

News at Random

Objekttyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1967)**

Heft 1532

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

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NEWS AT RANDOM

The new **Federal Office for Weights and Measures** was opened in Berne (Wabern), where radar instruments of the Police may be tested, satellites can be accelerated, and thermometers checked, as well as many other things. There are laboratories, a measuring hall with a 12-ton crane and 250-ton scales, a ray generator, measuring apparatus for propane, methane and butane gas, electric meters, and photoelectric microscopes and the largest centrifugal installation in Switzerland and other apparatus useful in industrial, scientific and military fields. There is a tower which contains a water tank on top and a metal-free laboratory on the top floor for experiments with short-waves. A visible connection exists with Berne University (Institute of Physics) which will be used for experiments with microwaves and Laser research.

Membership of the Swiss Trade Union Federation (1966) numbered 444,198 in 1966, over 5,000 fewer than in the previous year. The largest group are still the metal and watch workers (with 132,000 (-2,100), followed by the building and wood workers with 90,500, railway workers 61,400; next come trade, transport and food industry workers with under 40,000 (-1,300), the personnel of public services 39,000, PTT Union nearly 22,000, textile, chemistry and paper workers 16,000, typographers 14,000, clothing, leather and equipment workers 6,500. The rest include *Postbeamte*, customs staff, bookbinders and 484 *Seidenbeutelchweber*.

The 3,000 shops of the **Swiss Co-operative Society** reached a turnover of 159.5m. francs, 7.8% more than in the previous year. The **Moevenpick** restaurants have reached for the first time a turnover of 50m. francs, a record which had been predicted for 1970.

The **price of beer** has been increased by 5cts. a *Dreier*, and the Federal Council decided to also increase the customs duty on beer and brewing ingredients.

The Council of the Swiss Federation for Atomic Energy has decided to issue an English press bulletin "**Nuclear Newsletter from Switzerland**" to fill the vacuum which exists with regard to news of this science from Switzerland.

The **Communist Party in Switzerland** has dissolved on the decision of the majority of its members. It will be known in future as "Swiss People's Party". Its aim will be to try and find a solution to vital problems of national importance to Switzerland.

The second of the two pilots who were **forced by mercenaries to land** in Rhodesia in mid-July, was a young Swiss from the Valais, who had been in the Congo for two years. After he was released, he travelled to Brussels via Johannesburg.

In the middle of August, the **first motorway petrol station** was opened in Switzerland. It is near Koelliken (Aargau). The second stage of development will include a restaurant.

At Libingen near Buetschwil in the Toggenburg, Walter Meierhaus erected a memorial tower for Dr. Albert Schweitzer whose family originated from the Toggenburg. The tower now houses the **largest carillon in Europe**. The hitherto 40 bells have been increased to 60, amongst them the 2,200-kg Albert Schweitzer Bell.

The **ideal young Swiss woman 1967** was elected in July; Mrs. Milena von Below-Mauerhofer of Burgdorf has been chosen out of over 1,000 applicants.

The second **Swiss Mesoscaphe**, the PX115, has been started at Monthey. It has been ordered by an American aviation company, and this new submarine's first mission

will be a six weeks' dive of almost 1,600 miles in the Gulf Stream. It will take one year to build.

The next official **World Exhibition** will take place in Osaka, Japan, in 1970. Switzerland has agreed to take part, subject to acceptance by the Federal Parliament.

News has arrived from Moscow that a duck with markings "**Vogelwarte Sempach Helvetia z-4045**" was **found in Western Siberia** last year. The duck must have travelled 4,000km. It is considered a rare piece of luck that a report of the find was made in the country of origin.

The "**Pro Juventute**" Sale of stamps and postcards last December resulted in 6.36m. francs as against 5.54m. in 1965. Of stamps alone 64.6 million were sold. The Canton of Baselland had the highest sale *per capita* of population with 1.31 fr. per head. Appenzell-Innerrhoden was lowest with 42 cts. On the occasion of the 5-millionth Silva Book, the Silva Publishers made a donation to "Pro Juventute" of Fr.10,000.— for their youth and family service.

The Easter Gift 1966 to "**Pro Infirmis**" amounted to over one million francs for the first time. The organisation has been successful in intensifying co-operation between social insurance and private help to invalids, especially also for educational homes which do not fall under the invalidity insurance.

The **Swiss Spastics Society**, comprising 16 regional groups with over 2,000 members, has decided to open a permanent office in Zurich.

From the report on activities of the "Band" *Genossenschaft* for the **support of invalids**, it may be seen that an average of 66 invalids were occupied at the permanent workshops of the "Tscharnegut" in Berne. 57 people attended special training courses for assistant mechanics, of whom 20 found employment afterwards in

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private industry. 20 TB patients were employed at the Davos "Band" sanatorium workshops, and another 30 sold leather and textile goods.

The **world-famous** soprano Anneliese Rothenberger (German) resides in a small village in Thurgau called Salenstein, where she spends her short rests. She recently gave a song recital at the local gymnasium, and the proceeds were given to the school children.

The freemasons made it possible for the **Pestalozzi Children's Village** at Trogen to have a new house destined for young people who grew up in the village, but had to leave for their training. Now they are able to reside there also during their studies and training.

[A.T.S.]

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