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# The Swiss Observer

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## Comment

### SHOULD THE POLICE BE ARMED?

Two policemen who staged their own man-hunt emptied two magazines on a teenager who had just escaped from Bochuz penitentiary and killed him. This incident, which took place in August and which was reported in our last issue, was widely commented on and gave rise to strong criticism of the police. It also revived the debate on whether policemen should be armed.

One commentator noted that this tragic incident had led to the death of a young man whose only offence had been to commit a petty theft, and to try to escape from Bochuz penitentiary. That young man had nothing in common with the "mad dog" killers who recently escaped from a Colorado jail and were trapped a thousand miles away in Texas by an army of Rangers and armed police after having committed two murders and two rapes.

Guns should always be used with caution. Circumstances can arise where a policeman may lack the necessary reflexes, self-control or judgement to make proper use of his ordnance weapon. There are occasional incidents in Switzerland of accidental deaths due to police action. A well-known Yugoslav footballer was killed by an off-duty policeman in Sion two years ago as the result of a disturbance. On the other hand, it doesn't seem that the Police are better protected by carrying a gun. A policeman has just been killed in Zurich by a man caught breaking parking meters. He was shot inside a Panda car as the man was being driven to Headquarters.

Incidents of this kind in Britain never fail to trigger urgent calls for arming the police. The British "bobby" has an unequalled reputation, abroad as well as in the U.K. In no other country are men in police uniforms viewed with so much goodwill and affection. This is due in part to the British policemen's traditional courtesy and standards of behaviour. But it must also have something to do with the fact that they are unarmed and are thus covered by an aura of bravery and innocence.

The police in Switzerland aren't exactly loved at all, they are respected. The Swiss being a law-abiding and conformist people, have a remarkable respect for those powers that defend the law and decency. A gun must be the necessary appertunance of a man whose calling is to be respected. It is not so much an instrument of defence and of containing crime as an insignia, or an essential part of a cop's uniform. The problem of carrying a gun is also related to the differing attitudes in the two countries towards such weapons.

Guns are a common sight in Switzerland since every male Swiss has a most lethal weapon stored in a back-room for immediate use in case of war. This gun must be regularly produced at inspections, repetition courses and obligatory shooting exercises. Mothers, wives and children are therefore used to seeing their sons, menfolk and fathers go to the Army with an instrument that can kill at 400 yards. Pistols are also a common sight for the same reasons. There are thousands of officers in the Army who have been issued with such weapons.

As a nation of marksmen, the Swiss are therefore not too impressed by guns. Other countries marvel at the fact that ordinary citizens are entrusted with a gun at home and 24 cartridges in a sealed box to be opened in times of war. Should a Swiss want to use his gun for some criminal purpose, he could easily find cartridges at any shooting range on a Sunday morning. Surprisingly, the universal availability of an efficient weapon has hardly any incidence on the murder rate! To our knowledge some suicides are occasionally committed with the "Sturmgewehr", and some robberies have been committed with stolen guns of this type with sawn-off barrels.

Guns are of course not such a common sight in Britain. Laws on the possession of firearms appear to be stiffer here than in most other countries. But as far as arming the police is concerned, the relevant factors seem tied to the traditional and accepted image of law-enforcement officers. Although the rising crime-rate is bringing about pressures towards arming the police, many people in and out of the British police corps feel that this would kill the traditional bobby who has won so much

attachment.

Likewise, nobody except the dissident radicals seriously want the Swiss police to be disarmed since this would also modify the image of law-enforcement. A Zurich psychologist added that reactions of criminals towards the police depend on their knowing whether the latter are armed or not. A cat-thief in Britain is less likely to use a gun at pursuing officers but also more likely to get away since he won't be fired at. In Switzerland, shots are more likely to be fired with the occasional accident.

P.M.B.

## SWISS EVENTS

### FEDERAL

#### SWITZERLAND RECOGNISES THE INDEPENDENCE OF GUINEA-BISSAU

Switzerland has recognised Guinea-Bissau as an independent sovereign state. This Portuguese territory has not yet been technically liberated from Portuguese presence, and complete independence was planned for September. Switzerland is always careful in recognising new regimes or nations. In this case, Switzerland's recognition came after the great majority of member-countries of the United Nations had recognised the new State. These countries included the United States and the Common Market. Mr. Ernst Brugger, President of the Confederation, sent a congratulatory message to Mr. Luis Cabral, Head of the new African State which has waged war against the Portuguese for many years.

