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TECHNICAL ITEMS

gaseous effluents of its plants in Switzerland (namely Kaisten, Monthey and Grenzach—and shortly at the Klybeck plant in Basle). Considerable efforts have also been devoted on stemming the flow of fluid waste. The group has paid 18 million francs for a new, 21 million franc purifying plant near Monthey. Similar efforts are planned in Basle in co-operation with other chemical firms. The group has set up a special research department and intends applying stringent anti-pollution measures not only in its factories in Switzerland, but also in its factories across the world. Over 6,000 shareholders (among them a great many employees) and journalists were recently invited to witness the fruition of these efforts at the Ciba-Geigy works of Schweizerhalle and Kaisten.

Contrary to general opinion, industry is not the principal cause of pollution. In Switzerland it accounts for 30 to 40 per cent of water pollution, 15 to 20 per cent of air pollution, and less than 10 per cent of solid waste.

Sports league table

A Swiss newspaper read throughout the country asked its readers to pick their "best sportsmen" of the year. The paper was thus able to publish two tables, one for Swiss athletes and one for world athletes, showing the rating of the Swiss public for the performances of these competitors. The first three in the Swiss table were Bernard Russi (ski Sapporo medalist), Marie-Therese Nadig (two gold medals in skiing at Sapporo) and Fritz Chervet (European flyweight champion). Karl Odermatt and Mario Prosperi (half-back and goalkeeper of the Swiss national football team) were respectively in sixth and seventh position. Athlete and long-jump national record holder Neta Antenen was only ninth. Clay Reggazzoni, the racing ace, was 21st.

As regards world athletes, the Swiss rated Eddy Merckx (Belgian cyclist champion), Mark Spitz (swimming) and Lassen Viren (long-runner), as the three top athletes for 1972. A few Swiss appear in the world league: Bernard Russi (5th), Marie-Therese Nadig (12th) and Gerald Rigolet (ice-hockey keeper) (16th). Shane Gould was elected sixth best athlete and Valery Borsov seventh. John Akii-Bua came 14th.

The "Eurostar" for a CIBA-GEIGY invention

At the 14th International Packaging Contest, held in Barcelona, the European Packaging Federation awarded Ciba-Geigy the "Eurostar". This distinction, the most coveted in Europe in its field, was awarded in recognition of the Swiss firm's invention of a special polypropylene barrel with a capacity of 175 litres, for the transport and short-term storage of chemical products in granulated, paste or liquid form. Weighing only 22 lb., this barrel is very easy to handle. The space required is reduced to a minimum, since the empty barrels can be fitted into each other, then transported and stocked on palettes. 45,000 barrels of this kind are presently in use in several Ciba-Geigy factories. This patented barrel is now also being manufactured for the firm's clients.

Swiss watchmaking on display in Moscow

The International Exhibition of Watchmaking Machinery, Appliances and Tools "Inchasmash 72" was held in Moscow from 17th to 26th October, 1972. Organised by the Russian Chamber of Commerce, this exhibition forms part of the efforts being made to strengthen the economic and commercial ties between the USSR and western countries. Wishing to ensure Switzerland's industrial presence in Eastern European countries, some thirty Swiss firms took part in this event. One of them, Ebauches Co. Ltd., was represented at "Inchasmash 72" by three of its affiliated companies: Oscillioquartz Co. Ltd. (Neuchâtel) which, in addition to various types of quartz clocks, presented the model of a new atomic clock developed in its laboratories; Ebauches Electroniques Co. Ltd., Marin, displayed a whole range of electronic alarm and table clocks; finally, Technica Co. Ltd. (Granges) exhibited different high precision machines as well as measuring appliances.

Nestle in Greece

The Greek government has announced the signing of an agreement between the Swiss company Nestlé Alimentana and the Greek firm of Provigal, with a view to setting up a milk processing plant in Thessaloniki. The new company, known as Nestlé Hellas, will process some 150,000 tons of milk a year to start with, output being raised subsequently to 240,000 tons. The initial investments will total 10 million dollars to which another

3,300,000 dollars will subsequently be added. Nestlé Alimentana will provide fifty per cent of the capital in Swiss francs. The remainder will be supplied by Provigal in Greek currency and land. The Swiss company will also contribute the technical processes and production methods. The agreement stipulates that imports into Greece of condensed milk will stop completely once the factory *starts* production. At present these imports represent some 25 million dollars a year.

