisation beyond a certain limit which is quickly attained. The European market has become very tight and competition very strong. Bally's direct competitor in Switzerland, "Shuh Hug", has had to close down two factories.

Two years ago Bally refused to merge with the American Melville shoe company, which means that it intends to soldier on alone. Part of Bally's difficulties have been compounded by its nepotistic management and by the constant shuttling of its former Director, Dr. P. Koller, between the Holding Company and the main factory at Schönenwerd. The company will have to try to survive while continuing to produce quality shoes in a period of labour bottlenecks and wage inflation. All this at a time when, ironically enough, the wealthy Swiss prefer to buy cheap and ephemeral shoes. Bally's long term objectives are limited to a 4 per cent increase in production, which can hardly be considered as the forecast of a growth company.

CIVILISATION FORCED UP THE LÖTSCHENTAL

The inhabitants of the Lötschental lived until recently 50 years behind the rest of the Valais. This wild and isolated valley, which branches off to the right of the savage Goppenstein gorge before the beginning of the Lötschberg Tunnel, will now be invaded by civilisation. A 7 km road 5 metres wide already brings the postal buses up as far as Fäfleralp. A parking for 7,500 cars is under construction in this hamlet. It may one day become another cosmopolitan winter-sports resort. The days of idyllic living and wild pastures are over. Many Swiss and conservationists indeed deplore that one of the last remaining live monuments to the "life of yore" should disappear; that urban crowds should spoil the silence of a natural sanctuary. But the villagers of Blatten, Kippel and Wiler see the transformation of their valley in a different way. For them the construction of a motorable road really means "progress". It was the only alternative to a departure for the Valley below. The road and electricity will utterly change their life and their work. They used to have to keep their cattle where their food was harvested and stored: In stables up the 1,800 metres high pastures of Fäfleralp, Gletscheralp and Gugginalp. They had to make the difficult and dangerous climb to fetch the milk and carry it down to their village every day. Now the cattle are kept in stalls in the village and all the hay is brought down in the fall along the new road. The peasants can now go and find work in the valley during the winter months, with the fortunate result that the population of the Lötschental which had suffered a steady decline for years is now beginning to grow again. Seventeen hundred people live in the valley.

(Tages Anzeiger)

THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY SPIKED TYRES

The use of spiked tyres during the winter months has become widespread on the continent. They permit cars to

have some measure of road-holding on ice-covered roads but can be very harmful to road surfaces. Following a motion by a delegate to the Great Council of Geneva, an enquiry has been conducted into the actual extent of damages caused by spiked tyres. According to its conclusions, each spiked tyre user causes some 15 to 20 francs worth of damages to road surfaces during the months when they are permitted. Surface markings in towns suffer particularly and can disappear within ten days when an appreciable proportion of motorists use spiked tyres. Over half an inch of tarmac can be worn off on bends, crossings and the stretches of streets next to traffic lights.

Buyers of spiked tyres tend to rely excessively on the arguments of the salesman. Spiked tyres have been proved to be less adherent on dry and moderately damp surfaces than normal snow tyres. Police reports have tended to show that the cases of skidding and loss of control on roads free of snow and ice frost were more frequent with spiked tyres. As a result, the Executive Council of Geneva will propose a reduction of the period in which they are authorised. Motorists are presently allowed to use spiked tyres during the seven months from 1st November to 30th April.

ARE THERE TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES?

A team of experts from Basle University has undertaken a study of the labour requirements of the Swiss economy in the next decade. Their conclusions would indicate that the country is at present producing too many graduates. Having built a "model" extending from 1960 to 1980 they find that the number of graduates and academically-qualified people will have increased by 120 per cent during that period. Considering that the actual volume of work available will not increase more than by 22 per cent, their conclusions are that the proportion of graduates in the work force will increase by five and a half times. The question is whether Swiss economy will be able to absorb such an influx of highly educated people. Basing themselves on findings considered as the "healthy norm", the Basle group, without committing itself, believes that the output of the Universities will have to be throttled down. They believe that the proportion of graduates employed in agriculture, industry and certain public services in 1965 was the "right" average and that the extrapolated increase of academically qualified manpower would inevitably bring redundancies. It is obvious that with the growth of technology the talents and qualification required by industry and commerce will increase. To take the example of doctors, whose shortage have long been a cause of concern in Switzerland, it is easy to realise that

with the prolongation of life and the increasing sophistication of disease and treatment, their task will increase faster than the growth of the population. The same can be said of lawyers. Their responsibilities will expand in proportion with the specialisation and the technical evolution of the walks of life in which they are required. The team of Basle experts didn't recommend as yet the institution of a "numerus clausus" in our higher educational establishments. It believed that an excess of graduates had the advantage of easing bottlenecks in education and leading to smaller classes. But the solution for Swiss economy will reside in the readiness of its technocrats to learn perpetually and keep abreast of the continuously changing methods of every sector. At first glance however, too many young people are attracted by the glamour of the higher careers traditionally opened to graduates. The economy needs more intermediate people and more skilled technicians. Contrarily to what happens in eastern European countries, every potential student in the West may choose the subject of his studies, irrespective of the actual needs of the country as a whole. This liberalistic concept may perhaps have to be put in question.

