

A disturbing little item culled from the press

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A DISTURBING LITTLE ITEM CULLED FROM THE PRESS

We are grateful to Die Tat and its London correspondent Dr. H. G. Alexander for the kind permission to publish this rather thought provoking little article.

WGS

Our rich mother country is rapidly gaining the reputation of being a miser by some of her friends in the British Isles. This is because Switzerland pays not a single penny to the Richmond, Surrey-based German language school, even though 16 Swiss children are being educated there.

At the same time West Germany, which has maintained the school since 1971, emerges as more than generous. Any child of German mother tongue, irrespective of nationality, is accepted by the school, and paid for by the German taxpayer.

Headmaster Eberhard Schierschke estimates that each child at the school costs the German taxpayer Sw.Fr.4,000 to Sw.Fr.4,500 per year. Even Austria, considerably poorer than Switzerland, showed its gratitude for the fact that 22 little Austrians are educated at the school

by sending a teacher, at Government expense, from Vienna.

According to the article, an enquiry by the school at the Swiss Embassy in London received a reply to the effect that Helvetia's pockets were firmly sealed.

"Switzerland faces economic problems" the Embassy is alleged to have said. But, remarks Headmaster Schierschke, so do Germany and Austria so Switzerland's reaction is all the more disappointing.

Enquiries by *Die Tat* in the appropriate quarters in Berne revealed that nothing was known there about the school's request. The newspaper was told that the department's funds were limited and, in any event, they would subsidise a non-Swiss school abroad only in cases where many Swiss were being educated there. Sixteen children, as is the case in Richmond, were thought to be too few.

The article concludes on a slightly satirical note to the effect that Berne cannot recommend that its citizens in the United Kingdom send their children to the Swiss school — there isn't one.

SKI-ING INTO THE SWISS SPRING TIME

Ski-ing in the spring snow, when the pistes are no longer overcrowded, the days are longer and special prices prevail, is possible in many places in the Swiss Alps. The bargain all-in arrangements offered from the middle of March to the end of the season (except over the Easter holiday period) generally cover accommodation, half-board, instruction in alpine or nordic ski-ing and skipass.

Among resorts holding special weeks are: Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, Celerina, Chur/Brambrüesch, Davos, Flims, Laax, Lenzerheide, Pontresina, San Bernardino, St. Moritz, Savognin, Sedrun, Splügen, Vals, Braunwald, Unterwasser, Wildhaus, Engelberg, Melchsee-Frutt, Stoos, Oberiberg, Adelboden, Gstaad, Hasliberg, Lenk, Mürren, Saanenmöser, Wengen, Wilderswil, Zweisimmen (combined with tennis), Les Diablerets, Leysin, Crans-Montana, Fiesch, Grächen, Haute-Nendaz, Leukerbad (with its popular motto "from the ski piste into the thermal baths"), Ovronnaz, Riederalp, Saas Fee, Täsch and Zermatt.

Cross-country courses only are offered by Maloja, Sils i.E., Zerne and Zuoz. Cross-country ski-ing is also popular in the Jura. The guided ski-roaming weeks through the

Franche-Montagnes district until the end of March are called "Forfait équipe" while the 4 to 14 day "Forfait évation" arrangements have been devised for advanced cross-country skiers and families. Participants can decide their own routes and pace.

For those who enjoy high-altitude mountain ski-ing and don't shirk the effort of getting up there, the Swiss mountaineering schools offer a whole range of possibilities up to May or even into June. The basic principle in ski-touring is the stemming turn in deep snow. Easy, guided tours away from the pistes take skiers into such areas as the Parsenn district. The Ticino and Graubünden high-altitude routes are intended for average skiers while experienced high-altitude tour skiers choose the Mont Blanc route.

As an experiment the joint season ticket will be sold for Sw.Fr. 320 for the current winter season. Cross-country ski-ing is also a big feature of this region. Examples are by the Solleg ski-lift, in the Schwende district, at Gonten and on the northern slope of the Kronberg, where laid-out and marked trails and ski-roaming routes are available everywhere.

GO AHEAD FOR ALL WEATHERS

From 20th April Swissair's DC-10s will be able to land at Zürich under Category IIIA conditions when the airport's runway 14/32 opens for this type of operation. It means that poor visibility and inclement weather at Zürich will cause fewer flight diversions, with the resultant improvement in the punctuality and regularity of the airline's operations.

For the time being the DC-10s are the only part of Swissair's fleet qualified and equipped for Cat. IIIA. The limits set for the DC-10 operation at Zürich are 200 metres (600 feet) runway visual range, visibility with full runway lighting, and 6 metres (20 feet) decision height.

The features required for Cat. III operations at Zürich were incorporated in the planning of the new runway 14, opened in 1976, and the related installations. Thus, transition from Cat. II needed only some minor adjustments in taxiway lighting.

Although Swissair's DC-10s were certificated for Cat. IIIA when they were delivered, the application to the Swiss Federal Air Office for lowering of the weather minima to 200 m/6m was delayed until the summer of 1977 because of extensive modifications, streamlining of operating procedures and the definition of a maintenance concept.

Swissair started tests with the automatic landing system with a number of selected captains in September, 1975 and has been conducting them on a routine basis since April, 1976. Up to the end of February, 1978 nearly 4,100 automatic landings had been initiated within the normal flight operations pattern. With growing experience the success rate progressively improved and reached, for example, 98.5 per cent in September, 1977. In addition, all crews have completed an extensive Cat. III simulator training programme, approved by the licensing authorities. In introducing Cat. IIIA all-weather operations Swissair is able to profit from many years of Cat. II experience; it is at present the world's only airline with its entire fleet and all flight deck crews licensed for Cat. II operations.

Swissair's DC-9-80 fleet will also be equipped for Cat. III operation. Therefore, in the early 1980s almost half the carrier's fleet will be able to operate to these low weather minima at its home base and, it is hoped, at a number of other airports.

Further details on the above are available from: John Elliott, Press and Public Relations Officer. Tel. 01-734 6737.