

Swiss tourism - yesterday, today and tomorrow

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SWISS TOURISM — YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

In 1934, the overnight stays in Swiss hotels, boarding-houses and sanatoriums totalled 14.3 million. By 1962, this number increased to 31.6 million, or more than double. Of this total, about 18 million were accounted for by foreign tourists, the remaining 13.4 million being Swiss travellers and holiday-makers. Of the foreign guests, 54% came from the neighbouring countries, 32% from other European nations and 14% from overseas. In 1962 also, the Germans topped the list with 5.2 million, followed by 3.1 French, 2.9 British, 1.6 from the U.S.A. and Canada, 1.2 Italians, 1.1 million from Belgium and Luxembourg, 958,000 Dutch and 382,000 guests from the Scandinavian countries. Added to the above 31.6 million may be an estimated 15 million overnight stays at camp sites, in holiday flats and chalets, youth hostels, etc., including 6 million foreigners. Although competition from other countries is being increasingly felt, Switzerland has been able to maintain her position as one of the leading tourist countries in the world.

Today, the 250 resorts and tourist centres of Switzerland offer over

7,714 hotels, motels, boarding-houses, sanatoriums and clinics

with 224,000 beds, representing a capital investment of over 3.5 billion Swiss Francs. New constructions and extensions during the years 1952 to 1962 increased the number of available beds by 47,365 and necessitated further investments of some 500 million Swiss Francs, expenditure for 1962 alone amounting to 100-120 million. Switzerland is the country of small and medium sized establishments: 87% of Swiss hotels can accommodate a maximum of 50 guests, 10% may have up to 100 beds while a mere 3% are in the "grand de luxe" category with a capacity of over 100.

Railway Network of 3,500 miles

Apart from the Swiss Federal Railways operating 1,875 miles of track, there are 78 private railway companies in which the cantons and communities, however, hold a major interest and which are responsible for the traffic over 1,625 miles. The entire Swiss railway network comprises 608 tunnels of 187 miles total length, the world's longest tunnel, the Simplon Tunnel, alone accounting for 12.3 miles. There are 5,077 railway bridges totalling 47.25 miles. The official index lists 1,979 railway stations — in other words the average distance from one station to the next is but 1.5 miles. In 1961, a total of 840 electric locomotives, 575 electric motor rail cars and 4,635 passenger cars seating 310,700 were in operation. The Swiss railway network is now 100% electrified. Construction costs totalled about 5 billion Swiss Francs, that is about 1 million per kilometre (0.62 miles). In addition, Switzerland has 17 cog-railways, 51 funiculars and 165 aerial cableways. The interests of the sportsman are served, winter and summer, by 42 chairlifts, 360 skilifts, 22 chair-skilift combinations and 7 trailers, representing a total investment of some 250 billion Francs.

Despite the heavy increase in road traffic, the railways also must cope with intensified traffic; comparable figures are 166 million travellers in 1938 against 340 million in 1961. During the last ten years, the Swiss Federal Railways have spent 1.8 billion Francs in order to modernize and increase the capacity of their facilities, half that amount having been invested in new rolling stock.

Transport of cars by rail through the St. Gotthard, Simplon and Lötschberg tunnels — "the rolling highways" — was stepped up to a maximum, with no less than 411,400 motor vehicles shipped through the three tunnels during 1962. Projects for the next few years include extension of double tracks, new stations such as a completely new construction in Berne, as well as more second class sleepers on international lines.

A vast undertaking is planned to lessen the load on the St. Gotthard tunnel. In fact, two projects are being evolved: a new 27-mile railway tunnel from Amsteg to Giornico and a 9.6-mile road tunnel from Göschenen to Airole, parallel with the existing through-cut.

From Paris, Amsterdam/Brussels, Hamburg/Frankfurt and Milan travellers to Switzerland can now take the Trans-Europ-Express trains. In 1961, the most modern four-phase diesel-electric TEE trains of the Swiss Federal Railways went into operation on the lines Zurich-Gothard-Milan and Milan-Simplon-Lausanne-Paris. During the summer months, special trains which will also take automobiles run from Ostend to Basle/Brigue, from Hamburg to Basle/Chiasso and from Calais to Lyss/Berne.

The public conveyance system further includes motor coach facilities over 5,640 miles.

Of this total, the Swiss Postal Motor Coach Service covers some 4,000 miles while private motor coach companies holding a special licence run 1,650 miles. Passengers recorded by the two systems in 1962 were 28 million and 24 million respectively. Particularly popular are the motor coach services organized by the PTT during the summer tourist season across the frontier to Freudenstadt-Wiesbaden, Merano-Bolzano, Garmisch-Munich, Menaggio and Verbania-Stresa.

The network of cantonal highways covers 10,500 miles.

During the last 30 years, some 3 billion Francs have been spent on upkeep and improvement of existing highways as well as on new constructions. The Swiss Alpine roads are world-famed. They total 930 miles, of which more than 50% are now completely modernized. The Susten Pass linking the St. Gotthard region with the Bernese Oberland is the most modern Alpine road in Europe. Considerable construction work has been done during the last few years on the St. Gotthard, Simplon and Forclaz passes. A 3.6-mile road tunnel piercing the Great St. Bernard range, which will serve international traffic throughout the year, is to be inaugurated in spring 1964. Construction of a similar project in the San Bernardino region (Grisons) was started in 1961.

There are over

1.1 million motor vehicles,

including 655,000 private cars, registered in Switzerland. In other words, every fifth Swiss has a car, and Switzerland ranks among the most motorized countries in Europe. In 1962, over 18 million foreign cars crossed into Switzerland, plus 66,000 foreign motor coaches with 2 million passengers.

In 1960, work was started on the construction of a 1,125-mile network of national highways, estimated cost of which is 6 billion Francs. This system will comprise some 450 miles national super highways (four-lane), 400 miles highways (2nd class), 262 miles national roads (3rd class) for mixed traffic and 36 miles city speedways. The