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Swiss Radio International in action

Shortwave link with the world

– That's informative,
accurate Swiss
Radio International

"THAT was the news from Swiss Radio International, read by..."

So ends another bulletin on the Swiss shortwave service, Switzerland's non-stop, 24 hours a day link with the outside world.

But the end of the bulletin brings no respite for the busy newsroom, where reporters and sub-editors are already putting the finishing touches to the next one.

For news is the lifeblood of Swiss Radio International, with 35 bulletins being produced every day and night for beaming to the furthestmost corners of the world.

SRI is the external service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, based in Berne. Its two-fold task is clearly stated in the charter granted to it by the Swiss government – to strengthen the ties between Swiss living abroad and their native country, and to promote Switzerland's image around the world.

The staff of about 130 people include many non-Swiss journalists who prepare and present the foreign language programmes. All have been specially selected and trained to respect and conform with the service's ultra-high standards.

Listeners need to be informed quickly and accurately about major events all over the world. And this is especially important for Swiss who find themselves in other countries at times of crisis or conflict.

But speed is not the primary criterion. Accuracy, objectivity

and balance are more important.

From the banks of telex machines pours a constant stream of stories from SRI's own correspondents and all the world's major news agencies. But none is broadcast until it has been confirmed by a second reliable source. As a result, listeners everywhere have learned to rely on the accuracy of news from Switzerland.

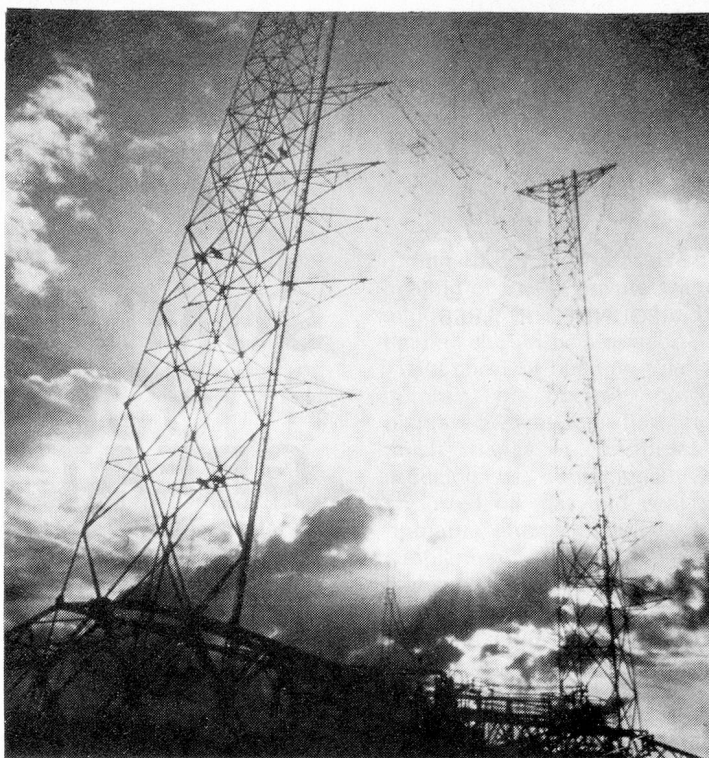
The programmes are transmitted from several centres in Switzerland. There are six transmitters at Schwarzenburg, two at Lenk, one at Sottens and one at Sarnen.

There is also a reserve centre at Beromünster, where two transmitters are standing by to take over in the event of an emergency.

For more than ten years the main feature of SRI's broadcasting policy has been to give as comprehensive a coverage as possible of events all over the world.

SWISS Radio International is on the air 24 hours a day. Four hours a day are devoted to programmes in English, which is fourth in order of coverage. Programmes in German account for six hours, French five and a half hours and Italian five hours.

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LISTENERS send up to 30,000 letters a year to Swiss Radio International. Most are from Europe – 8,500 – but there are also 4,000 from the Arab world, 3,000 from



This mammoth task has been carried out through "Dateline", the station's current affairs magazine. It is broadcast in English from Monday to Friday at 7am, 9am, 11am, 12noon, 1.15pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm and during the night at 1.45am and 4.30am

Since 1970 the four reporter-producers have travelled 400,000 kilometers and broadcast 9,000 interviews and reports. These, combined with 30,000 news bulletins and 5,000 commentaries have given a special insight into Swiss life and activity as well as reflecting major developments throughout the world.

The largest audience of the week is probably on Saturdays and Sundays, when SRI puts out special programmes. Among these are:

Talkback (first and third Saturdays): SRI's listeners' forum, a mixture of interviews and reports, interspersed with Swiss country music.

The Swiss Shortwave Merry-Go-Round (second and fourth Saturdays): A special programme for amateur radio enthusiasts presented by Bob Zanotti and Bob Thomann.

Dateline Review (fifth Saturday): This slot is reserved for a review of the major events of the month as reflected by Dateline, the current affairs magazine.

Inter-Action (second Sunday): The story behind Swiss organisations and international agencies based in Switzerland – what they are and how they work in the world.

Sunday Supplement (third Sunday): An in-depth expansion of selected subjects first covered in Dateline.

Jazz Panorama (fourth Sunday): Musical highlights from the world of international jazz.

Repeat Performance (fifth Sunday): This is a programme chosen by listeners, with repeats of features listeners have asked to hear again.

Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and a further 3,000 from North America.

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A GALLUP poll in the USA revealed that Swiss Radio International was one of only five shortwave stations in the world that listeners felt they could rely on.

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SWISS Radio International came second in the Top Ten list of most preferred stations in the French-speaking world,

according to the Club des Amis des Radios francophones du monde.

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THE North American Shortwave Association reported that Swiss Radio International was one of the most popular stations listened to by North American "hams".

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A BBC inquiry showed that in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Swiss Radio International had more than 200,000 listeners.