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A giant miracle – that's the Ganter Bridge

SEVEN staunch piers rise skywards, supporting a bridge almost half a mile long and 500 ft high. Giant main spans of up to 600 ft traverse the valley below, while an elegant S-curve of pre-stressed concrete soars over the Ganterbach, a mountain stream rushing towards the Rhone.

These are just a few facts and figures describing the new Ganter Bridge on the Simplon route, about six miles up in the mountains from Brig.

The inauguration of the bridge took place in December and in this land where tunnels and bridges normally occasion no surprise, this particular engineering feat called for a celebration.

Is it really an engineering miracle? It certainly is! If the novice is not impressed by the above data, listen to what the engineer has to say.

Not without a touch of pride, he informs us that the foundation problems faced on the valley's left slope were resolved in a novel way. This slope, composed of coarse gravel and moraine, lies on a base of weathered slate, the whole resulting in creep of some five millimetres per year.

Bridges, however, have their likes and dislikes and a bridge longs for stability the same way a driver hopes for a safe trip.

Hence special anchorage shafts up to 80 feet deep had to be provided to serve as proper "beds" for the imposing piers, whose stability and upright position could be guaranteed against creep by means of foundation adjustment.

The engineer may also just happen to mention that the 600 ft long main spans constitute a Swiss record.

After the building of the



High above the Ganter, the half mile long bridge

Simplon mountain route from 1949 to 1960, after the construction of innumerable avalanche-safe open tunnels, bridges, support walls and tunnels themselves, the opening of the Ganter Bridge, 4,756 feet above sea level, was the crowning event of long, hard work to secure a minimum roadway 23 ft wide on the Simplon route. It is a roadway capable of meeting the demands of modern traffic even in winter.

It is a first-rate tourist attraction. And if the driver himself wants to enjoy the scenery, the big gold PTT bus is there to give both him and non-drivers the opportunity to do so in comfort and safety.



Swiss postal coach in the Kaltwasser gallery