PREFABRICATED CHURCHES

A Swiss-German firm, "Horta Immobilien AG", has made a breakthrough in the use of prefabricated building elements. It has applied this principle to the construction of churches. There are at present six churches in Switzerland already built by the company at a maximum cost of 500,000 francs. These churches are in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Beringen, Birr, Zurich Alstetten, Seon and Zurich Affolten. They have been designed by a Swiss engineer, J. Wernle, and their building blocks are known in the trade as "Wernle elements". A church built by this method can be completed incomparably faster than by a traditional one. The "L 200" design used for the new Tituskirche in Affolten cost only 350,000 francs and was built within three months. The price included a vestry, an office for the minister, the steeple and electric bell, central heating, space for 200 faithful, an altar and religious decorations. The elements are of wood, steel and glass and lend a particularly sober and functional atmosphere to these radically new kinds of churches. Wernle elements are a long way from Baroque Art . . .

SWISS ORCHESTRAS

There is a surprising number of professional orchestras in Switzerland. "Federalism" transpires into the orchestral world with the result that the density of Swiss orchestras is probably the highest in the world. To name the most famous, there is the Orchestre de

la Suisse Romande, founded by the late Ernest Ansermet; the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich, founded by Hans Rosbaud and now one of the greats of European music under the leadership of Rudolf Kempe. There are furthermore full-scale symphony orchestras in Basle and Berne, smaller ones in Winterthur, St. Gall and Lucerne. Add to this a radio symphony orchestra based in Basle and another one in Lugano. There is also a blossoming of chamber orchestras. The Zurich Chamber Orchestra is world renowned. Other well known ones are the Collegium Musicum in Zurich, die Camerata Zurich, l'Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne and the Basler Kammerorchester, which has accomplished a monumental service to modern music under the direction of Paul Sacher.

The Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, which not only performs for concert halls, but for radio and opera as well, has, ever since the death of Ernest Ansermet, been conducted by a series of illustrious guest conductors, but now Wolfgang Sawallisch has been appointed as its new head conductor. He will take up this function within the next two years. The Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra gives no less than 60 performances a year, many of which are with choral accompaniment. It was conducted by Frank Martin himself on his eightieth birthday. The orchestra also participated in the musical prize award of the town of Zurich when the composer Wladimir Vogel received this distinction. The Tonhalle performed a number of premieres by Wladimir Vogel and Robert Suter, as well as many Swiss premieres of foreign works in its past season. The Ticino Radio Orchestra specialised in the symphonic work of Robert Schumann. Basle's Symphony Orchestra now offers its public a mixed programme. Berne Orchestra has searched into new avenues under the direction of Charles Dutoit and is particularly open to modern music.

Paul Sacher carried out the premiere of Frank Martin's "Trois Danses" for Oboe, Harp and String Orchestra with the Collegium Musicum Zurich. Hermann Müller created a new Harp Concerto by Peter Mieg with his Berner Kammerorchester. Another Swiss composer had an important birthday to celebrate: Robert Blum was 70 recently and the Zurich Camerata played his triple-concerto for string trio and chamber orchestra for the first time. The Tonhalle Orchestra performed the premiere of the string quartet for which he was commissioned by the Tonhalle Society.

The orchestral ensembles mentioned so far are the "household names". The list can easily be continued. A particular example would be the Ricercare Ensemble in Zurich. It specialises in ancient music and always gives its audience a small lecture on the history of the works being performed. Another example are the Swiss Groups

of the International Society for New Music. This is a very active movement with main representations in Basle, Geneva, Berne, Lausanne and St. Gall. It has assumed the ungrateful task of bringing the newest and trendiest developments of modern music to the musical public.

