

Inside Switzerland : Plea for Bigger swiss Navy to help Tourism

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Inside Switzerland

PLEA FOR BIGGER SWISS NAVY TO HELP TOURISM.

A call for the setting-up of a high-seas fleet flying the Swiss flag for the transport of passengers as well as cargo has been made by Mr. Gottlieb Duttweiler, Swiss MP and head of Hotel Plan.

It is thought in Switzerland that such a move would greatly help the country's tourist industry. It would mean that holidaymakers from Britain would be able to board a Swiss ship and cruise through the Mediterranean and along the French and Italian Riviera coast to Genoa, from where they would travel to Switzerland by rail or road.

Switzerland's merchant fleet was started in 1941. It now consists of more than 50 ships.

Swissair has decided against the purchase of British "Comet" jet airliners for the time being. Before placing an order for new DC-6B aircraft, the company seriously considered whether this kind of aircraft would not be out-dated in the near future, but confirmed the order on being told it would not be until 1960 at the earliest that jet aircraft would be in regular use by commercial companies.

The first of the new machines will cost 35 million francs (£2,858,400). One will be put on Swissair's transatlantic services this autumn, and the remaining three in the autumn of next year. Two other DC-6Bs are already in operation.

Swissair has decided to develop its transatlantic services in preference to renewal of its European air fleet. This is in line with general policy in Switzerland of concentrating on the American market. The Swiss National Tourist office, for instance, is spending more and more on tourist publicity in the United States, and officials complain that the recent credit of 2,400,000 francs (£195,970) granted by the Swiss Government is not sufficient for its world-wide commitments — particularly in view of the efforts now being made in this direction. It is estimated that one in every four of the million transatlantic tourists expected to visit Europe in 1954 will pass through Switzerland.

The 30 per cent reduction in the fees of Swiss mountain guides intended to make things easier for foreign visitors came to an end on September 30.

The guides, who get back the missing third of their fee from the tourist organisations, are not all in favour of the system. Instead they suggest cheaper tickets on railways and postal cars for foreigners which will fill the hotels and find sufficient clients for the guides without the need of subsidies.

The top-line guides claim the concession principally aids less-experienced men, and say that some not-so-honest guides have sent in claims for climbs never carried out.

Authorities in Vevey have announced that the next *Fête des Vignerons*, one of Switzerland's biggest folk festivals which is held only once every quarter of a century, is to be held in August, 1955. Previous festivals have always allowed at least two years in which to prepare the programme, and the different commissions to go into the details of the 1955 festival will be set up this autumn.

Modifications to the "taxe de séjour" system are

being planned in Montreux. The present tax, which is from 30 to 60 centimes a night according to the type of hotel, goes back to 1942. In the last few years it has brought in more than 200,000 francs (£16,330) a year, which has been divided between the Montreux Tourist Office and the development societies of nearby villages. Modifications which are now being studied include an extension of the tax to take in all boarding houses as well as the private houses who accommodate "paying guests".

Youth hostels cannot be accused by hotels of unfair competition, says the Swiss Federation of Youth Hostels.

They claim that, on the contrary, the thousands of young hostellers who visit Switzerland from other countries will enjoy their holiday so much that when they are older and appreciate more the comfort that only a hotel can offer they will want to return. Last year Switzerland's 165 hostels accommodated 130,000 young people under 25, of which a third were from outside Switzerland. Among the foreign hostellers those from Britain headed the list.

Derek Meakin.

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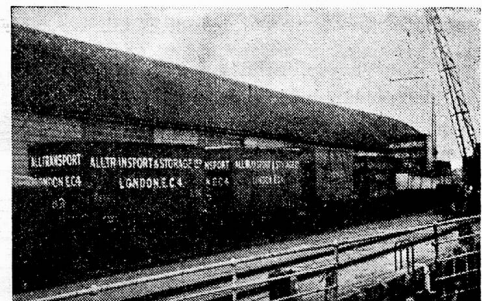
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