

The fascination of mountaineering

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FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE AT AN END

The winter of 1965/66 was one of the worst as regards the dreaded foot-and-mouth disease. Within four months, 934 herds with 49,523 animals were affected, and 33,902 heads of cattle had to be slaughtered. Federal Councillor Wahlen was the Chairman of a special committee to collect funds for the afflicted farmers. Over two million francs were collected, which, he said, showed the solidarity existing between town and country people.

Talking of sickness — influenza cases were particularly heavy during the past few weeks — over 8,000 were notified. Several cases of typhoid were registered in the Aargau, due to infected milk at a farm at Oberfrick. In the Canton of Zug, there was an outbreak of dysentery, and in Lucerne, a few cases of malaria were notified.

[A.T.S.]

THE FASCINATION OF MOUNTAINEERING

The more difficult a climb, the more attractive it seems to be. But, alas, only too often, alpinists come to grief or even fall to their death. All last year, we read of fatal accidents in the Mischabel Group, on the Jungfrau and the Salève, in the Gastlosen, on the Canardhorn and elsewhere. But this does not deter the mountaineers who are determined to conquer the most inaccessible peaks.

First ascents recently made include the West face of the Gertrudspitze in the Engelhörnern by two alpinists from Meiringen, Bruno Hohler and Martin Epp. Six mountaineers and Valais guides managed the first ascent in winter of the Tête Blanche in the Val d'Hérens. The North-East face of the Piz Bernina was conquered for the first time in winter by two Pontresina guides and a guide trainee from Poschiavo; it took them three days.

One of the most difficult climbs is the Eiger North face. After three young Swiss had successfully achieved its first winter descent on the last day of 1963, the first woman, a German mountaineer Miss Daisy Voog, aged 26, managed to complete the ascent of the cruel mountain last summer. German alpinists were also in the recent triumph of scaling the North face by the direct route. It was an international effort comprising five members of an American-British team and an eight-strong German team. The leader of the former, the American John Harlin, tragically fell to his death. Four Germans and a Scotsman reached the summit successfully on 25th March after a month of hard work. The route has been named after the American killed during the attempt.

There has been strong criticism; the President of the Swiss Alpine Club has deplored the way the trial was financed by the Germans, and that financial considerations might have clashed with normal prudence. But the accident to Harlin was a normal risk and not due to a daring gamble. The climbers went on after his death as a personal tribute to him. Their courage and the greatness of the mountaineering feat are beyond question.

Two expeditions outside Switzerland were successful last summer. A group of fifteen Geneva alpinists achieved several ascents in the Caucasus, and a Bernese expedition, a Solothurn team and a veteran team of Himalaya mountaineers all went to the Andes where several climbs were completed, amongst them the "Matterhorn of Peru", the Yerupaja (6,515 metres), scaled probably for the first time.

The mountain climbing profession in Switzerland is regulated by the cantonal administrations. The Swiss

Alpine Club takes part in the training of the guides. The total number of licensed guides, according to Cantons, is as follows: Grisons 135, Glarus 8, Obwalden 12, Uri 19, Ticino 3, Vaud 34, Berne 296, and the Valais 210; a total of 717. Of that number, of course, only the younger guides are actively employed. And there are unfortunately progressively fewer "all-round guides" in this age of specialization — i.e. men prepared to lead climbing parties in all seasons, for rock-climbing or under snow- and ice-conditions.

[A.T.S. and S.N.T.O.]

AN AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY FAIR IN LAUSANNE

The Swiss Agricultural Machinery Fair, organized by the Swiss Association of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers and Dealers, was held in Lausanne from 21st to 26th April 1966, in the halls of the Lausanne Fair or Swiss Comptoir as it is known locally. This strictly specialized exhibition in which a hundred or so exhibitors took part this year, giving visitors an overall view of Swiss and foreign production of agricultural machinery, occupied an area of 192,500 square feet. Visitors had an opportunity of seeing and comparing 160 tractors, 60 mechanical reapers and single axle tractors, 40 harvester-threshers, 40 loaders and 40 mobile presses.

[O.S.E.C.]

SWISSAIR NEWS

Swissair's total revenue rose in 1965 by about 12 per cent to 633.3 million Swiss francs from 566 million francs in 1964. Operating expenditure totalled 511 million francs, a 7.4 per cent increase over the corresponding 1964 figure of 476m.

Net profit for 1965 is 18.6 million Swiss francs compared with 14.9m. for 1964. Including the profit balance brought forward from the previous year, 19.4m. was put at the disposal of the annual general meeting on 29th April. The directors proposed to the meeting a dividend of six per cent plus a bonus of two per cent. At the same time the Board also proposed an increase in the share capital from 140 million to 175 million Swiss francs.

The introduction of new Douglas DC-9 twin jets on a number of European routes and higher frequencies, notably on long and medium haul services, are the highlights of Swissair's summer schedules effective from 1st April 1966.

From 11th August, DC-9 jets will operate London-Basle-Zurich day flights from Heathrow. On 14th August the new jets take over the night flights between London and Zurich from Gatwick. Also during August, DC-9s will start to serve Paris, Milan, Munich, Brussels, Barcelona and Palma. In October services to Hamburg will be added to the DC-9 programme. Owing to some delay in the delivery of the DC-9 aircraft, the above dates have to be revised.

Swissair now operates the London-Zurich and London-Geneva night tourist services from Gatwick; the London-Basle night flights will continue to go from Heathrow. In July Caravelles will take over the night flights to Basle which will then continue to Zurich.

With the introduction of DC-9s on the London-Basle-Zurich flights in August, all Swissair U.K.-Switzerland services will be by jet.