Much of musical life in Switzerland is carried out at local and regional level. But despite this expression of the local-mindedness which has been described as the "Swiss illness", cantons are beginning to co-operate in the field of music. The Stadtheater of Berne has presented its own production of Jan Cikker's "Das Spiel von Liebe und Tod" in Geneva's Grand Theatre. Zurich and Basle are planning their co-operation in the ballet. The Swiss State Opera, kept on the move by the indefatigable efforts of Armin Brunner, has performed Benjamin Britten's "Rape of Lucretia" in many cities. And Argau's Opera, which has ripened in a rejoicing way during the past few years, now not only performs Weber's arch-romantic work "Der Freischütz" from town to town in its own canton, but actually crosses the border of the neighbouring cantons of Zurich and Schaffhausen, and even goes to perform in far-away Chur.

One of the most striking novelties of recent Swiss musical history was the "Diorama de musique contemporaine" founded by the Orchestre de La Suisse Romande. It has increased its circle of membership and now includes the orchestras of Geneva and Lausanne, most of their choirs, the chamber ensembles and all the soloists of Western Switzerland as well as various musical groups from abroad specialising in modern music. The central theme of every year is the music of a particular country. Next year it will be Great Britain. But the Diorama concentrates modern music from many countries, not least Switzerland, and it is planned to extend it to Ticino and German-speaking Switzerland. There may be one day a "Pan-Helvetical Diorama", a national view on the music of the present and a platform of the Swiss activities in this strange and fascinating field.

(by courtesy of "Switzerland")

OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN GERMAN IN SWITZERLAND

There were already two kinds of German in 16th century Zurich: a spoken and a written language. The difference between the two was relatively small. They were both a localised "old German" different from the German in common use today. The printing trade was obliged by commercial reasons to adopt linguistic practices overriding communal borders. Its language however remained at first very close to spoken language. The only concession made to the "Common German" was the adoption of the new diphthong "haus", in replacement of the former

one "hus". But in the course of the 18th century the language of printed works gradually became closer to the language used in the German-speaking world. The Zurich Bible lagged behind this new trend and it was necessary to rephrase it a first time in 1668, and a second time in 1755, so that it should remain in keeping with the German spoken and written at large. This divorce between dialect and the written word led to a considerable sense of linguistic insecurity among Swiss writers. Albrecht Von Haller was forced to correct and improve himself from one edition to another. Bodmer had his writings corrected by a Leipzig professor.

The parallel existence of two quite distinct languages had become a serious problem by 1800. A new verbal consciousness resulted from this tension and the verbal dialect was both positively and negatively appraised by the intellectuals of the time. It was criticised for its relative roughness, for its static character and for the fact that it was difficult to understand for foreigners. Its supporters, headed by Mörikofer, were delighted by its earthy sound, by its freshness and immemorial roots and sought to establish its grammar so that it could be taught in the schools. Jacob Grimm was also sensitive to its genuineness but disagreed with Mörikofer by his feeling that the Swiss-German dialect could not reach the style of higher discourse and was therefore pessimistic over its future. Such a pessimism increased towards the turn of the century. The "Idiotikon", or first Swiss-German dictionary, was created with the intention of saving a condemned language. It was argued at about 1900 that the existence of two languages was too much on the people and that a common language, German, would impose itself universally sooner or later.

These predictions have not been borne out. They took insufficient account of the importance of the Swiss language in Swiss thinking and ignored the reality of the "geistige Landesverteidigung". There are two main schools of thought on the future of German-Swiss. One believes that "Hochdeutsch" should be maintained together with "Schyzerdütsch", each used in their respective fields and respected in their integrity. The other school, represented by the Alliance for Swiss-German, wishes to exclude German altogether and adopt a national Swiss-German, which the Swiss would also use in their exchanges with Germans.

What is the situation today? Swiss-German is used in every-day encounter, with the exception of Germans and foreigners. On the other hand, almost everything that is written is in German, with the exception of a very marginal literature in dialect. Speeches can make use of both German and Swiss-German. German would be used for an academic lecture, dialect would be used on a family occasion, and in between there

is a wide field where both can be used and where one speaker will choose German and another Swiss-German. But in the main, the use of Swiss-German has not only been preserved, but has definitely expanded.

The two languages are practically never used in their "pure" form. The Federal President hardly disowns his fellow compatriots whenever he speaks in German and, on the other hand, he uses a dialect when he addresses the Great Council of Berne which differs from German hardly more than by its intonations. Written language has in fact become more distinctively Swiss than at any time in the past 70 years, and Swiss-German has been getting nearer and nearer to German spoken language. In fact the tension between the two has begun to be balanced since the 1950s and there is now a relation between both forms of expression which has become more easy to master. The younger generations are no longer crying out against the disappearance of structure and substance in the spoken language because the defence of our national linguistic heritage is somewhat passed out of fashion. The Swiss are in the linguistically fortunate position of being able to use the gamut of possibilities offered by Swiss-German and a common German which is becoming an increasingly accepted language.

(*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*)

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