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SNTO NEWS

Switzerland comes up first with a chairlift turning around curves

The mountain resort of Schönried in the Saanen region has a world novelty in the field of chairlifts. It was developed by the firm of Bachmann in Steffisburg, near Thun, and it is a chairlift able to go around curves on parallel pulling ropes. This new invention has already aroused the interest of experts. At the time of writing it has been in operation for 1800 hours without any trouble. The first trials with single and double chairlifts of this type were made at Linden near Oberdiessbach in the presence of experts from the Swiss Federal Traffic Office.

The "Baco Ablenkrad" ("Baco" diverting wheel) is protected by patents in Switzerland and abroad. The biggest problem was to diminish the jerking to the side known to occur with polygon lifts. However, the polygon lifts of which only two or three have been built abroad are equipped with single chairs and run at a maximum speed of 1.6 metres (about 5 feet) per second, as one could not expose the passengers or the chairs to the considerable strain of an acceleration sideways and the jerk it causes. As the new track on the Rellerligrat is about two kilometres (about 1.25 miles) long, this meant that one should aim at reaching the maximum speed of 2 metres (about 6.5 feet) per second permitted by the authorities on a straight track. Maximum riding comfort was achieved due to suppression of torsion, as it is possible to pass the wheel at full speed.

At the same time, similar chairlifts to the one of Schönried, were built in Schwanden above Sigriswil, in Reutigen in the Bernese Oberland and in Saas Fee in the canton of Valais as

well as in Bosco Gurin in the canton of Ticino, a settlement of German-speaking "Walsers" in an Italian-speaking canton. All these chairlifts go around curves. Thus one may make detours around forests and it is no longer necessary to blaze trails in the woods. The trees can remain where they are and continue to add beauty to the scenery.

Reconstruction of Zurich's airport

Switzerland's largest building site at present is located at the northern edge of Zurich where no less than 38 different building lots make up the third phase of the enlargement of the inter-continental airport. During a press conference, the director of the Office of Air Traffic and some of the experts on his staff led journalists, radio and TV reporters to several tremendous pits from which within the next few years will rise buildings and innovations of a total value of several hundred million Swiss francs. The high pressure construction programme includes a large underground railroad station which, in the future, will be able to handle fast international trains, also a terminal subway station, a parking garage for 2,000 cars, a new airport with finger docks, two departure halls for jumbo-jet passengers and many other buildings, among them a special airport for private and sport plane traffic, situated entirely outside the main airport area.

The Swiss Hiking Book of the Upper Engadine . . .

The third of the "Green Series" of Swiss Hiking Books published by Kümmerli & Frey of Berne, specialised in geography and maps, contains as

much as 148 pages devoted to the Upper Engadine Valley. This region has become well known thanks to the painter Segantini. Giovanni Segantini is also the author of the introduction of this diversified series of road descriptions of 41 hiking routes, 75 walking tours and five longer hikes that would take several days each. One can read in it that: "The rocky ridges and the eternal glaciers blend with the delicate fragrance of the pastures and the deep green colour of the stone pine forests, and the blue sky is reflected in the lakes which are a hundred times bluer than the sky", which is quite an impressive description of this wonderful, unique scenery through which we are guided by Robert Pfister who has died in the meantime. This eighth edition of the Swiss Hiking Book on the Upper Engadine Valley was edited by P. Stoffel. It was published with the support of "Pro Helvetia" and "Bündner Wanderwege".

. . . and on the Val d'Anniviers and Val d'Herens

The Val d'Anniviers and the Val d'Herens are, according to Dr. Ignace Mariétan, among the most beautiful and pleasant ones in the canton of Valais. No. 12 in the "Green Series" edition of Swiss Hiking Books has appeared in a German as well as a French new edition. These books are published by Kümmerli & Frey of Berne, a publishing house specialised in geography and maps. This book published with the co-operation of the Hiking Roads Association of the canton of Valais in Sion, contains the descriptions of routes of 42 hiking roads with profiles and sketches of maps. It is the second edition to appear in German and the fourth one in French. Helen Beyeler saw to the translation into the German language. There are not only descriptions of the Val d'Anniviers and the Val d'Herens, but also of the Turtmann Valley and the Val de Nendaz. Cozy, old houses typical for the canton of Valais near the village church of Evolène are illustrated on the cover of both the French and the German editions.

NEW NATURAL RESERVATION

A new regional park is to be created in the region of the Joux Valley. Covering an area of about 32 square kilometres, the projected natural reservation will be situated in the communes of Chenit and the Marchairuz. It is one of the most beautiful and wildest regions of the Jura. Landowners and communes in the area are prepared to sign a convention forbidding the erection of new buildings and investments liable to alter its natural beauty.

(ATS)



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