

Swiss consumption of plastics

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World's Oldest Serviceable Organ in Sion

The Basilica of Valere in Sion, Canton Valais, houses the world's oldest organ still in use — an instrument mentioned in chronicles as long ago as 1390. Under the direction of Maurice Wenger this exceptional organ will be played in six Saturday afternoon recitals of organ music. On July 17th the organist will be Markku Kotala and on the following Saturdays up to August 21 the organ will be played by John Searchfield, Bram Beekmann, Grazia Salvatori, Jan Valach and Edwin Peter.

Alpine Cheese Dairy: New Tourist Attraction at Chateau-d'Oex

The resort of Chateau-d'Oex, in the Pays d'Enhaut region, has a new attraction ready for its summer visitors. At the entrance to the village they can watch mountain herdsmen making cheese over a wood fire at "le Chalet". This is an ancient tradition that is still very much alive in the mountains as the figures show: in 1975, 946,000 gallons of milk and 169 tons of cheese were produced in the mountain regions. The cheese dairy is open daily from 9 a.m. to midday and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. until September 30th; from October to April it is open in the afternoons only. Throughout the year the resort offers cheese milk cures. For a further glimpse of the culture and way of life of the people of the district, take a look around the Musee du Vieux Pays d'Enhaut.

Swiss Consumption of Plastics

Swiss production of plastics in 1975 was 75,169 tons, a drop of 28.5 per cent as compared with 1974. Imports, amounting to 256,712 tons (674.2 million francs), fell off by 26.7 per cent in volume and 40.8 per cent in value, while exports, amounting to 78,165 tons (426.7 million francs), fell off by 16.4 per cent in volume and 21.05 per cent in value. Apparent consumption was 253,716 tons (a figure which takes no account of stock turnover), so that the use of plastics in Switzerland fell by 108,612 tons (-30 per cent), amounting to 40.3 kilograms per inhabitant, as against 56.8 kg in 1974 and 58.2 kg in 1973. If stock turnover is allowed for, the drop in consumption is less marked, amounting to about 20 per cent. This evolution has seriously affected the 12 plants producing synthetic materials and the 247 industrial plants and 780 small companies which transform these basic materials into finished products. Their turnover fell from 1,910 million francs in 1974 to 1,423 million francs in 1975, a drop of 25.5 per cent, due in part to an average reduction of 9 per cent in the price of plastics. This recession has forced some firms to introduce shorter working hours, while others have laid off hands. The number of employees has diminished by about 2,500, the total employed in the plastics industry thus falling from 19,010 to 16,600 at the end of 1975. Initial results available for 1976 seem to show that the worst is over and that a certain recovery has got under way in the past few months.—(SODT)