Growing expenditure on the environment

In Switzerland, public departments at present spend three-quarters of a billion francs a year on the protection of the environment. According to the latest statistics available, in 1970 the Confederation, cantons and communes spent on this sector (water protection, water supply, sewage disposal, etc.) 733.4 million francs (US \$193 million) i.e. 188 million (US \$49 million) more than the previous year. Per head of the population, expenditure on this sector amounted to 117 francs (US \$30.80) in 1970 compared with only 41 francs (US \$10.80) in 1965 and barely 17 francs (US \$4.50) in 1961. During the last ten year period 1961-1970, the Confederation, cantons and communes spent a total of 3,446 million francs (US \$907 million) on the protection of the environment, of which 2,659 million (US \$699.9 million) was accounted for during the last five years.

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The Swiss, big consumers of soap

In 1971, Swiss consumption of toilet soap and toiletries of all kinds amounted to 1.34 kg. (2.95 lb.) per inhabitant. Switzerland thus comes first among Western European countries, followed by Great Britain (1.31 kg.—2.88 lb.—per head of the population). The consumption of these products has increased considerably since 1970: by 19.6% for shampoos, 8.4% for toilet soaps and 4.3% for shaving soaps. In 1939, Switzerland's total output of soap and washing products amounted to 38,200 tons. It has more

than trebled in the last 30 years. In fact, the Swiss soap-making industry, which employs some 1,900 people, produced 117,800 tons in 1971, including 61,500 tons of washing products (10,900 tons in 1939). It had a turnover amounting to approximately 300 million francs (US \$78.95 million). If one considers the total consumption of soap of all kinds, including cleaning products for industry, Switzerland came third among European countries in 1971 with a consumption of 16.2 kg. (25.6 lb.) per head of the population, behind Germany (17.2 kg.—37.8 lb.), and the Netherlands (16.4 kg.—36.1 lb.).

and a new Nordic ski school, "Peu Péquinot", has been opened at Le Noirmont in the Jura mountains. Those who want to go in for a competition can inscribe for the Einsiedler "Volkslauf" or national cross-country race (16 miles long) on 25th February. Tougher long distance skiers should go in for the fifth ski marathon of canton Grisons which will be held on 14th March and its 26 mile long course will lead from Maloja to Zuoz. A new brochure on long distance skiing this winter has just been published and this can be obtained at the "Schweizer Skiverband", 3000 Berne 6.

TOURIST NEWS

"Klima in der Therapie" (Climate in the Therapy) a new SNTO publication in German

With the collaboration of the Working Group on Climatic Questions of the Federal Health Office and the Swiss Association of Climatic Resorts, the Swiss National Tourist Office published a paperback entitled "Klima in der Therapie" (Climate in the Therapy) at the end of November. This vademecum, written by Dr. med. J. S. von Deschwanden of the Bioclimatic Research Centre in Adelboden, is divided up according to 50 groups of illnesses. It contains indications on methods of treatment, information on a health resort's appropriate height and climate, the lengthy and success of a cure, etc. Over forty Swiss climatic health resorts lying between 600 and 5,400 feet are classified according to degrees of stress varying from 0 to 3. This new guide in German is especially designed for doctors and medical circles.

Long distance skiing: Switzerland's second national sport

Performance is not the only thing that counts with long distance skiing. This sport is equally good for one's physical and mental condition. More and more ski enthusiasts are taking this sport up since there is no age limit. Quite a few Swiss ski resorts have their own "loipes"—the most recent ones being those of: Grächen, Grindelwald, Les Marécottes, Mürren, Saas-Fee, Zinal and Zuoz (cross-country skiing track). Some runs are even lit up in the evening which allow for training when it's already dark outside, namely at: Albis (near to Zurich), Arosa, Bäretswil (Zurich Oberland), Disentis, Einsiedeln (the main long distance skiing centre), Gstaad, Les Cernets, Lucerne and Tiefencastel. Cross-country ski schools hold weekend courses in several areas. A three day course will be given by the cross-country ski school of Amman at Alt St. Johann for instance

"Klausjagen" a traditional festivity in Switzerland on St. Nicholas' day

The St. Nicholas procession at Küssnacht am Rigi is one of the most impressive customs pertaining to St. Nicholas' day (6th December) in Central Switzerland. On the Thursday before 6th December, over a hundred light-bearers or "Iffelträger" parade through the streets of Küssnacht followed by the Nicholas chasers: trumpeters, brass band and "Treichler" (youngsters equipped with large cowbells). The "Infuln" or Iffel" are mitres lit up inside and made of cardboard. Cut out in ornamental patterns they are illuminated from within by many candles. The demonic figures perform a sort of ritual dance through the crowds to the unusual rhythm of the music and bells. Only the "Chleper" or chasers can hold back the spectators by swinging their whips in the air, thus producing the effect of rifle shots in the night. All wait for the holy St. Nicholas to appear. Just before midnight, the village lights are lit again and the visitors warm themselves up with coffee or a glass of wine at the inns.

The first mobile Alpine hut in the world

A former carriage of the Bodensee-Toggenburg railways has been converted into a mobile Alpine hut.

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