#### Gift of lorries to South Vietnam

The Swiss Government has offered ten first-aid vans worth a million francs as a gift to South Vietnam. The ten vehicles were presented by Mr. Gilbert de Dardel, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires in Saigon, to the South Vietnamese Minister of Health, Mr. Huynh Van Huon. They were to be immediately sent to the many refugee centres in the country. South Vietnam already had four vehicles of this kind supplied by the United States and West Germany nine years ago.

#### Switzerland short of energy

Switzerland's energy supplies are not guaranteed for the coming five years and the Swiss could be facing electricity shortages this winter. This warning was given by Mr. Willy Ritschard, Head of the Department of Transport and Communications in the German Weekly "Handels Zeitung". Mr. Ritschard added that the Federal Council was actually

preparing a Message which would ask Parliament for the means to order cuts in energy consumption. These warnings echo those made last year by Mr. Roger Bonvin, Mr. Ritschard's predecessor, and come at a time marked by an increasing opposition between conservationists and the promoters of nuclear power stations.

#### The Army ombudsman will have to wait

The "Army Ombudsman" for whose creation Mr. Helmut Hubacher, a Socialist National Councillor from Basle, has campaigned vigorously will have to wait. The special Commission entrusted with examining this issue has decided to shelve Mr. Hubacher's proposal until the Government's proposals on reform of the Military Code and Right of Appeal are known. The Commission also wishes to know more about the Federal Council's plans regarding the creation of an "Administrative Ombudsman" before making any recommendations on applying the idea to the military sphere.

The function of Ombudsman, a word which comes to us from Sweden, is to mediate between various parties and the authorities. The original promoter of a mediator for the Army in Switzerland was a lawyer, Mr. Gerhard Jakob, who claimed that the Swiss soldier's rights were insufficiently safeguarded under the present system. An ombudsman would presumably be named from outside the Army to examine complaints from soldiers and eventually bring them to the

attention of Parliament. A similar system is in operation in Germany, but the German Ombudsman, in a hearing before the Commission, said that the administration of this required about 70 persons.

So far, most circles and the Army have reacted coolly to an idea which somehow conflicts with the ideal that Swiss Army and the People are one. In any event, the Army Ombudsman wouldn't be the first in Switzerland: Zurich already has an official ombudsman and so have the insurance companies.

#### Berne would like to see new international organisations move to Canton Vaud

The Government has declared itself in favour of asking new international organisations wishing to establish offices in Switzerland to settle in Canton Vaud rather than in Geneva. The Federal Council's position on an issue of some importance to Geneva was expressed in a recent message published in Berne. The authorities of Vaud are known to be interested in new international organisations provided they are important outfits offering good employment possibilities. Geneva, on the other hand, considers that it can't cope with more international activity. There is a general feeling that welcoming more UN and other agencies would further complicate the housing problem and the social situation arising from the presence of so many international officials.

Switzerland's official policy has been so far to welcome international organisations. This policy remains unchanged but, in its message, the Federal Council says that it is "aware of the limitations imposed by the small size of our country and the importance of its population". The Government adds that it has refrained from canvassing for the presence of more international organisations. This policy will in fact be aided by outside developments. As far as the United Nations are concerned, for example, the trend is either to limit the number of international officials, or move new agencies to third-world countries. Thus the new UN Agency for the Environment, which could well have been opened in Geneva had it been created ten years ago, will have its headquarters in Nairobi.

But the Swiss Government continues to help the special fund to finance international buildings. In its message, the Government asks Parliament to approve credits of 56 million francs for completing, or enlarging, the Headquarters of the International Labour Organisation and the International Labour Union.

#### Too many committees

To save money in a period of professed austerity, the Federal Administration will look into the role and use of the 400 committees who at present advise the Administration, the

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Government and Parliament on a wide variety of matters. An enquiry will determine whether all these committees are justified and whether duplications can be avoided. Their strength will also be reduced to 15 or 25 men, depending on the nature of the committees. They are to remain extra-parliamentary bodies and members of the Federal Assembly will be allowed to sit at them only in exceptional circumstances.

## MODERN LIFE

### SWITZERLAND'S WEALTH

The Swiss are overflowing with material riches — such is the first conclusion that is derived from perusing the Union Bank of Switzerland's latest "Switzerland in Figures" leaflet. The 1974 issue of this regular publication available at the Bank's branches tells us that Switzerland's Gross National Product amounted to 41.94 billion dollars last year. Britain's GNP for the previous year had totalled just under 130 billion dollars for a nine times larger population. Thus the Swiss are on average three times wealthier than the British. This superiority is bound to increase as the Swiss standard of living continues to rise faster in real terms.

