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Getting the news – by fair means or foul

NEWSPAPER sellers in Switzerland are never surprised to find the occasional 10-franc or even 20-franc notes when they empty their vending machines at the end of the day.

That's the equivalent of a customer in Britain leaving up to £3.75 for his copy of the *Daily Express* or *Daily Mail* – that is, 25 times the proper price.

The Swiss customers in question generally owe conscience money. And they settle the account anonymously.

A leading Swiss daily, the *Tribune de Genève*, reports that one of its agents operates 45 such vending machines in the Geneva area, distributing 55,000 copies of the newspaper every month – of which 35 per cent are not paid for in various ways.

Some customers manage to extract a copy of the newspaper without inserting anything at all.

Others – in one month alone – managed to obtain a copy by using such objects as a hair-grip, silver paper, a key, a button, a crucifix (made of plastic), toy money, a piece of cardboard, a matchstick, a safety pin, a United Nations guide badge, plus a variety of other worthless items.

Some customers do in fact pay – with foreign currency. During the month in question the unfortunate newspaper seller found coins in his machines from no

less than 32 countries.

The German, French and Italian currency he was at least able to change into Swiss money. But the other coins would not be accepted by the banks.

Why do customers do it? "Some are simply dishonest", reports the *Tribune*. "Some think the newspapers are already

casting Corporation has announced that increased radio and television licence fees are "inevitable" because of SBC's mounting deficit.

The budget for 1982 foresees a deficit of almost Sfr 70 million – about £20 million.

The SBC's central committee reports that the corporation's

Mr Bachmann has since left the Defence Ministry.

Mr Keiser – who was acquitted on five charges but found guilty of a sixth offence – received a suspended prison sentence of 30 days for "unintentional" violation of military secrets.

The prosecution had demanded a 16-month jail term for "intentional" violation.

The trial was held in closed court and precise details of the individual charges were not revealed.

The Swiss Journalists' Association said Mr Keiser had been unjustifiably punished for revealing "defects and disorders" within the Defence Ministry.

As a result, said the SJA statement, Swiss journalists now felt "intimidated and insecure in attempting to pursue their profession in the public interest".

Broadcasting from Mont Blanc

BROADCASTING has reached new heights in Switzerland – nearly 13,000 ft up on the slopes of Europe's highest mountain.

Radio Mont Blanc, transmitting from the Italian side of the mountain is aimed at a potential listening audience of five million people in French-speaking Switzerland and parts of France and Italy.

The new commercial station has its operating headquarters in Geneva and is partly financed by Swiss newspaper interests.

Broadcasts are mainly in French, although transmissions also include a one-hour English language news programme every evening for the international community in the Geneva area.

But both the French and Swiss governments consider the Mont Blanc broadcasts illegal, and the French authorities have already begun jamming transmissions on their side.

Switzerland's press, radio and television not only report the news – they sometimes make it as well. This round-up by Colin Farmer spotlights some of the recent happenings back home in which the media made their own headlines.

making a fortune out of advertising without having to charge for the paper.

"What they do not realise is that it's not the newspaper which suffers, but the unfortunate seller. Some people pay the money back a day or two later – into a machine operated by another vendor."

Radio and TV to cost more

THE monopoly Swiss Broad-

reserves have been exhausted and that the deteriorating financial situation is causing concern.

SBC director general Leo Schuermann said any increase in licence fees would cover only inflation.

The combined radio and television licence fee in Switzerland is currently Sfr 207 – about £60.

Sentenced by military court

THE Swiss Journalists' Association has issued a strong protest against the trial and sentencing by a military court of a Swiss journalist accused of "treasonable violation of military secrets".

The journalist, *Weltwoche* defence correspondent Marcel Keiser, was charged after revealing the controversial activities of Defence Ministry intelligence official Albert Bachmann.

In what became known as "the Bachmann affair", the official authorised the sending of a Swiss spy to military manoeuvres in neighbouring Austria – even though the two neutral nations liaise closely on military matters.

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