

Switzerland, safest debtor in the world

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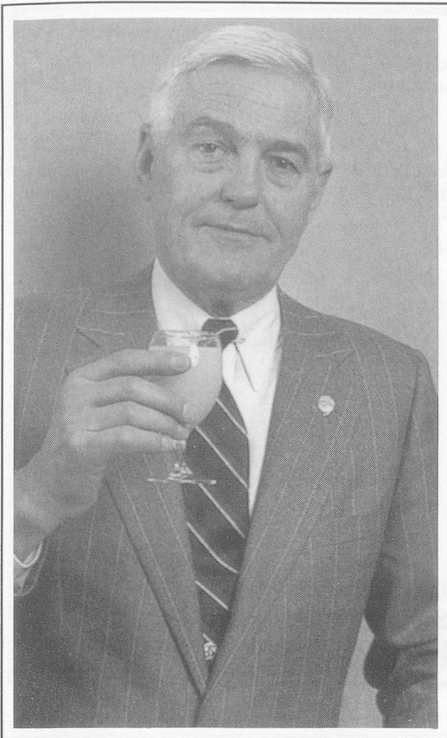
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Robert A. Lutz, President of the Chrysler Corporation seen recently at the Geneva Automobile Exhibition.

HIGH FLYING SWISS

Swiss born Robert A. LUTZ, aged 64, new President of the worldwide Chrysler Corporation is most likely the highest paid Swiss employee with a yearly salary of some 4,5 million NZ Dollars. Although he still has a Swiss passport, he lives in the USA and commutes everyday from his home to his office 100 km away. So he travels some 50,000 to 60,000 km every year. He admits driving at speeds between 140 and 150 km on motorways where the speed limit is officially 115 km. When he is in a hurry, he uses his corporate helicopter to get to work. On weekends, he flies his very own jet fighter plane for relaxation. Lutz took over the control of Chrysler following the departure of the ubiquitous Lee Iacocca who collected a cool 80 million NZ Dollars severance pay when he left his job. Lutz believes that he himself is worth every dollar he gets paid claiming that after all, he is in charge of some 120,000 workers. He plans to retire within the next 2-3 years. Anyone interested in this particular job?

PASTA EATERS

Who eats the largest amount of pasta in the world? Of course it is the Italians, but who is second after them. You guessed it, it is the Swiss as the statistics show:

| Past eaters | Number of Kg. per year and per head |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Italians | 25.5 kg |
| French | 6.6 kg |
| Spaniards | 4.0 kg |
| Swiss | 9.5 kg |
| Germans | 4.6 kg |
| British | 2.0 kg |

SWITZERLAND, SAFEST DEBTOR IN THE WORLD.

If you want to lend some money to a government, your safest move would be with Switzerland, but if you give your money to Pakistan, your chances of getting it back are not so certain as the table below shows. The list has been put together after consultation with over 100 Banks.

| | Points | | Points |
|-----------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Switzerland | 92.2 | China | 57.0 |
| Japan | 91.6 | Saudi Arabia | 55.3 |
| Germany | 90.9 | Cyprus | 54.3 |
| USA | 90.7 | Qatar | 53.6 |
| Netherlands | 89.3 | Kuwait | 53.4 |
| France | 89.1 | Indonesia | 52.4 |
| Great Britain | 87.8 | Bahrain | 51.9 |
| Austria | 86.2 | Oman | 51.8 |
| Luxembourg | 85.5 | Greece | 50.0 |
| Singapore | 84.0 | Israel | 49.2 |
| Norway | 81.6 | Botswana | 49.0 |
| Canada | 80.3 | Colombia | 46.5 |
| Denmark | 79.9 | India | 46.1 |
| Taiwan | 79.9 | Mauritius | 45.9 |
| Belgium | 79.2 | South Africa | 45.2 |
| Sweden | 74.1 | Hungary | 45.0 |
| Spain | 73.7 | Tunisia | 44.0 |
| Ireland | 73.4 | Slovenia | 42.4 |
| Italy | 72.3 | Mexico | 41.8 |
| South Korea | 72.2 | Turkey | 40.9 |
| Finland | 71.4 | Morocco | 39.1 |
| Australia | 71.2 | Argentina | 38.8 |
| New Zealand | 69.4 | Uruguay | 38.5 |
| Malaysia | 69.1 | Poland | 37.6 |
| Portugal | 68.4 | Barbados | 37.3 |
| Hong Kong | 67.0 | Philippines | 36.8 |
| Thailand | 63.8 | Slowak. Rep. | 35.7 |
| Malta | 61.8 | Brazil | 34.9 |
| U.Arab Emirates | 60.8 | Trinidad/Tobago | 34.4 |
| Czech Rep. | 58.4 | Papua N. Guinea | 33.9 |
| Iceland | 57.6 | Venezuela | 31.4 |
| Chile | 57.4 | Pakistan | 30.7 |

Some ranking may come as a bit of a surprise. That Singapore is way ahead of New Zealand is now an accepted fact, but that Taiwan, South Korea and particularly war-torn Ireland and politically unstable Italy are beating us is a bit of a blow to New Zealand. On the other hand, it is pleasing to see that Hong Kong, with all its wealth and enormously rich people gets beaten by New Zealand. A disappointment are the Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain who, with all their wealth in oil, should be much higher up on the list than they are. And finally the biggest but not totally unexpected surprise is that the largest country in the world, Russia, does not even appear on this list. It could not even beat Pakistan of tiny Trinidad and Tobago. But at least Russia can console itself with the fact that Cuba did not make it into this list either....

REVIVAL OF THE LONG-PLAYING RECORD

With the arrival on the world market of the Compact Disc (CD), most people thought that the long-playing record with its mechanical pick-up would soon become history. Not so. All over Switzerland music shops are re-stocking the old vinyl records which are fast becoming collectors' items. True music collectors feel that CDs are a cold piece of metal and that you have "nothing in your hands" with them. On the other hand, the vinyl record with its colourful sleeve is in their view much more satisfying to the touch. "Disc conventions" are becoming the rage with seasoned collectors haggling with one another over old and new long-playing records. Wonder whether the 45 and even the 78 records which could almost be played with a nail rather than a needle will eventually make a comeback too? It seems that there are still plenty of people who have a nostalgia for the "good old times".


NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS


Over the past months over 1,6 million telephone numbers have changed in Switzerland. The move is to provide everyone with a seven digit telephone/fax number.

The change affects all subscribers in the regions of Lucerne, Winterthur, Rapperswil, St. Gallen, Chur, Fribourg, Lausanne, Sitten, Berne, Olten, Thun, Biel and Neuenburg.

Should your relatives not have advised you of this change and should you ring the old number, a computer will automatically tell you the new number to phone.

For your information, with the introduction of the new seven digit numbers, the area codes of 042, 043, 044, 053, 054, 058, 072, 073 and 074 have been discontinued.





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