The leaflet breaks down economic statistics according to Cantons. Here are some of the more salient results:

Canton with the highest per capita income: Basle City 8,965 dollars, Geneva 7,612, Zug 6,660 and Zurich 6,539. The lowest income is for Appenzell Inner Rhodes 3,452 dollars. National average: 5,438 dollars a year (well over £2,000 for every inhabitant).

The highest cantonal budget is Zurich's 892.6 million dollars, the lowest is Appenzell Inner Rhodes' 9.3 million dollars (Note, Zurich's budget is slightly higher than Zaire's, an African country of 23 million inhabitants). Total cantonal expenditure amounted last year to 4.848 billion dollars, or 753 dollars per inhabitant. Excess of cantonal expenditure over income totalled 221.2 million dollars.

The highest density of bank branches is to be found in Fribourg, where there are 14.3 offices for every 10,000 inhabitants while there are only 4.4. offices per 10,000 inhabitants in Zurich, continental Europe's financial centre.

Bank savings are the highest in Zurich, where every person holds an average of 6,189 dollars and where there are 202 savings or deposit books for every hundred people. The national average for bank savings is 4,690 dollars per inhabitant. There are moreover 188 savings or deposit books for every hundred inhabitants, which means that the great majority of adults have two such booklets or have opened another for their children. The total of savings is higher than the average mortgage investments of the Swiss — 3,479 dollars

for every inhabitant. This shows that, so far, the Swiss have still believed in shares, in bonds, in gold and have not deserted these traditional values for the possibly greater security of property. In this respect, there is a fundamental difference in investment mentality with regard to the British. Although Swiss shares have small yields and property hasn't shot up as fast as in Britain, this traditional pattern still apparently holds true.

Foreigners account for 16.7 per cent of the total population. This percentage rises to 32 per cent in Geneva, 27 per cent in the Tessin, 22 per cent in Vaud, 21 per cent in Neuchatel, 19 per cent in Zurich and Schaffhausen, 18 per cent in Glarus, Basle City and Country, Aargau and Thurgau. The Cantons with the fewest foreigners are Uri, Obwalden and Appenzell Inner (7 per cent), Nidwalden 8 per cent and Fribourg 9 per cent.

### Women in the home — still the preferred lifestyle

A recent opinion poll conducted among a wide spread of Swiss men and women by a women's magazine spelt a severe defeat for the liberationists. It showed that 68 per cent of the Swiss people still believe that the most important role of a woman's life is to be exercised within the family setting. Educating one's children (28 per cent), creating a family (23 per cent) and offering a happy home to one's husband (17 per cent) appear to be the priorities of more than half the women of Switzerland.

### A third of hospital staff is foreign

Thirty-two thousand foreign persons are employed in Swiss hospitals, sanatoriums and psychiatric institutions. The total staff of these establishments hovered around 92,000 at the beginning of last year.

### HOW TO CHASE THE RICH AWAY

The Swiss Credit Bank Magazine last June commented severely on various calls for more cantonal property and income tax. This comment contained a list of the consequences which could hurt a Canton claiming too much from its more prosperous residents: The survey applied in particular to Basle-land which has recently increased its taxes on higher incomes.

- Immigration to the Canton is slowed down and with it the growth of revenue.
- Private businessmen are compelled to transform their businesses into limited companies.
- People of means will be encouraged to donate their property before their deaths. Losses will be supported by the Canton of residence if these donations benefit inheritors or donees living in another canton.
- The owner of a family business will be encouraged to evade tax for

himself and members of his family by distributing his own income to the latter.

Wealth could be transferred away from the high-tax Canton. Thus the holder of a fair amount of stocks and shares can sell these and buy a building in another canton with the proceeds. He can rent this building and be taxed on wealth and income at the rates prevailing in the Canton where this building is situated.

An high-income executive can agree with his employer to have his income reduced against an increase in pension.

In general, heavily burdened tax-payers will be led to consider this tax load as "immoral" and will not hesitate in loosening their "tax morals" by resorting to any tax-evasion means they can.

The magazine notes that politically-motivated calls for more taxes on the rich bear on increases varying from 6 to 20.4 per cent of income tax, and 10 to 200 per cent on corporation tax. These enormous discrepancies show the "lack of logic" and the partiality behind the many initiatives on the matter.

