

The smart car

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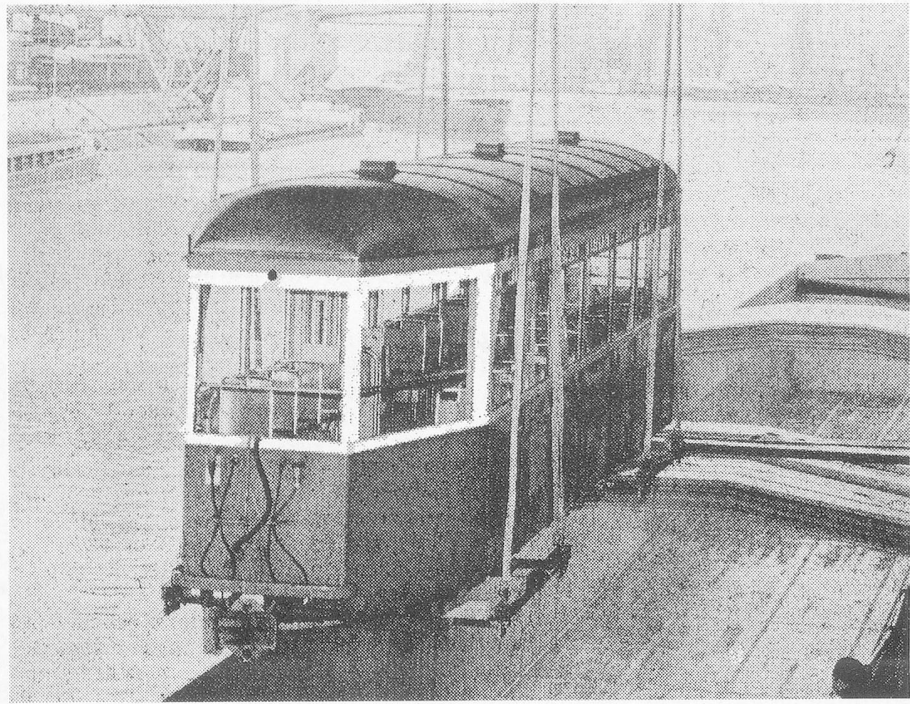
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NEW LIFE FOR OLD ZURICH TRAMS

When you haven't got the money to buy new equipment, you have to do with second hand stuff. Like New Zealand buying up discarded old Japanese cars, North Korea has recently purchased some of Zurich's old tram fleet. The picture shows one of the 40 year old trams being loaded onto a barge in

Basle for their transport to Vlissingen in the Netherlands where they will be transferred to an ocean going ship bound for North Korea.

POPULAR FIRST NAMES

If you think that the most popular first names for boys and girls in Switzerland are still Hans, Peter, Köbi or Urs or Heidi, Bettli, Trudi or Maria, you are totally off the mark. The Swiss have become quite international in this respect and adopted names as far away from the old tradition than you can think.

The most popular names last year were Michael and Melanie, believe it or not, at least as far as the German part of Switzerland is concerned. Other popular boys' names were Simon, Markus, Patrick, Pascal, Fabian and Kevin and for the girls: Sarah, Fabienne, Laura, Sabrina, Nicole and Jasmin.

What is rather surprising is that French names such as Pascal, Fabien, Fabienne and Nicole seem to be so fashionable in the German part of Switzerland.

In the French part, the most popular names were Kevin, and David for the boys and Melanie and Laura for the girls.

In the Ticino, the favourite names were Andrea (for boys?) and Giulia (for girls). In the Engadin, the most popular names were Adrian for the boys and Ladina for the girls.

The traditional names of Peter, Hans, Maria and Anna are increasingly pushed back into the role of middle names.

To prevent children from being ridiculed and handicapped through silly names given to them by their parents, names such as "Thömmeli, Puzli, Jogo and Pfüdi" have been turned down. In one case the Federal Court had to stop parents from naming their son "Wiesengrund".

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THE SMART CAR

Swatch and Mercedes-Benz, partners in the Swiss-German joint venture company Micro Compact Car AG (MCC) in Biel, have announced details concerning the production of their city-car. The temporary name, Swatchmobil, has been replaced by "Smart". The car will also carry the words "Swatch Car" and "Concept by Mercedes-Benz". Manufacturing is planned to begin at Hambach, France, in the second half of 1997. In 1998 some 200,000 mini-mobiles, ranging in price from SFR14,000 to SFR18,000 will be ready to be delivered to countries throughout Europe and later on to North America and the Far East. The car will be 2.5 metres in length and available with a choice of four different drives: a three cylinder petrol unit with turbo, the same with diesel, an electric battery-powered hub motor as well as a diesel and electrically powered hybrid system.

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