

News from Switzerland

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Christchurch Swiss Club

Masquerade Ball (Gipsy theme): Friday, 12th November, 1971, at Ouruhia. **Please make this an all-out effort.** There will be a prize for originality. Tickets on sale from 1st November. Watch out for posters.

St. Nicholas Day: Sunday, 5th December, 1971. Make this a family afternoon. —J.F.

NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

THE "FREIBERGE" — A WALKER'S PARADISE

The plateau of the Freiberge, with its majestic fir-trees, pastures and meadows could be likened to a beautiful national park. Here and there, surrounded by nordic flora, a silvery pool lies hidden. The walker will certainly appreciate the unique charm of the Freiberge where he can wander wherever his fancy leads him.

This delightful region can be reached by the Jura railway from La Chaux-de-Fonds, Tavannes or Glovelier. The specially reduced "rover" ticket (Wanderbillett) is ideal for excursions combined with walking tours. It is valid throughout the entire Jura railway network including its coach routes and also for coach services between Tramelan, Saignelegier and Coumois. The "rover" ticket is available all through the year.

BUOYS FOR SUPERTANKERS

As the majority of ports are not equipped at present to take supertankers, either new docks or jetties must be constructed or else the tankers must be made fast to a certain number of buoys. But these solutions entail large-scale investments and present many technical problems. Now as long ago as 1961 a Swiss firm in Fribourg conceived a revolutionary mooring system employing only a single buoy and allowing vessels of 35,000 tons to be loaded and discharged. After computer studies and model tests the company has now developed a buoy capable of mooring tankers up to 1,000,000 tons deadweight. Already such buoys have been delivered for ships up to 750,000 tons.

The chief advantage of the system is that the moored vessel is able to move freely under the action of wind and currents during the entire loading or discharging operation. When a tanker arrives, lines are secured to the mooring hawsers and the floating pipes are then connected to the ship's manifold pipe. To discharge a vessel for example, the oil is led from the ship to the buoy through the floating pipe, and thence to the shore installations

via flexible underwater pipes and the fixed pipeline on the sea bed. Having completed the operation, the tanker can put to sea again after disconnecting the pipe and mooring lines.

The system combines high-level technology with relatively low costs, and demands only a minimum of maintenance. In view of all this it comes as no surprise to learn that this Swiss firm has installed mooring buoys for the major oil companies of all five continents, and holds more than three-quarters of the world market in this field. (osec)

SWISS PARTICIPATION IN THE "CONCORDE" TESTS

The Concorde airliner — a joint Anglo-French project — will attain a speed of 2240 km/h and is expected to enter service during 1972. For economic reasons a commercial airliner should achieve an operational life of 12 to 15 years, hence the construction of the airframe and the endurance and strength tests must satisfy extremely exacting requirements. Before series production commences, five prototypes will log altogether 500 flying hours plus an enormous programme of ground tests.

A Swiss firm — Sulzer Brothers of Winterthur — was entrusted with the installation of a large testing facility at Farnborough in Britain, which enables a series aircraft to be subjected to the stresses occurring in flight. (osec)

BRIENZ - ROTHORN

Switzerland's last cog-wheel railway, still operated by steam traction, has recently undergone a major overhaul. Five steam locomotives put into service in 1892, when the Brienz-Rothorn railway was inaugurated, are still in use. In 1933 and 1936, two further more powerful locomotives were added to this fleet. The time taken to surmount the altitude difference of approximately 6000 feet is only slightly longer than that taken by a modern electric locomotive. A journey to the Rothorn in an open carriage is an exciting experience not only for children but older railway enthusiasts as well.

FIT — NOT FAT — WITH "SPORT FOR EVERYONE"

In our present ultra-sedentary age with its lack of physical activity, more and more people are looking for exercise — as a pastime — even on holidays. This summer Engelberg, the mountain spa in Central Switzerland, staged every day until August 21st its ninth season (no less!) of popular gymnastic programmes for holiday-makers. Everybody took part in morning gymnastics to music, in games, swimming, runs through the woods, folk-dancing and exercises, with special equipment and fitness training thrown in and without any obligation whatever.