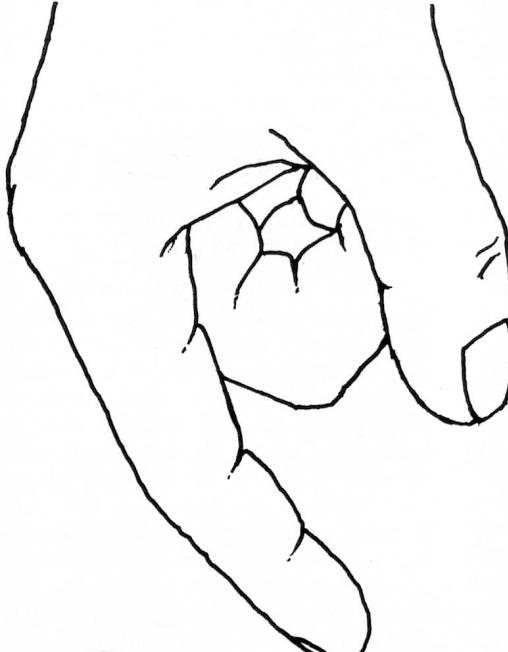
## JURA

### Third Force renews its call for unity

The Movement for the Unity of the Jura, or "Third Force" Party, which suffered a severe defeat at the 23rd June Plebiscite, has called on all parties to meet and reflect together on the ways of preserving the region's unity. Following the June Plebiscite, six French-speaking districts of the Jura may be separated: the northern three forming a separate Canton, and the southern three remaining inside Berne. A second plebiscite, to be taken in about three months, should confirm these results. Holding a special General Meeting at Moutier, the Third Force Party called for urgent reconciliation before that fateful vote to forestall a permanent division of the Jura. It called on both the Separatists and the Anti-Separatists to be more flexible and consider the coming months as a cooling-off period.

### Demonstration against secondary residences on the Franches Montagnes Plateau

Two hundred noisy Jurassian demonstrators milled in a café at Les Embois as an old farm in the Franches-Montagnes, one of the three Separatist districts of the Jura and an entirely agricultural area, was being sold by auction. The purpose of the demonstration was to prevent this property from falling into the hands of some prosperous businessman from Basle, Zurich or elsewhere. With some 380 secondary residences already dotting the Franches-Montagnes, the population is



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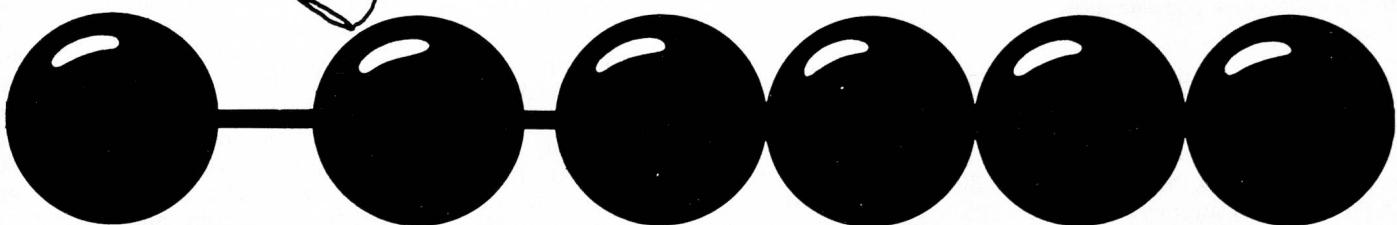
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getting increasingly concerned about preserving the ownership of its natural heritage. The auction began with a starting price of 56,000 francs. Three bidders, two men from the area and a lawyer representing a buyer from Tavannes, a town in a neighbouring district, were vying for the possession of the farm. As it happened, the deal was pulled off by one of the two *Franc-Montagnards* to the delight of the attendance which began singing "La Rauracienne", the Jurassian "anthem" dating from the days of the French Revolution. The demonstrators said that they would stage a similar action whenever property in the Franches Montagne was put up for auction.

## TOURISM

### Kite-flying the new popular sport in Switzerland

Kite-flying is definitely increasing in popularity in Switzerland. After the first kite-flying school at Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera proved such a success last winter, a three-day course will be held there this summer. It costs Fr.295 and applications should be sent to the Tourist Office, CH-7550 Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, Switzerland. Private and group instruction courses in kite-flying will also be held at the "Arc-en-ciel" Hotel in *Gstaad*, though bookings must be made in advance. Cost of two hours instruction for two: Fr.100 and for three: Fr.80 etc. Beginners and advanced pupils can get a good knowledge of kite-flying during a three-day course at *Interlaken* (cost: Fr.350). More information is obtainable from Fred Michel, Seestrasse 44, CH-3800 *Interlaken* (tel. 036-22 38 42), Switzerland. Another kite-flying school is intended for next winter at *Brünig-Hasliberg*. A week's attendance at the "Delta" kite-flying school at the Valaisan resort of *Morgins* costs Fr.560 (incl. 4 hours of daily instruction). Further information is obtainable from: Ecole de vol "Delta", CH-1875 *Morgins* (tel. 025-8 33 64) Switzerland. Permits are obtainable at all schools listed above.

### Special services for Invalid Travellers in Switzerland

Invalid holiday-makers to Switzerland will doubtless value the new Hotel Guide for the Handicapped. It contains information on the number of steps to hotel entrances, lifts, car parks, dieting, swimming pools, etc. in its three different sections: hotels for invalids in wheelchairs, slightly and severely handicapped persons. They will also find the "City Guide for Handicapped Persons" of great help. Issued by the "Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Invalidenhilfe" (Swiss Study Group for Relief to Invalids), (Feldeggstrasse 71, CH-8008 Zurich), it contains a key to

signs for the cities of Berne, Zurich and Basle, in several languages. It also gives information on various forms of access to museums, shops, theatres, cinemas, hotels, etc.

### Davos – Grace skiing

The Ski-lift "Geissloch" at Bolgen, Davos is operating on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 13.30 (Saturday from 10.00) for the benefit of grass skiers.

### For railway enthusiasts

The Electric Railway Society, 96 Antrobus Road, Sutton Coldfield, War., has published the 1974 edition of the booklet entitled Swiss Motive Power, a survey by C. W. Sex and B. J. Prigmore. The 27-page booklet is well illustrated and contains highly interesting information for the railway enthusiasts. Price 35p.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Steam over Switzerland" by George Behrend: This 48-page profusely illustrated book concludes photographs of the steam trains recorded on Argo Transacord ZTR 137 Stereo by Peter Handford. It is complementary to the record and describes the lines where the recording was made in 1972, the 125th Anniversary of the Swiss Railways. George Behrend, who is an Associate of the Institute of Transport and a member of the Guild of Travel Writers, has written several books about railway tourism, including Railway Holiday in Switzerland (still available in German but out of print in English). This book is of the same format as his popular book *Hof Steam* (90p) but with fewer pages to keep the price down. Publishers: Jersey Artists Ltd., St. Martin, Jersey, Channel Islands. Price: 50p plus 3½p postage.

### Interlaken – Beauty & Fitness weeks 29th September–20th October, 1974

Following the success of last year's event, Interlaken will again be organising beauty and fitness weeks in the coming autumn (29th September–20th October, 1974). The first two weeks will be reserved for ladies only. The all-inclusive arrangement at the hotel Beau Rivage, a first class hotel with indoor swimming pool, sauna, fitness room and beauty centre costs Fr.705 per person in a double room with bath or Fr.740 in a single room.

### Wildhaus – Autumn Curling Course 13th–27th October, 1974

In the Curling Hall inaugurated last year at Wildhaus, pre-season curling weeks will be organised from 13th–20th October and 20th–27th October, 1974. The all-inclusive arrangements for the Hotel Acker includes demi-pension terms, curling tuition and equipment and costs Fr.580 per person in a double room with bath or Fr.495 without bath. Application should be sent to Automobile Club

Suisse, Werdmuhleplatz 3, CH-8001 Zurich, Switzerland.

## TRANSPORTS

### Two-year delay in the construction of the Gotthard road tunnel

The Gotthard road tunnel, which was begun in 1969, will take at least two years longer to complete than planned. The future tunnel will be 16.3 km long and be the major civil engineering construction on the national road from Basle to Chiasso. It should have been opened to traffic by the end of 1977. Now 1980 is considered as the earliest possible date for the tunnel's operation. The job of digging through the mountain, which should have been completed by the middle of next year, is now expected to take at least two more years. Delays were caused by various geological factors. The rocks were either harder or softer than expected. Engineers had to tackle water leakage problems. All this will entail higher costs than predicted. The budgeted 306 million francs will rise to at least 500 million francs. The tunnel is to link Goschenen to Airolo and unload the Gotthard railway.

## Miscellaneous

### A Geneva lawyer manages the Ali-Foreman fight in Kinshasa

A Geneva lawyer, Mr. Raymond Nicolet, has taken in hand the organisation of the Ali-Foreman fight which will take place in Kinshasa on 25th September. Mr. Nicolet, an internationally-known lawyer, has been entrusted with all the organisational details involving contacts with the Zairian authorities.

The fight – which will be waged between George Foreman, the ruling world heavy-weight champion, and former world-champion Muhammad Ali – will be a historical event. There has admittedly been a fair number of "matches of the century" in this century alone, such as the fights between Jack Dempsey and Georges Carpentier, Rocky Marciano and Archie Moore, Cassius Clay (Ali) and Sonny Liston and later, Joe Frazier. But the fight that will take place on Tuesday, 25th September, at 3 a.m. British time in front of 100,000 Africans and President Mobutu at Kinshasa's 20 Mai Stadium will be without precedent because of the venue, and the prize-money involved (5 million dollars to each of the contestants). Zaire sees this as an event to the glory of Africa and the black man. A three-day festival will be staged before the fight, for which the two boxers are already training in central African countries.

Owing to the complexities of organising an event like this, Mr. Nicolet is supported by a team of specialists, and a firm of auditors. This is necessary since much of the capital invested in the fight has been raised by various Swiss groups.

Mr. Nicolet is closely in touch with "Video Techniques Inc" the American firm that launched the original idea and is organising the world-wide close-circuit TV transmission of the fight. He explained that he had accepted the job because of his admiration for President Mobutu. He said that he would do his best to keep the profits of the fight, expected to reach 10 million dollars, inside Zaire. Mr. Nicolet said that he would try to have this money used for the building of a hospital for handicapped children in Zaire.

#### A MINISTER TRICKED OUT OF 3,000 FRANCS

A minister from a Zurich lakeside parish was swindled of 3,000 francs by a man posing as "Prince Erick von Rastenberg". The man called on the minister claiming that he had been robbed of an important sum of money, his diplomatic passport and a ticket for himself and his "secretary" to Beirut, where he was to negotiate the return of ex-King Constantine of Greece to his country.

The minister made a casual check of the man's identity and then gave him 3,000 Francs (£4000). The "Prince" left with his "secretary" and the parson called at the Airport to confirm his visitor's identity. He asked for an employee whose

name the "Prince" had given him, but was told that the employee didn't exist. Realising that he had been tricked, the minister, who was not named by the Press, lodged a complaint with the Police.

#### Where international law comes in useful

It is not often that knowledge of international law can be helpful in business. A Swedish tradesman has found a perfectly legal way to profit by the recent agreement signed by Switzerland, West Germany and Austria on navigation on Lake Konstanz. This agreement states that waters away from the shoreline where depths reach 20 metres or more are "international". Consequently, the tradesman transformed an old passenger boat into a duty-free shop with a wide variety of groceries, cigarettes and drinks. In no time, he was doing roaring business on the international waters of the lake.

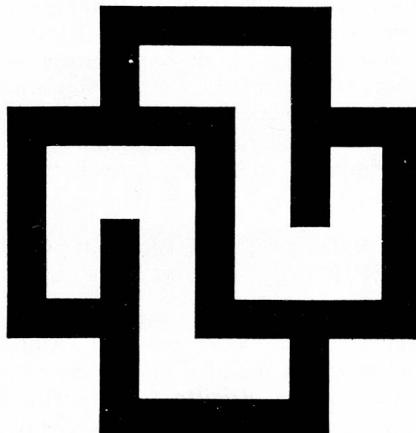
eventually expelled. The film was generally praised, and was noticed as one of the cheapest historical films ever made. An ancient street and an appropriately dated building were about its only sets. Among other well-noticed Swiss contributions were Alain Tanner's "Le milieu du monde" and David Schmid's "La Paloma".

The Swiss Cinémathèque has been refused a federal subsidy of 40,000 francs to save old Swiss films in its Archives. Some of these films exist in only one copy and cinema circles were angry at the Government's miserly attitude. Although 40,000 francs barely pays for a few yards of motorway, it was considered as too high a price to pay for the preservation of old freelance productions in times of official thrift.

#### Locarno Film Festival

The Annual Locarno Film Festival took place last month and enjoyed more success than ever. This was due to a new attitude by the organisers, who are becoming more selective and breaking from the traditional pattern of these festivals. Mainly, they have made an effort at reaching a wider public by the choice of their films, which remain small-scale productions by cineasts. The Festival opened with the "Extradition", by a young Swiss director, Peter von Gunten. He relates the story of a Russian revolutionary who found refuge in Switzerland in the early 1870s and was

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